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Assessing the Impact of Domestic Violence Upon the Lives of African American Women

Meleh Duarto
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Walden University

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Meleh S. Duarte

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Assessing the Impact of Domestic Violence Upon the Lives of African American Women

by

Meleh S. Duarte

MA, Keiser University 2016

BS, Argosy University, 2013

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Criminal Justice

Walden University

May 19, 2023

Abstract

Domestic violence is a public health problem in the United States. It can be associated with physical, mental, emotional, and psychological problems for the victims. African American (AA) women experience this type of violence more than any other ethnicity or race. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to identify and report AA women's lived experiences of domestic violence. Bandura's learning theory informed this study, which included a semi-structured survey questionnaire to collect data from 20 AA women survivors at least 18 years of age located in the metropolitan area of Georgia. The phenomenological research method with a development of themes was used to explore the lived experiences of AA women. Themes included abuse and how it began, fear, and the third theme was related to health and wellbeing. Findings may be used by social workers, law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and others interested in domestic violence for positive social change in working with survivors of domestic violence.

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Dedication

I am dedicating this dissertation to God for His grace, mercy, good health, strength, knowledge, and wisdom to get me to where I am today. To my loving and devoted parents that left this world earlier than I could imagine, Mr. Nyah and Mrs. Yea Duarto, thanks for believing in me; that is why I have come thus far. To my siblings Mr. Saye Z. Duarto, Mr. Zawolo H. Duarto, and Nohn Duarto Miaway, To my academy peers that helped me along the way, Dr. Bokai and Dr. Somo Hubbard-Barsir, I am grateful. I appreciate your inspiration and your unparalleled love with me through this long, at times frustrating process. To my beloved children, Zika, Melelyn, Ma Yea, Jabez, Dionicious, Meleh Jr., and Malachi Duarto, thanks for your unwavering love and understanding. Finally, I can say my life has a meaning because I have the Highest God as my Savior.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Domestic partner violence is a significant problem that has devastating consequences for African American women's public health and well-being. This problem needs immediate attention because research devoted to understanding domestic violence's consequences is limited and contains significant gaps and weaknesses. Likewise, there is limited empirical research done on the topic. Why do African Americans experience domestic partner violence than their white counterparts? Some of the barriers preventing African American women from reporting domestic violence are expected and were used to answer the research questions.

Albert Bandura's learning theory informed this study. The phenomenological research method was used to explore the lived experiences of African American women. Creswell (2013) suggested this research method because it provides a detailed and complete description of human experiences. This phenomenological inquiry assessed the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women. This research method was uniquely positioned to support this study because as Creswell (1998), Tuffour (2017), and Neubauer (2019) observed, the phenomenological approach provides a rich and complete description of human experiences and helps researchers to understand the meaning of people's lived experience. The phenomenological framework helped me learn from the experiences of African American women and how they made sense of their world. In-depth open and closed ended survey questions were used to collect data from 20 African American women participants

relative to the topic of domestic violence. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants.

Despite many studies on the topic and programs to combat violence, domestic violence against women has grown dramatically over the years. As a result of this, research on domestic violence in leading scholarly journals and national reports has grown substantially over the past few decades (Alhabidj et al., 2009; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009; Catalano et al., 2009; Iyengar & Sabik, 2009; Tjade & Thoennes, 1999). These studies confirm, among other findings, that domestic violence against women is a serious public health problem as recognized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Center and Prevention (CDC), the American Medical Association (AMA), and major health care providers. The study noted that nearly four of every 1,000 women in the United States are victims of domestic violence every year. While domestic violence against women overall is on the rise, research indicates that African American women disproportionately experience this phenomenon than their white counterparts.

The Sharma and Borah (2020) study noted that, while countries are battling this pandemic, they are also experiencing the effect COVID-19 has on families, relationships, and societies in exceptional ways, leading to an economic crisis. The study noted that it is being felt at an alarmingly increasing rate, such as Brazil's domestic violence rate on the rise of 40-50%, Spain and Cyprus by 20–30%, 25% in the UK, Portland undergoing a 22% increase in arrests related to domestic violence, Jefferson County Alabama with a 27% increase in domestic violence calls during March 2020 compared to March 2019,

and New York City experiencing a 10% increase in domestic violence calls during March 2020 compared to March 2019.

Background

Domestic violence is a worldwide phenomenon that has no boundaries. It takes place everywhere. It happens in countries, regions, rural, suburban areas, and cities and cuts across age, race, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, and religion worldwide (Chhikara et al., 2013; Saredine, 2018). In its pioneer publication, The World Health Organization (WHO) cited domestic violence as a significant public health problem and a violation of women's human rights. The World Health Organization (WHO, [2020](#)), violence against women is highly prevalent. Globally, one in three women has experienced physical and or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Domestic abuse cases have been increasing since the COVID-19 outbreak, and an estimated 137 women are victims by their intimate partner or a family member daily. The Lien & Lorentzen ([2019](#)) article notes that when there is violence in the relationship, it is because both husband and wife have contributed to it through argumentation, humiliation, manipulation, and blackmail.

The publication notes that about one in three (35%) women worldwide have experienced physical and sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Worldwide, one third (30%) of women who have been in a relationship report that they have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner in their lifetime. Globally, as many as 38% of women murders are by an intimate male partner. Finally, the WHO also observed that women are more likely to experience

intimate partner violence if they have low education or exposure to violence during their earlier childhood.

This phenomenological inquiry assessed the impact of education on domestic violence incidence against African American women. This research method supported this study because Creswell (1998), Tuffour (2017), and Neubauer et al. (2019) observed that the phenomenological approach provides a detailed and complete description of human experiences and illuminates the meaning of people's lived experience. The phenomenological framework helped me learn from African American women's experiences and how they made sense of their world.

The survey questions were in-depth open and closed ended questions that were designed to collect the data from 20 African American women participants relative to domestic violence. Purposeful sampling was used to guide to select the participants. Despite many studies on the subject and programs to combat violence, domestic violence against women has grown dramatically over the years. As a result of this, research on domestic violence in leading scholarly academic journals and national reports has grown substantially over the past few decades (Alhabidj et al., 2009; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009; Catalano et al., 2009; Iyengar & Sabik, 2009; Tjade & Thoennes, 1999). These studies confirm, among other findings, that domestic violence against women is a severe public health problem as recognized by the CDC, the AMA, and significant health care providers. The study noted that nearly four of every 1,000 women in the United States are domestic violence victims every year, while domestic violence against women, overall, is on the rise.

Problem Statement

Domestic violence is a major problem of concern among African American women. African American women experienced domestic violence at significantly higher rates than Whites. As observed by the Women of Color Network (2006), African American women experience intimate partner violence at a rate of 35% higher than that of White American women. The study also estimated that 29.1% of African American women are victimized by intimate partner violence during their lifetime compared to 10% of White American women (Women of Color Network, p.2). Likewise, a 2017 report by the National Center for Victims of Crime maintained that 53.8% of victims of intimate partner violent aggression were Black compared to 10% of their White counterparts (Al'Uqdah et al., 2016). Yet despite these findings, a review of the current literature suggests that there is limited research on domestic violence as it relates to African American women. This has been attributed to multiple factors such as racism, distrust of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, and cultural and religious beliefs (Al'Uqdah et al., 2016.) This phenomenological qualitative study assessed the impact of education of African American women on the incidence of domestic violence and why it is prevalent in the African American community. Moreover, this study filled in a gap by interviewing African American women ages 18 to 45, with specific focus on their level of education and their likelihood of being a victim of domestic violence, to gain insight into their experiences as it relates to domestic violence. The meaning of education as used in this study is about the causes and impact to the victims. Despite their vital role in identifying signs of abuse and getting information to referral pathways, research indicates

the victims of abuse often lack the education needed to help get them out of the abuse. The article examines how the professional learning and professional confidence of teachers can be developed, and how recent policy and practice developments in the United Kingdom have the potential to influence work in this area. The study also includes recommendations for future research and educational policies to reduce domestic violence against women.

As stated by the Women of Color Network (WOCN) (2018), Black survivors are disproportionately more likely to be criminalized by the legal system, in spite of their high rates of domestic violence. The WOCN noted that, according to the National Intimate Partner Violence and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), 9.5% of Black women had been stalked and 41.2% had been physically abused by a partner during their lifetime. This same study reported that, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), during the year 2003-2012 at the rate of 4.7 per 1,000, Black/African/African Americans had the highest rates of intimate partner violence compared to Whites (3.9 per 1,000) and Hispanics (2.3 per 1,000).

Purpose of the Study

Although African American women are at a higher risk of experiencing domestic violence than their White counterparts, there is dearth of information on their experiences with this topic. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research was to ascertain the incidence of domestic violence among African American women between the ages of 18 to 45. Another purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occur among African American women.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Why do African American women stay in domestic/intimate partner abusive relationships?

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of domestic/intimate partner violence on the health and wellbeing of African American women?

Research Question 3: What are some of the barriers preventing African American women from seeking professional help with respect to domestic/intimate partner violence?

Nature of the Study

My research design was guided by the phenomenological qualitative method. In the phenomenological qualitative research method, the researcher is interested in people's beliefs, experiences, and meanings from the participants' point of view. Open and closed-ended semi-structured survey questions that were used to gather the necessary data.

Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. Creswell (2007) explained that the purposeful sampling strategy involves the researcher selecting the participants purposively since they understand the phenomenon. This method is useful, because as Creswell (1988) argued, open-ended semi structured phenomenological research is suited to understanding the "lived" experiences of participants in their natural setting, while Seidman (1988) observed that qualitative phenomenological research helps us to understand participants point of view and allow their voices to be heard. Qualitative phenomenological research helps researchers understand the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

I selected the qualitative phenomenological semi structured open and closed ended survey question method because I wanted to immerse myself in the everyday lives of African American women to better understand their lived experiences of domestic violence.

Data in this study were collected from African American women, ages 18-45 (Table 1, 2, 3). For this study, the NVivo software was used to analyze data. The qualitative data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. This method is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes). The data were coded in relation to the research questions. Significant statements, major themes, words, key phrases, and sentences that emerged from the survey questions were extracted.

Definitions

The operational definitions for this study were culled from the following sources: (Mayo Clinic, American Psychological Association, 2019; The Missouri Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence, 2012; World Health Organization, 2013).

Batterer is a person who uses coercive and abusive tactics and behavior to establish and maintain control over another person with the batter is in intimate, dating or family relationship.

Coercion is when one person forces or attempts to force another person to think or act in a different way. Examples include but are not limited to threatening to report the victim to child and family sources or police, forcing a victim to drop charges against the batterer, and forcing a victim to participate in or commit illegal activities.

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and other types of abusive behavior perpetrated by an intimate partner against another.

Economic abuse is when the abuser makes or tries to make the victim financially reliant. Economic abusers often seek to maintain total control over financial resources, withhold the victim's access to funds, or prohibit the victim from going to school or work.

Education is the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school or university.

Emotional abuse involves invalidating or deflating the victim's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem.

Intimate partner violence is defined as violence between two people who are intimate.

Physical violence is violence that injures or causes physical harm to another person. Some examples of physical violence include hitting, biting, slapping, battering, pushing, cutting, and burning.

Psychological violence involves the abuser invoking fear through intimidation, threatening to physically hurt themselves, the victim, children, the victim's family, or friends.

Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion (Flasch et al., 2015).

Stalking involves spying on, watching, or harassing the victim, showing up at the victim's home or work, sending gifts, collecting information, making phone calls, leaving written messages, or appearing at a person's home or workplace.

Verbal abuse is when a batterer uses words to establish and maintain power and control over a victim. Some examples include the use of language to manipulate, control, ridicule, insult, humiliate, vilify, and show disrespect for others.

Assumptions

There are many assumptions critical to the meaningfulness of this study. I assumed that the participants in the study would answer the survey questions accurately and honestly and that they had sufficient knowledge to provide information necessary to answer the research questions. I assumed that the inclusion criteria of the sample were appropriate and therefore assumed that the participants all experienced the same or similar phenomenon of the study. Since the topic of the research deals with domestic violence, and it impacts African American women disproportionately, they had a sincere interest in participating in the research. Likewise, I assumed that the theoretical framework would demonstrate an understanding of the theories and concepts that are relevant to the topic of the research and that it would have a relation to the broader field of knowledge. The key philosophical assumption of qualitative research, as observed by Merriam (1977), is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Moreover, I assumed that the methodology was appropriate to the problem being addressed and the purpose of the study and that the survey questions accurately reflected the phenomenon and allowed me to elicit rich textual data to address

the research questions. It was assumed that the interview instrument was reliable and gave the same measurement each time when measuring the same construct. Once the analysis was completed, I assumed that the results of the study were generalizable beyond the sample being studied. Finally, it was assumed that the results of the study were meaningful and relevant to the stakeholders.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on the impact of education on the likelihood of being a victim of domestic violence among the African American women. The research setting was in Fulton County, Georgia. This region was chosen for the study due to the high population of African Americans in the area. The study was limited to African American women who have gone through high school and those who have had a college education living in this section of Georgia.

Limitations

Domestic violence affects women of all races and sociological background globally. However, this study was limited to African American women residing in a specific geographic area in Atlanta. Therefore, the findings of this study were not generalizable to all women in the United States. Another limitation was the financial aspect. Conducting interviews is an expensive proposition. As a result, the study was limited to African American women ages 18 to 45 living in four zip codes areas in Atlanta.

Significance

The goal of this phenomenological inquiry was to assess the impact of domestic violence amongst the African American women. This study had profound significance on many levels. Healthcare providers, social service workers, African American organizations, and sociologists will find this work useful as they study domestic violence among African American women. As Trochim et al. (2016) acknowledged, giving voices to their plight will “Contribute significantly to the process of policy making, policy implementation and policy evaluation” (p. 59). On another level, implications for social change for this study included the potential to enhance opportunities for African American women to acknowledge the different signs of domestic violence. Moreover, this study gave a voice to a group of victims that are underrepresented in the current discourse. The study filled a gap in the existing literature by assessing the impact of domestic violence amongst African American women. Other women, healthcare providers, and educators can use the findings of the study to bring about awareness to women suffering from this type of abuse. The study contributed to the criminal justice world by helping to provide knowledge for students and instructors. Finally, this study has added to the growing body of literature on the topic of domestic violence as it relates to African American women.

Summary

Chapter 1 described the study in which respondents offered their perspectives regarding the impact of education on domestic violence in African American women. The findings of the study may bring major changes to how African American women are

treated. In addition, the information presented in this chapter will show the increasing lack of opportunities for African American women to access quality education and other important services. A description of the problem statement, purpose of the study, nature of the study, and scope and limitations was provided. Also included in Chapter 1 was a discussion of significance contributions of the study to the African American women and the Black communities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to examine the research that contributes to this study. The chapter presents a summary of previous research on the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women. It introduces the main framework for the case study consisting of the primary focus of the research described in the previous chapter. In Chapter 1, the history and overview of the research topic was provided. For this study, education is related to the causes and impact it has to or related to the victims. I also identified the significance and the purpose of the study and the research problem. The research methodology used was briefly discussed. The limitations and assumptions were also included in Chapter 1. The primary purpose of the literature review was to summarize the existing knowledge about the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women. The literature helped in scoping out important data collection requirements for the main research to be carried out (Marshall et al., 2015). Researchers are required to familiarize themselves with existing studies before collecting data for their studies (Marshall et al., 2015). However, familiarizing yourself with research before the actual study contradicts the grounded theory presented by Charmaz and Belgrave (2012).

The literature review allowed me to avoid collecting vast primary data. Second, the review ensured that I focused on the topic under study throughout the research. Finally, the literature review offered an opportunity for critical analysis of the collected data during the data analysis stages. Science databases were the most significant sources

used in this chapter. Important publications were located from different academic domains such as business studies, information systems, psychology, organization science, science and technology, information science, strategic management, and sociology. Most of the publications used are peer review literature, journals, and non-peer review articles.

Literature Search Strategy

Based on existing studies on domestic violence among the African American women, the theoretical framework that was used for this study was social cognitive theory and social learning theory. The two theories have been based on psychoanalysis and behaviorism. The key components for these theories include observation, retention, motor reproduction, attention, learning, and motivation (Chen et al., 2015). Basing on the theories, individuals acquire new and desired behaviors through learning which help them in self-regulation, physical and mental maturation, personal behavior control, and self-efficacy.

Social learning theory emphasizes the importance of observation and modeling of behaviors, attitudes, and emotions to improve how individuals treat their loved ones (Devi et al., 2015). The theory explains how behavioral, environmental, and cognitive factors interact to influence individuals' behaviors (Devi et al., 2015). Chen et al. (2015) argued that people can improve their behaviors by observing how other people carry out themselves and approach important ideas. The assumption of social learning theory is that cognition plays a huge role in behavioral learning. Devi et al. (2015) article stated that the theory has been recognized for over 30 years for its ability of interpreting human behaviors and beliefs in terms of cognition. Self-perception, as argued by Devi et al., can

leave a person depressed. The depression risk factors are based on a person and their surrounding environmental and social factors. If these factors are not controlled, they can result in negative cognitions and poor functional behaviors (Chen et al., 2015). In this study, the Chen study focused on domestic violence among African American women and whether education increases or reduces the violence. The dysfunctional beliefs among the African American community such as feelings of inadequacy, lack of education opportunities and low-wage employment can result in domestic violence (Chen et al., 2015; Devi et al., 2015). This study used social learning theory as a framework to determine the thought patterns and feelings of individuals in African American community (Akers & Jennings, 2019).

My research design was guided by the phenomenological qualitative method. In the phenomenological qualitative research method, the researcher was interested in people's belief's experiences and meanings from the participants' point of view. Open-ended and closed-ended, semi-structured interview questions were used to gather the necessary data. The survey questions guided the research design by answering the research questions. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants. Creswell (2007) explained that the purposeful sampling strategy involves the researcher selecting the participants purposively since they understand the phenomenon. This method was useful because, as Creswell (1988) argued, open-ended semi structured phenomenological research is suited to understanding the "lived" experiences of participants in their natural setting, while Seidman (2016) observed that qualitative phenomenological research helps us to understand participants point of view and allowed

their voices to be heard. Qualitative phenomenological research allows one to understand the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

I selected the qualitative phenomenological open and closed-ended semi structured survey question method because I wanted to immerse myself in the everyday lives of African American women to better understand while domestic violence is so prevalent in their communities. Finally, the phenomenological qualitative method helped me answer the research question: What is the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence for African American women?

Data in this study was collected from 20 African American women, ages 18-45. Open and closed ended semi structured survey questions were used to collect the data.

After the phenomenological interview, information was organized for analysis. Significant statements, major themes, words, key phrases, and sentences that emerged from previous studies were included in the questions. Major themes were developed from coding the data and imported into NVivo for analysis.

Literature Review

Domestic Violence in the African American Community

Domestic violence can be defined as psychological, emotional, economic, sexual, and physical abuse (Al'Uqdah et al., 2016; Bhandari, 2020). An individual may commit such acts to feel superior or to control their partners. Al'Uqdah et al. (2016) stated that domestic violence affects every person regardless of their religion, race, sexual orientation, or social class. African American women are not the only ones that are experiencing this problem. In many societies, a women's sexuality is linked to family

honor (Patra, Prakash, Patra, Khanna, 2018). Traditional norms in these societies allow the killing of women deemed to have brought dishonor to the family. Furthermore, sexual violence against women occurs to defile the enemy's honor (Patra, et al, 2018).

Domestic Violence affects women of every background and age, but it is prominent amongst African American Women. In his research, Bhandari (2020) asserted that both women and men experience domestic violence. However, over 85% of the reported domestic violence occurs against women (Bhandari, 2020). The National Black Women's Health Project stipulated that one of the leading factors that affect the general health status of African American women is domestic violence (Schalk, 2020). However, due to methodological limitations and too much dependence on poor socioeconomic communities' data, the true extent of domestic violence in African American communities is not known (Schalk, 2020). Franklin (2000) discovered the similarities between violence against Black women in post-civil war era and during slavery. In both eras, Franklin argued that women were viewed as men's helpers and not allowed to have high status within the society. As Bent-Goodley (2001) noted, the best way to eradicate domestic violence in African American communities is by addressing classism and sexism.

In current society, media images, videos, and movies glorify violence. The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) is against all forms of violence, especially those against women of color either within the United States or abroad (Bent-Goodley, 2001). The survival of the African American women is threatened by continuous increase in domestic violence cases. Bent-Goodley (2001) stated that

domestic violence is no longer a private issue but a public one, which the government has to develop strict measures to combat. It is everyone's responsibility to address domestic violence, not only through words but also actions. NABSW used three ethical principles in making their stance regarding domestic violence in African American communities (Bhandari, 2020). The first principle is respect, whereby each person needs respect regardless of their status, gender, or class. Individuals show respect by holding each other's hand and having patience when things are not going right in their relationships (Bent-Goodley, 2001; Bhandari, 2020). The second principle is collective work and responsibility. Bhandari (2020) stipulated that every person has a role to play in eradicating violence within the society. Through collective responsibility, society can come up with better mechanisms of fostering stable and healthy relationships (Bhandari, 2020). Finally, through inherent goodness, Bhandari asserted that every individual in the society has the capacity to change. Bent-Goodley argued that if society helps those that are abused, they can recognize their actions and change.

Hampton et al. (2003) found that African American women fail to report cases of domestic violence to police in fear of police brutality against them or their partners. The fear of the police limited the possibility of assaulted women reporting violence during the period when the cases were escalating. Hampton et al. (2003) also asserted that the policies implemented by the government to guide mandatory arrests discriminate against both African American women and men. Police are more likely to arrest African American women after reporting violence cases as compared to White women. African American women also fail to report domestic violence cases because they feel it will

betray their race or create negative stereotypes within the community (Bent-Goodley, 2001). Dealing with the difficulties of protecting their husbands, Black women turned to their families and close friends for help before seeking help from the police (Bent-Goodley, 2001; Wyatt et al., 2000). African American women have a high risk of being separated with their children due to domestic violence. Over 70% of African American youths in prison attempted to protect their mothers from domestic violence (Wyatt et al., 2001). Domestic violence affects many families, regardless of gender and race. Despite domestic violence becoming a serious problem as early as 1980s, there is no empirical research that adequately addresses the issue and how it affects the African American community (Hampton et al., 2003). However, the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community (IDVAAC) provided important information that helped in understanding the issue of domestic violence especially in African Americans. IDVAAC has developed recommendations on how policy makers, community members and professionals can respond to domestic violence (Hampton et al., 2003). IDVAAC identified education as a key factor in reducing domestic violence against African American women. Through education, Hampton et al. (2003) stated that individuals understand the importance of equal rights regardless of their gender or social class. More funding is required so that researchers can conduct more culturally competent studies regarding domestic violence among people of color. Such research, according to Hampton et al., is essential in providing prevention efforts, intervention programs for abusers and protection for children who witness domestic violence. Faith based interventions need to be undertaken and avoid focusing only on community-based

programs. Culturally competent research also addresses issues such as same sex relationship, fatherhood and violent in youth's relationship (Hampton et al., 2003).

Domestic violence and abuse affect everyone; the Callaghan, Alexander, Sixsmith, and Chiara article speak of children's exposure and responses to this violence. The report argues that, in situations where violence and abuse occur between adult intimate partners, the impact on the children is drastic, and children are always victims of abusive control (Callaghan, Alexander, Sixsmith, & Chiara Fellin, (2018). Domestic violence is a global problem, and even though it affects primarily African American women in the US, it also affects children. Over 2 million children in England are affected by domestic violence (Children's Commissioner, 2018).

Intimate Partner Violence

Cook and Nash (2017) defined Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as intentional victimization and forced control of person that the perpetrator shared an intimate or romantic relationship. The authors stated that IPV was a form of domestic violence that had recorded many cases within the African American community. It occurs between individuals who are in a close personal or sexual relationship (Smith et al., 2017). In their study, Cook and Nash (2017) identified different forms through which people experience IPV. They included physical abuse, social isolation, sexual harassment, economic control and coercion. Although the rate of IPV was high against African American women, Cook and Nash (2017) explained that it is not discriminatory and affected every person regardless of their culture, ethnicity, race, social class, and gender. Across the US, at least 27% of women, both of color and whites, experienced different forms of violence such as

physical abuse, sexual assault, and stalking (Smith et al., 2017). The impacts of violence on women includes concern for their security and safety, stress, trauma, lack of safe housing, sexually transmitted disease, fear, unwanted pregnancies, reduced economic stability and general poor health (Cook & Nash, 2017).

African American Attitudes Toward Domestic Violence and DV Assistance

Existing data shows that despite gradual decrease in the domestic violence cases, black women across the US still experience high rates of intimate partner violence as compared to women of other ethnicities (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001). The data by U.S. Department of Justice (2001), mentioned only American Indian women experienced higher rates of intimate partner violence as compared to African American women. Surveys across the US showed the need for data regarding attitudes towards DV services treatment needs perceptions and evaluation of DV programs within the African American community. Professionals have voiced their concerns about lack of studies on why black women lack opportunities to access victim services (National Violence against Women Prevention Research Center, 2001). Few research exists on the needs of African American women who experience domestic violence. The studies indicated that black women do not make use of the available domestic violence services (Thomas, 2018; Gillum, 2019).

Gillum also noted that women, regardless of their ethnicity, looked for different types of help such as financial, shelter, counseling and materials from their families and friends. Gillum asserted that African American women were more likely to call police for help as compared to white women. However, Thomas (2018) argued that African

American women only seek for help from the authority only when the domestic violence is seriously threatening their lives. As compared to whites and other races, African American women reported cases are very severe (Thomas, 2000).

Domestic violence services have benefited African American women more than white women (Gillum, 2019). The black women who go through advocacy services are more satisfied and live a more comfortable life afterwards (Gillum, 2019). The advocacy services involved assist through education programs to understand the importance of reporting domestic violence cases in time. Gillum (2019) found that after going through the services, the African American women expressed their needs of continuing with advocacy services. In the research done by O'Neal and Beckman (2017), African American women found it difficult to walk out of violent relationships due to discrimination, social inequality and economic hardship. Majority of African American women lived below the poverty line. It was difficult for them to own a car, and they were the only providers for their families (O'Neal & Beckman, 2017). In the shelter stay programs, African American women did not list financial issues, material goods and health issues as primary need. Social and financial issues affect African American women more than the whites (O'Neal & Beckman, 2017).

The Salacious, Urhan, Pirinccioglu & Aydin (2017), study argued which involved 27 focus groups consisting of African Americans. The focus groups were different in size, ranging from three to 12 members. The individuals who took part in the research were volunteers. Recruitment for the study was done through the national newspaper and posted notices. Participants were rewarded with \$20 each to cater for their participation

expenses. A total of 66 African American males and 134 women took part in the discussions. The researcher used brief questionnaires which were handed to respondents prior to their participation. The age of the participants for the Salacious et al., (2017)), ranged from 18 to 74 years. The participants reported an average of 14 years of education and income ranged from zero to \$150,000. An African American woman with high experience in psychology led the focus groups. She was assisted by graduate student in guiding and counseling (Salacious et al., 2017). The research aimed at understanding the extent of domestic violence among the African American women and how it affected their mental wellbeing (Salacious et al., 2017). Therefore, it was not necessary for participants to have past experiences with domestic violence. Four different factors were examined during the research. These factors included the perception of respondents towards domestic violence in the African American community, barriers that cause them from seeking help, perception towards the necessary services and knowledge of exiting services across the country (Salcioglu et al., 2017).

The key finding of the study according to Salacious et al. (2017), was that African American women who visit DV services after reported domestic violence live comfortable lives. Women who are more educated report any forms of violence immediately to the police for help. They understood the negative impacts that domestic violence can have in their lives such as depression. Salacious et al. (2017) also found that African American women have a very strong pride hence deny any form of violence or vulnerability. African American women are brought up in environments where they take care of themselves. Therefore, they self-blame and feel embarrassed when they fail to

take control or endure situations such as domestic violence. As stated by O'Neal and Beckman (2017), women of color were responsible for ensuring that families are together, and they were required to keep children close to their fathers. Therefore, they feared that reporting domestic violence to authorities will separate children from their fathers. African American women face loyalty pressure from their families not to disclose any of their family disagreements (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). The Salacious et al. (2017) article notes, there was a need for a good education for African American women on domestic violence. The women needed to be enlightened on the signs and behaviors that accompany domestic violence. The government should target media and other influential institutions in the African American community to rollout any educational programs (Salacious et al., 2017). This is because women of color rely on their friends, media and families for advice pertaining domestic violence (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). African American women, due to pride, are more likely to seek for help from these sources before reporting the case to police. Professionals need to identify the most appropriate ways through which they can motivate African American women to use public institutions to address their domestic violence (O'Neal & Beckman (2017).

Education and Domestic Violence

Education empowers people economically and socially hence it is regarded as a protective tool in preventing any forms of violence (Rapp, Zoch, Khan, Pollmann & Krämer, 2012). It has been noted that individuals with low education levels are sometime likely to experience violence as compared to those with high education levels (Rapp et al., 2012). Individuals with low education levels are limited to jobs that have low wages.

Due to discrimination and racism in the US, African American women do not have access to quality education hence, they fall in this class of low incomes (Rapp et al., 2012). This has forced black women on their partners who in return abuse them. The women found it difficult to report the cases to police or leave the abusive relationships since they did not have adequate financial resources to support themselves and their children (Rapp et al., 2012).

Education and income are socioeconomic factors contributing to domestic violence. Holiday et al. (2020) and Cheng and Lo (2019) note that the other factors that make individuals not report domestic violence to law enforcement, including fear or mistrust of law enforcement, fear of getting the offender involved in the criminal justice system; the belief that law enforcement will or could not help; and belief the offense was a personal issue or too trivial to report. The mistrust of the police has caused domestic violence victims to underreport domestic violence in racial and ethnic minority groups, specifically in-migrant communities (Amuedo-Dorantes & Arenas-Arroyo, 2019).

However, it is important to note that domestic violence can occur across all academic levels. “In the simplest of terms, those individuals with less than a college education are at a higher risk of being victims of domestic violence than those with a college degree” (Jackson, 2007). Individuals with low education levels are limited to jobs that have low wages. Due to discrimination and racism in the US, African American women do not have access to quality education hence, they fall in this class of low incomes (Rapp et al., 2012). This has forced black women to stay with their abusive partners. The women found it difficult to report the cases to police or leave the abusive

relationships since they did not have adequate financial resources to support themselves and their children (Rapp et al., 2012).

The current education system helps in the prevalence of domestic violence the Rapp et al., (2012) studies focused on impacts of outsourcing disciplinary cases from schools to police. The studies showed that introduction of zero tolerance regulations and handling of school disciplinary cases by the police greatly harmed the wellbeing of individuals and communities (Jackson, 2007). In the past, students who committed small mistakes in schools were punished at school level but now they must face criminal prosecution at juvenile corrections systems (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). By prosecuting students at this age, the system does not trim them away from criminal and violent behaviors. This educational system mostly affects individuals from African American community (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). Women from this community are largely affected due to their reduced chances of accessing better education (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). Rapp et al. (2012) argued that low education levels increased domestic violence. Poor communication skills and education are also linked to domestic violence since perpetrators resorted to violence since they are unable to speak clearly about their frustrations and anger (Stephenson, Koenig, Acharya & Roy, 2008). Individuals learn communication skills through education. Educating the victims on the causes and the impact of domestic violence will have a positive outcome. With low education level, a person develops poor communication skills (Stephenson et al., 2008). Rapp et al. (2012) asserted that African American women who experienced domestic violence do not achieve high education levels as they are blocked by their abusers who feel that they

might become independent. Their abusers felt psychologically threatened and hence sabotaged the women's chances of furthering their education (Rapp et al., 2012)—adult education incredibly controlled domestic abuse in the African American community (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). African American women with high education levels raised their self-esteem and access to high-paying jobs (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). Stephenson et al. (200) added that high-wage women commanded respect and could avoid abusive relationships.

Individuals who had received an evidence-based education, which is the kind of education with valuable, needed resources, reported reduced cases of violence (Stephenson et al., 2008). Stephenson et al. (2008) note that students who go through healthy relationships and multisession education for a particular period recorded positive relationship changes. Professionals designed the sessions to address cultural norms and individual attitudes (Stephenson et al., 2008). Empowering people to confront their attitudes and cultural beliefs helped reduce domestic violence (Howard et al., 2010). Learning institutions must include healthy relationship education in their school curriculum to help the African American community reduce domestic violence incidents. Howard et al. (2010) highlighted that intersections are essential in bringing different groups together, such as education professionals, service providers, and support system staff. This is an opportunity to learn more regarding the appropriate response and prevention of domestic violence.

Education as a Vehicle to End Violence Against Women

In the lives of many African American women, the adverse effects of lack of education can be seen. Less educated women are unable to take care of themselves due to a lack of job opportunities (Reed, Raj, Miller & Silverman, 2010). Reed et al. (2010) discovered that uneducated women had health issues, such as mental distress, which affected their decision-making. Their children were more likely to be exposed to illiteracy and malnutrition. Educated women, according to Reed, could help them manage their families and personal relationships.

Violence Against Black Women

Educational sabotage according to West (2014) has been used in blocking African American women from accessing education. Tactics that have been used in education sabotage include disruption of financial support, discouraging women from education achievements and physical violence (West, 2014). These strategies deployed in the African American community have become serious barriers to successful completion of education by African American women. West (2014) established that without education, women of color were left to depend economically on their intimate partners. Reducing women's chances of education was a strategy used by African American men to further their power and control over women (Stephenson et al., 2008). According to the culture of this community, it has been perceived as abuse when a woman pushes for further education (Stephenson et al., 2008). The participants of West's study were asked to identify how education sabotage impacted their lives. African American women who took part in the study stated different impacts including increased domestic violence,

mental and emotional health problems and reduced academic achievements (West, 2014). However, the women also argued that their desires to overcome the barriers were increased. Across the US and the world, education sabotage has been listed among the different forms of domestic violence that black women have always received.

As indicated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008), educational sabotage was responsible for at least 16% of all reported homicide cases across the US. At least one in 10 African American women has been domestically abused in their lifetime. West (2014) asserted that pursuing higher education has helped African American women break out of isolation and reduced their economic over dependence on their partners. In an earlier study, Reed et al. (2010) stipulated that by understanding and designing preventive measures of educational sabotage among the black women, learning institutions and the community at large has an opportunity to curb domestic violence among African American women hence contributing to their safety and well-being.

Many organizations in the US have denied African American women high job and women leadership positions due to poor education. Reed et al. (2010) asserted that lack of employment opportunities has been going on for a long time in the country which has left black women with little or no income. For women to have economic independence, they need to have money to save, spend and invest, and also the courage to walk out of abusive and violent marriages (Reed et al., 2010). Many African American women lived in poverty, due to low education unlike White females (Stephenson et al., 2008). In African American community, culture, families have always preferred to educate boys over girls. The gender inequality in education is the main reasons why women have had

low educational achievements hence resulting in increased cases of domestic violence and sexual harassment (Stephenson et al., 2008; Reed et al., 2010).

Domestic violence has been recognized worldwide as a form of violence that affects a person's life in every way, physically, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically. It violates fundamental human rights—the most common spousal violence found to be emotional, followed by physical violence Deshpande (2019).

African American Community and Domestic Violence

For the past two decades, domestic violence has had different meanings. It has been referred to as intimate violence, child and elder abuse or sibling violence (Anderson, 2010). Intimate partner violence involved violence between individuals who had a formal relationship or marriage (Anderson, 20). In the United States, according to Tjaden and Thoennes (2000), the number of domestic violence cases was high among the African Americans as compared to whites. One of the first sources of data on domestic violence in African American community was the study conducted by Straus and his colleagues (Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980). Straus et al. (1980) found that African American men had high chances of domestically violating their wives as compared to the whites. In African American families, at least 113 men for every 1000 interviewed had assaulted their wives in different ways while in whites' families the number stood as 30 for every 1000 individuals interviewed (Straus et al., 1980). The second national family violence study was undertaken five years later. Straus and Gelles (1986) reported a similar disparity between the two races, African American families and white families. In the second survey, Straus and Gelles found that 207 out of 1000

African American families had experienced husband and wife violence as compared to 115 out of 1000 white families. Recent research by Rennison and Welchans (2000), approved the findings of Straus and Gelles as it showed that African American women experienced domestic violence 35% higher than the white women.

According to national data, domestic violence increased in African American community, and it is likely to grow into domestic homicide (Straus & Gelles, 1986). A survey carried out by Rennison and Welchans (2000) showed that African American women were just likely to kill their partners as husbands were to kill them. Domestic homicide cases in courts indicated that 47% of the victims were men while 53% were women (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). As compared to whites, 38% of domestic homicide victims were women while 62% were men. At least one in six African American women had been assaulted in the past five years (Fund, 2019). Fund asserted that 60% of the women who sought intensive care unit services in hospitals were African American women whose boyfriends or husbands had assaulted them. Rennison and Welchans (2000) highlighted that the high number of domestic violence against black women did not occur in a social vacuum. The acts occurred within specific social and situational contexts. Straus and Gelles wanted domestic violence against African American women to be explained in three dimensions; situational, cultural, and structural.

In a structural context, Straus and Gelles (1986) argued that African American women experienced different social conditions and structural arrangements that hindered them from accessing specific opportunities in life, such as education. The main structural

factor that made African American men violent to their partners was exposure to gender and racial oppression (Straus et al., 1980). Institutional arrangements had victimized these men for a long time, barring them from having the same economic, political, and educational achievements as white men (Rapp et al., 2012; Straus & Gelles, 1986).

The high unemployment rates and low incomes among men have adversely affected their women and children (Bhandari, 2020). According to Rapp et al. (2012), the high unemployment rate was attributed to low education levels; hence, they could not access well-paying jobs. This economic underachievement among black men has, for a long time, been a source of frustration and anger. Bhandari (2020) noted that since the slavery era, black men have always experienced frustrations and anger, which they direct toward their wives and partners.

Nathan Hare, a psychologist in 1964, introduced the concept of frustrated masculinity syndrome, which aimed at discovering how frustrated African American men reacted to prejudice (Laubscher, 2005). As Laubscher (2005) indicated, society has associated manhood with employment, independence, and the capacity to provide for their families. Therefore, lack of employment and independence among the African American men has left them frustrated thus resulting in increased number of domestic violence cases (Laubscher, 2005). The Fox, Hale, and Gadd (2014) in the United Kingdom, education can be used to prevent domestic violence in families. Development of domestic violence educational programs in schools changes the attitudes of students towards domestic abuse (Fox et al., 2014).

Fox et al., argued that their research boosted the calls of the UK government for learning institutions to include relationship education in their school curriculum. The project examined 2395 students from different countries including France, England, and Spain. Following the study, Fox et al. provided a toolkit which was 180 paged for teachers and tutors to tackle the subject of domestic violence.

Fox et al. (2014) stated that the study was effective in helping individuals deal with domestic violence especially against children and women. Across Europe in countries such as Germany, Spain, Malta, UK and Sweden, women were more likely to face domestic violence as compared to men (Bhandari, 2020). Fox et al. (2014) also highlighted that women who were less educated had high chances of experiencing domestic violence as their partners did not respect them. This study also notes that majority of male students who took part in the research believed that it was acceptable for men to hit their partners. However, based on the previous European Union funded studies; these attitudes can be changed through high level education (Gracia & Herrero, 2006). As per the questionnaires distributed by Fox et al. (2014) in the three countries, the participants showed improved attitudes after undergoing the educational programs. Spain and England recorded high changes in students' attitudes (Fox et al., 2014).

Therefore, Fox et al. (2014) argued that domestic violence against women and children can be addressed through inclusion of relationship education in high school curriculum. Rather than overlooking relationship education, training teenagers about their personal relationships helped them into understand their partners hence reducing violence cases (Gracia & Herrero, 2006).

Gracia and Herrero (2006) stated that authorities needed to collect different views regarding domestic violence from different parts of the world so that they could come up with very accurate and effective lessons for the students. It is essential for evidence-based materials to be available to learners so that they can understand the severe damages that are caused by domestic violence (Gracia & Herrero, 2006; Fox et al., 2014).

Women of Color Achieving Higher Education

At the beginning of the 21st century, the US had more than 175,000 professors both in private and public research and learning institutions (Evans, 2007). However, 72% of these professors were white men, 17% white women, 8% men of color and only 2% women of color (Evans, 2007). The question that Evans (2007) tried to answer with his study was why African American women still have low access to education regardless of many years of discussion about education access and diversity across the US. African American women have been marginalized with the education system of the US. Slavery was more rampant in South America than any other region. During this colonial period, only African Americans in New England and Midwest had the opportunity to obtain a college degree (Evans, 2007). Bhandari (2020), states that this trend was inherited for years, and African American women continued to suffer.

However, there are some programs as indicated by Evans (2007) which have offered entry points for African American women to further their education. These programs have copied the federal TRIO structure and include upward bound, talent search and McNair scholars which give underrepresented populations an opportunity to join higher education (Laubscher, 2005). There have also been other intervention

programs that Evans (2007) termed as “successful”. They include preparing future faculty from Howard University and southern regional educational board’s doctoral scholars’ program.

Evans (2007) argued that university management needed to consult with organizations dealing with races to ensure they do not discriminate against African American women during students’ intake. Black students, both men and women, were permanently blocked from accessing high-quality schools preserved for whites (Salcioglu et al., 2017). Though access has been improved in recent years, the numbers are not big enough to raise the status of African American community (Evans, 2007). Salcioglu et al. (2017), African American men needed more access to higher level education which will help them in reducing domestic abuse against women and children. Evans (2007) asserted that if the US wanted to create a system of higher education that is efficient, they have to make it inclusive.

The learning institutions were required to ensure that they create a diverse learning environment with equal representation of each race (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Employing more African American scholars would help in changing the current culture which tend to support and favor more whites than people of color (Evans, 2007). Research done by Rennison and Welchans (2000) showed that faculty of African Americans within a university operated well in a communal culture as compared to mainstream academia’s models of personal achievement. As most higher learning institutions shifted from teaching-learning to business-oriented model, it became difficult

for African Americans to access quality education due to low incomes (Rennison & Welchans, 2000).

The O'Neal and Beckman (2017) study noted that racism in America today is not as high as compared to the colonial years. Therefore, it is only people's ignorance of not wanting to help African Americans to achieve high education levels. The way African American women are being left behind in all development sectors, it is mainly the government's failure to act (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). The general assistance according to O'Neal and Beckman (2017) is by working closely with faculty of color to make basic things such as education and employment easy to access. O'Neal & Beckman (2017) asserted that working closely with this faculty will help people to understand the daily struggles such as domestic violence that African American women go through in their lives.

Association Between Spousal Education Achievement and Domestic Violence

Domestic violence against women is a serious violation of human rights and a key global health issue that affects the sexual, physical and mental being of women (Abuya, Onsomu, Moore & Piper, 2012). In their study Abuya et al. (2012) found that violence against women can be connected to their poor health status. The authors also found that women had high chances of being abused by their partners than any other perpetrator. Domestic violence occurs in different countries and can occur in any family regardless of their social status, religion, or culture. The education gap that exists between spouses resulted in domestic abuse (Abuya et al., 2012). In African American community, a husband who has a higher education level is less violent towards their partners (Abuya et

al., 2012). Laubscher (2005), states in Bangladesh, husbands who had education level of beyond tenth grade were also less violent to their families. Abuya et al. (2012) found that women who were 4 times below their partner's education level were more likely to experience domestic abuse. In general, Abuya et al. (2012) associated high education level among the men with low rates of intimate partner violence. Therefore, a less educated husband is a risk factor for domestic violence. Findings from the Abuya et al. (2012), study notes that improving education was an important intervention in reducing domestic violence against African American women.

How Can Education Lead to Positive Impact in Community

Domestic abuse is an epidemic that happens everywhere regardless of race, gender, class, and religion (Tower, 2003), However, the rates of domestic violence in African American women according to the study done by Tower (2003) is very alarming. For many years, researchers have learnt more about domestic violence and the factors that increase people's chances of experiencing it (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). Identifying the risk factors is very helpful in designing measures to prevent domestic violence especially in the African American community (Tower, 2003). One risk factor that Tower (2003) associated with domestic abuse is gender. African American women were more likely to be victims of domestic violence as compared to men. However, the researcher argued that men are not ruled out of domestic violence but only showed that women had high chances. The study also listed educational gaps between spouses in African American community as another risk factor. Discrepancies in education, professional occupation, social class, and income played a huge role in domestic violence (Campbell

et al., 2002). Education is one of the biggest risk factors of domestic violence in African American community (Campbell et al., 2002). Tower (2003) suggested that education as a risk factor included discrepancies in education level, lack or poor education for the offender and lack of education for the victim. However, despite being the cause of domestic violence, Tower argued that education could also be used as a protective factor for African American women.

Lack of education in African American community is a driving factor for domestic abuse within families (Stinson & Robinson, 2006). African American women with low education experienced more domestic violence as per the findings of Tower (2003). Women who were below college level in terms of education had high chances of being domestically abused as compared to those who held a college degree. The study also indicated that men who had low education levels as compared to their partners were more likely to be violent and abusive in the relationship. Tower (2003) indicated that most offenders in African American community were males due to low education levels of their partners. However, Tower (2003) explained that men with low education levels felt threatened with women's success hence relieved their frustrations and anger through violence. Communication skills of an individual improve as a person increases their education level (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). Therefore, African American men with low education level resorted to violence due to their inability to communicate properly with their partners (Babu & Kar, 2010).

Lack of education is a key factor in domestic violence (Babu & Kar, 2010). The difference in education levels of the two partners can exist on various levels (Tower,

2003). Most existing studies did not specify the extent of the gap that can cause violence. The studies only stated that as long as the gap exists, there was an abuse (O'Neal & Beckman (2017). The education gap can involve one partner having a college degree while the other having less than a high school education (O'Neal & Beckman (2017).

In most American communities, the education level of a person reflects their ability and status in the society. Therefore, a person may view the academic status of their partners as a future threat (Babu & Kar, 2010; Tower, 2003). The Tower (2003) found that abusers always felt threatened with educational discrepancies hence resorted to physical and psychological violence to control their relationships.

In African American community, women were blocked from pursuing higher education achievements as men felt that their superiority was being threatened (Babu & Kar, 2010). Despite education being a risk factor in domestic violence, Tower (2003) argued that it can be used as a preventive measure. The level of education that an individual achieves determines the amount of income, social status and most importantly how they behave and approach important issues in life (Babu & Kar, 2010). In African American community, women have been subjected to low paying jobs and unemployment due to their low education levels. This has increased their dependence on other people since they are unable to adequately provide for themselves and their children (Fox et al., 2012,2014). The lack of education and high paying source of income has given African America men an upper hand in domestic violence. Fox et al. (2014) stated that majority of the women who were oppressed domestically chose to stay in the abusive relationships due to fear of being ridiculed by the society. They also feared that without a

steady income, they would not survive on their own (Babu & Kar, 2010; Fox et al., 2014). Domestic violence victims have always been isolated from their families and close friends so that their dependence on the abusers could be increased (Babu & Kar, 2010). For African American women, education levels were low hence they could not secure a formal employment. This further explained why they could not leave abusive relationships (Fox et al., 2014). Stinson and Robinson (2006) listed domestic violence as one of the barriers that barred African American women from accessing employment and education.

Stinson and Robinson (2006) also stipulated that individual learnt new things through education. College education provided people with not only career knowledge but also general knowledge on what was acceptable in society and what was not (Babu & Kar, 2010). The status of a person in society was determined by their income level, education level and professional status (Tower, 2003). Going through a college education, a person was presented with an opportunity to meet and interact with new individuals hence learn different perspectives on life (Tower, 2003). In their study, Gracia, and Herrero (2006) stated that education gave people the ability to rationalize their day-to-day activities thus allowing them to make better decisions. Individuals with high education level had the ability to communicate effectively (Gracia & Herrero, 2006). Tower (2003) argued that good communication was a protective factor against domestic violence.

Education and Power Differences Between Partners

The Bonnes (2016) argues, that education is power. Therefore, the higher the education level that one achieves, the more powerful they become. Education differences and power imbalance between partners in a relationship are the risk factors for domestic violence (Bonnes, 2016). Power imbalance includes one partner making more money or being in a higher social class than the other.

In some communities such as African American, violence against less powerful individuals have been normalized (Stinson & Robinson, 2006). Choi and Ting (2008) examined how power imbalance could result in a domestic violence in South Africa. They identified four different explanations of how power imbalance resulted in violence between partners: submission, dependence, transgression and compensation. Choi and Ting (2008) argued that when a woman was economically dependent on their husbands, they would experience more violence in the relationship.

Choi and Ting (2008) determined power differences using income, education, occupation and making of decisions within the relationship. The dependence hypothesis stated that when men in the African American community brought more resources into the relationship, had high education level, earned high salaries, and made decisions on their own, they were likely to abuse their partners. The men feel that their wives are nothing without them and therefore must be submissive and are not allowed to question any decisions made (Choi & Ting, 2008). Some studies in African countries such as Kenya and Egypt indicated that women with poor education and low salaries reported high number of domestic abuse cases (Fox et al., 2014). Women feared leaving abusive

relationships as they had fewer resources to take care of themselves (Fox et al., 2014). Choi and Ting (2008) suggested that if education level of a woman was increased, they will acquire high paying jobs and thus increase the economic independence. This would reduce the rate of abuse directed to vulnerable women, especially in African American community (Choi & Ting, 2008).

Education makes a difference, and the Takahashi and Lee (2018) article surveyed the Hmong college, using students to examine their experience, awareness, and appropriate response to domestic violence. This study reported that 32.8% of the Hmong college women had some violence from their romantic partners, and two third of Hmong college men and women were aware of violence in their community. The recommendation from the study is for the results to formulate research-based cultural competence education for providers in the criminal justice system and facilitate discussions on youth perceptions.

As domestic violence becomes a global problem, researchers continue to study ways to curb this issue. A study conducted by Schrag and Edmond (2018) states the result of a study done among community students and Community College students are more likely to be women, people of color, working, parenting, and parenting, and first-generation college students. The study notes that Over 27% of participants reported IPV in the past year, while 25% reported sexual assault and 34% reported other uncomfortable sexual experiences in their lifetime. Nearly 20% of assaults and 34% reported other uncomfortable sexual experiences in their lifetime. Domestic violence significantly contributes to the global burden of ill health in terms of female morbidity leading to

psychological trauma and depression, injuries, sexually transmitted diseases, suicide, and murder (Bhattacharya, Yasmin, Bhattacharya, Baur, Madhwani (2020).

Intimate partner violence (IPV), sometimes called domestic violence (DV), continues to be a significant global public health issue. The World Health Organization defines IPV as any behavior by an intimate or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors (Mittal, Paden, McCormick, Palit, Trabold, Spencer, 2023).

Children are also victims of domestic violence. A study done by Harper, Ogbonnaya, and McCullough (2018), analyses report that when mothers who did not report IPV physical victimization compared with mothers who reported IPV physical victimization, the mothers who did not report the abuse were more likely to have toddlers with higher levels of socioemotional and behavioral problems. Abused children experience can result in emotional trauma, physical and psychological barriers to learning, and disruptive behavior in school, while the underlying causes of these problems remain hidden (Lloyd, 2018).

Usually, men are known to be the offenders of domestic violence. Alsawalqa (2020) states that men perpetrate abuse more frequently than women, and women face higher rates of repeated severe abuse, such as murder, assault, or rape. The prevalence of domestic abuse perpetrated by women is difficult to ignore (Joseph-Edwards & Wallace, 2020) and is related to abuse, control, power, escaping dangerous situations, and getting help (Walby & Towers, 2018).

Submissive hypothesis as indicated by Choi and Ting (2008) suggested that if a woman was too submissive to their partners, they were more likely to receive domestic abuse. Submission was worst in African American community where women were required by the society to be submissive to their husbands. Thomas (2000) argued that even women who had more resources and power than their husbands were likely to be abused.

Anderson (2010) found that in African American community, women who had more money and education than their partners were at a higher risk of experiencing domestic violence. When men have low education level and income as compared to their female partners, they prove their masculinity through violence. Choi and Ting (2008) labeled this as compensation hypothesis during their study as men seek to compensate their inability to fulfill their roles with violence. Another explanation that Choi and Ting (2008) used was transgression hypothesis. The researchers argued that when a woman had a high education level and brought more resources in the relationship than the man, they became assertive with no respect to their partners. Increased assertiveness and struggle for superiority in the relationship made men feel threatened and thus become violent to make the women submissive (Anderson, 2010; Thomas, 2000).

Coercive Controlling Violence

Coercive Controlling Violence (CCV) is an emotional intimidation pattern which individuals use to cause physical and mental harm to their intimate partners (Kelly & Johnson, 2018). CCV is the pattern of manipulation and control from a person to their partners. In African American community, men control the actions and activities of the

women (Kelly & Johnson, 2018). A coercive partner monitors their victims all the time and when they violate their rules, they take punitive actions Kelly & Johnson, 2018).

The Kelly and Johnson (2018) states that power and control wheel includes different forms of violence such as isolation, intimidation, blaming, minimizing, emotional abuse, asserting male privilege, coercion, denying resources and economic abuse. Ali, Dhingra and McGarry (2016), notes that an individual can use one or combination of these violence tactics to keep their partners under their control. Ali et al. (2016) compared CCV to intimate terrorism, where partners lack the freedom to express their thoughts. Ali et al. (2016) found that CCV is a severe form of domestic violence that occurs regularly. Ali et al. further noted that, CVV is mainly perpetrated by men. The study found that 97% of the CVV cases reported in Pittsburgh were male perpetrated. CVV male perpetration was also supported by Gulliver and Fanslow (2016). Few studies exist regarding women's use of CVV. However, some studies have associated women with perpetrators of this type of domestic violence (Cook & Nash, 2017).

Violent resistance, as referred to by Kelly and Johnson (2018), is retaliation violence that victims use to stop their coercive partners from abusing them. Cook and Nash (2017) referred to this type of violence as "female resistance." Feminist scholars consider any violence perpetrated by women toward men as a form of female resistance (Cook & Nash, 2017). However, Kelly and Johnson (2018) acknowledged that women could abuse their intimate partners. Both men and women may resort to violence to stop the abuse or stand up for themselves.

Female resistance is always short-lived, and do not encounter law enforcement. For most women, as Cook and Nash (2017) argued, self-protection is an automatic process. It always occurs immediately after their intimate partners begin to control and abuse them coercively. In many romantic relationships, women find their self-protection reaction ineffective and may worsen the situation (Kelly & Johnson, 2018). O'Neal and Beckman (2017) found that women who tried to defend themselves during domestic violence were more likely to get injured than those who did not.

What Role Low Education Plays in the African American Community

O'Neal and Beckman (2017) reminded us that in African American communities, education has focused on how blacks can access quality education programs and other essential resources to achieve equality. Since the 1960s, most learning institutions across the United States have continued to be segregated and unequal in standards (National Women's Law Center, 2016). Therefore, African American men and women continue to live in poverty. Segregated schools in areas such as Michigan and Maryland have a high population of black students but lack enough funding for better learning programs (O'Neal & Beckman, 2017).

The data from the National Women's Law Center (2016), these schools do not have well-developed curricula, highly trained teachers, and extracurricular activities that can give African American students opportunities to learn about real-life situations. African American students have few support programs, falling short of standards (Kelly & Johnson, 2018).

O'Neal and Beckman (2017) highlighted that many efforts had been focused on African American men, thus leaving women becoming less and less in the current education system in the country. Data from the US Department of Education (2015) showed that the school dropout rate among African American females was 7%. Many dropout cases cited a lack of support as the primary cause (Kelly & Johnson, 2018). The system gives black women reduced opportunities to better their current situations, thus leaving them vulnerable. However, O'Neal and Beckman (2017) explain that while the education system continues to fail African American women, it still presents the only way to learn rules and ways of becoming successful in the men-dominant African American culture.

Negative racial experiences in schools are damaging the education achievements of African American women (Gracia &Herrero, 2006). People of color are more vulnerable to racial discrimination. African American youths report many cases of racial abuse within the learning environment, thus making it difficult for them to concentrate. This discrimination has been one of the leading reasons why most black females drop out of school (Gracia &Herrero, 2006). In African American schools, female students must be quiet and obedient to be considered feminine and ladylike (Gracia &Herrero, 2006). In schools and homes, black women are required to be submissive, and any attempt to change this cultural norm may result in violence.

Public studies indicate that only about half of domestic and intimate partner violence reports to law enforcement (Morgan, R. E., Oudekerk, BA, 2019). Along with socioeconomic factors, such as education and income, there may be many reasons for

individuals not reporting domestic violence to law enforcement, including fear or mistrust of law enforcement; fear of getting the offender involved in the criminal justice system; the belief that law enforcement will or could not help; and, belief the offense was a personal issue or too insignificant to report (Holiday et al., 2020; Cheng & Lo, 2019).

Mental and Physical Health and Intimate Partner Violence

Several researchers have established a relationship between intimate partner violence and individuals' physical and mental health (Dillon, Hussain, Loxton & Rahman, 2017; Abuya et al., 2012; Fox et al., 2014). Chepuka et al. (2014) studied the mental and physical impact of IPV in Malawi. The researchers conducted focus group discussions and in-depth interviews in three different regions. All participants who participated in the research mentioned mental health as an impact of IPV. The consequences included pressure from families and friends to resolve the conflicts and the fear of being wrongly judged (Chepuka et al., 2014). The participants, essentially victims of IPV, indicated that they were unprepared to handle the mental and psychological consequences of domestic violence. Chepuka et al. (2014) noted that restructuring the country's healthcare system is essential for preventing IPV and improving mental health.

In developing countries such as Malawi, responses to domestic violence are not well documented in the general healthcare system. In the healthcare system of Malawi, IPV is classified as a communicable disease, including excessive consumption of alcohol and trauma (Chepuka et al., 2014). The country aims at developing 'one-stop centers' which will be used in providing comprehensive care for victims of IPV. The study conducted in three districts of Lilongwe, Mangochi, and Blantyre identified one major

problem Malawi is experiencing: gender inequality. Chepuka et al. (2014), more than 65% of Blantyre's population lives in unplanned poor settlements. The district has poor infrastructure and social services. Blantyre has a population growth rate of 3.3%, with most of its population below the age of 25 (Chepuka et al., 2014). Data used in this study was collected both from IPV victims and policymakers in the three districts. A total of three small group discussions were held, and 28 focus groups were used. The researcher also interviewed 47 people (Chepuka et al., 2014).

Chepuka et al. (2014) found that IPV survivors viewed police and healthcare facilities as the primary sources of help during domestic violence. Victims also agreed to see help from community organizations working against IPV. The respondents indicated that the police and authority prioritized mediating the partners (Chepuka et al., 2014).

Healthcare providers and policymakers agreed that they limit their responses to domestic violence whenever victims seek help (Chepuka et al., 2014). The health workers revealed that they focused on treating the physical health of the victims and tried as much as possible to avoid talking about their mental health status. Chepuka et al. (2014) note a lack of psychological support for victims of IPV in developing healthcare systems. Participants described stress, anxiety, low esteem, and depression as the negative consequences of domestic violence (Chepuka et al., 2014). They mentioned alcohol as a trigger for IPV (Chepuka et al., 2014). However, Chepuka et al. (2014) argued that victims also turned to alcohol to help them forget the difficult times they were going through.

Most research studies related to intimate partner violence are constructed on women of low socioeconomic status and the interventions established by and for White women. Up-to-date primary prevention approaches emphasize violence that is enacted by strangers rather than their primary wrongdoers. Chepuka et al. (2014) recommend developing and rigorously evaluating prevention strategies that should incorporate the visions of African American women and attention to primary prevention.

The deadly impact of intimate partner violence (IPV) is prevalent along with several health-related dimensions, including acute injuries, somatic health complaints, diminished psychological functioning, and decrements in other social role domains, including occupational, interpersonal, and parental functioning (Lee, Thompson & Mechanic, 2002). It is explicit so that some preventative measures and interventions can be part of the healing process. In the US, there are services for the victims of domestic violence. The above article notes shelters for women and their children's legal measures such as orders of protection and court interventions, the establishment of specialized family violence police teams using IPV policing strategies, advocacy services, psychological and social service counseling, and others.

Evaluations of these services and their effectiveness are emerging in the literature. Findings suggest that different IPV types require different types of services. Short-term counseling services are often desired and seem to provide at least some benefit, and post-shelter services may help and assist women who do not wish to return to abusive relationships.

Muhammad-Farooq et al. (2017) cited that many cases of domestic violence go unreported due to personal reasons such as economic dependency, embarrassment, and fear of retaliation and societal reasons such as family privacy. Failure to report will mean the victims won't have psychological or physical help (Bosick et al., 2012).

Health Care's Role in Domestic Violence is just as vital as any other problem. Some participants expressed concerns about the health system's role in domestic violence. Few domestic violence victims also give education on domestic violence, as per Ozer and Fidrmuc (2017). Most studies, such as the Ozer and Fidrmuc, state that some women, mostly from rural communities, reported feeling ashamed, surprised, and shocked when asked about domestic violence. In contrast, others considered the problem personal and questioned interference in private affairs. The shame leaves these women not wanting to seek treatment. Female education is vital in stopping domestic violence, for the female gender has been recognized as inferior to males. Still, it is not the only factor that prevents this violence, as indicated in the literature. It is a collective effort, and one of the steps in addressing this issue is the healthcare role. Even though female education does away with such a notion, the female ends up not being subject to any form of domestic violence. Still, when healthcare providers are involved, this can help prevent further abuse by the abuser. Few domestic violence victims also give education on domestic violence, as per Ozer and Fidrmuc (2017).

Black women have a strong sense of cultural affinity and loyalty to the community. Race solidifies many to remain silent, so their stories are not told or taken seriously. Most African American women feel indebted to put racial issues ahead of sex-

based (Gordon, 2019). One of the significantly related impairments is our unwillingness to trust the police or the justice system. The author further states that Black people are uncomfortable with the police's attitude toward them. The article also said that Black women experience domestic violence at significantly higher rates than white women; they tend to remain silent out of fear of the police force and a sense of duty to their race and culture. Subsequently, their first response is not to report. Instead, they decide to protect their men and their community. They also feel like they need to be healthy, and asking for help would be a sign of weakness. The idea of strong Black women is rewarded and can even be a source of resilience. Gordon (2019) noted one of the victims, saying that it can also leave us feeling like we have no one to help.

A phenomenological approach suits this study because the researcher seeks to understand different individuals' feelings, opinions, and experiences regarding domestic violence in African American communities. The Jones (2014) newspaper article describes domestic violence as a family secret in the Black community. She also stated that the reasons Black women suffer disproportionately from abuse are complex. Discrimination and sexism are two of the principal difficulties Black women in America face, but many Black women and men believe racism is a higher issue than sexism. The article added that black women tend to feel indebted to putting racial issues ahead of sex-based issues. Alesina et al. (2015) that violence committed by men against their female partners is one of the most common yet puzzling forms of violent behavior. Besides being a fundamental violation of women's human rights, domestic violence is becoming a significant public health problem, spawning high economic and social costs. As the

methodology refers to the overarching strategy and research project, this study therefore, phenomenology approach is best suited for this study because it exposes the study assumptions, highlights the importance of understanding domestic violence against women, factors that influence domestic violence, and the measures that the government can undertake to reduce the problem among African Americans.

The Heal (2019) study focuses on law enforcement and the abuse of women victims who do not trust the justice system. Even though my reflection is on African American women, this study was beneficiary to my research because it gives an inside look at the behavior of law enforcement officers that are abusers and how their profession and partners protected them.

This establishes why these victims are sometimes silent and why they think reporting their abuse to the police is useless. This article tells how men and women who experience domestic abuse speak of the fear of reporting or of not being believed, of what their abuser might do, and of being judged. Just 28% of women using community-based domestic abuse services and 44% of those refugees had reported their experiences to the police when Women's Aid performed a survey in 2017.

The research design for this study was a qualitative study with 20 female African American participants. There was a need to raise awareness within the Black communities to educate individuals to adhere to accountability and non-impunity. This can help restore ethical values in society, reducing domestic violence. Effective authority responses are essential in ending gender-based violence. The current study shows a positive correlation between recurring domestic violence and effective measures.

The Morris, Mrug, & Windle (2015) article states that adolescents face a severe problem: dating violence. The study further noted that 10% of high school students were victims of physical dating violence in 2014. The 10th grader also reported that 24% were victims of verbal dating abuse. The study notes that dating violence has been linked with prior exposure to violence in the family, including harsh parenting and inter-parental conflict. However, the evolving instruments through which family violence leads to dating violence are poorly understood. Family violence likely serves as a distal risk factor for later adolescent dating violence, with its effects facilitated by more proximal individual and peer factors. For instance, predictors of dating violence include individual attitudes toward dating violence and deviant peer affiliations. The implications of these women's narratives for criminal justice responses to domestic violence are discussed. The study linked the future relationship between pre-adolescent reports of harsh discipline and adolescent dating violence perpetration, consistent with previous longitudinal research and the Social Learning Theory (Bandura 1977).

Goodrum, Rosa, Self-Brown, Veauuse-Brown, and Armistead's (2019) article speaks on the high violence victimization rate, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse in childhood and intimate partner violence in adulthood. According to some US-based research, Black South African women and girls face high rates of violence, and violence victimization predicts parenting difficulties. Still, this relationship has not been examined in a South African context. Goodrum et al.; study reviewed a sample of 99 Black South African female caregivers for child abuse, IPV, and cumulative trauma rates. The study noted the associations between the caregiver's victimization history and current

parenting quality. Includes parent-child relationship quality & parental involvement with the child, and the article reports that women killed by intimate partners in South Africa are six times the worldwide average, and rates of rape of women and girls are also high in this country.

A long history of gender- and race-based discrimination underpins the unacceptably high rates of victimization experienced by Black South African females. Interpersonal violence victimization is linked with subsequent adverse outcomes, including relationship and family difficulties. Among these negative consequences may be impairments in parenting, which impacts children's well-being. Despite the potential long-term effects of victimization history on female caregivers and their families, little is known about whether and how Black South African women's past victimization experiences predict their parenting quality. Poverty, economic inequality, unemployment, migrant labor, housing overcrowding, and common misconceptions about sexual violence are all factors that further exacerbate the risk of violent victimization among women and girls. Many women with a history of child maltreatment are later victimized in their intimate relationships.

The TePoel, Saftlas, Wallis, Harland, & Peek-Asa (2018) article gives insight into women seeking an induced abortion. The report notes that these women with this procedure have experienced high rates of intimate partner violence. However, little is known about their help-seeking behaviors. The data for this study were collected from patients attending a large Midwestern clinic who screened positive for intimate partner violence. The data were analyzed to determine how help-seeking women differed from

women not seeking help and those not disclosing their help-seeking behavior. The study research measured current and planned resource use and evaluated the self-perceived helpfulness of resources. The conclusions were severe battering, physical and sexual abuse, frequent sexual abuse, increased relationship length, and employment were positively associated with help-seeking. Approximately half of the women who screened positive for abuse in the past year had already pursued or planned to seek help, signifying this population is receptive to intervention.

One emerging trend in the context of domestic violence is the use of technology to facilitate stalking and other forms of abuse. The Woodlock (2017). the study surveys 152 domestic violence advocates, and 46 victims, showing that technology, including phones, tablets, computers, and social networking websites, is commonly used in intimate partner stalking. The perpetrator's omnipresence uses this form of technology and to isolate, punish, and humiliate domestic violence victims. Offenders also threatened to share sexualized content online to humiliate victims. The study states that technology-facilitated stalking needs to be treated as a serious offense, and effective practice, policy, and legal responses must be developed.

The Semahegn and Mengistie (2015) article, acknowledged that violence against women is a global recognized problem and it's been classified as a human right abuse and a public health problem that is associated with physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health. The age group studied were 15-49 years. The study indicates that a significant number of women experienced violence during their pregnancy. The study link alcohol consumption with domestic violence. The study listed chat chewing, family

history of violence, occupation, religion, educational status, residence, and decision-making power as all factors that contribute to the domestic violence women experienced in Ethiopia.

The Macy, Martin, Nwabuzor Ogbonnaya & Rizo (2018) study investigated the perspectives of 80 program directors of domestic violence and sexual assault agencies regarding whether gathering specific information during intake helps determine survivors' needs for five service areas such as legal advocacy, medical advocacy, support group, counseling, and shelter. We explore whether directors' opinions of information-type usefulness differ by type of service agency (single- or dual-focus). Findings show directors perceive the information most helpful to early service provision includes survivors' goals, experiences of violence and trauma, and health status. MANOVA results show no significant differences among directors from single- or dual-focus agencies.

The Yohannes, Abebe, Kisi, Demeke, Yimer, Feyiso, & Ayano (2019) article describes domestic violence as a common global health problem, which is hidden and is an ignored form of violence against pregnant women. It also states that this violence is high in low and middle-income countries. This study was limited to pregnant women in Ethiopia. This study aimed to measure the degree and predictors of domestic violence among pregnant women in southeast Oromia, Ethiopia.

The Favaretto, Freitas, Benetti & Crempien (2020) article mentioned that intimate partner violence against women is one of the most common forms of violence. This study investigated the operationalized psychodynamic diagnosis of women victims of domestic violence, exploring the severity and experience of violence, structural functions,

dysfunctional interpersonal patterns, and intrapsychic conflicts. The study concluded that there were some patterns in these abused women's behaviors. Most stay in the relationship, leaving themselves vulnerable; they perceive the partner as controlling, aggressive, offensive, and fear abandonment. These women give in to their abuser's desire by being submissive. The main emotional struggle was the need for care versus self-sufficiency.

The Duran and Eraslan study were to determine women's exposure to domestic violence, its affecting factors, and coping methods. The study concluded that beating ranked first among physical violence behavior reported by 83(14.2%) subjects. Name-calling and yelling ranked first among verbal violence behavior reported by 118 (20.1%). Women at a certain distance ranked first among emotional violence behavior, reported by 95(16.2%). Not purchasing the fundamental needs of the home ranked first among the economic violence behavior, reported by 38(6.5%). Finally, 14(2.4%) said being physically forced to engage in a sexual act, which ranked first among sexual violence behavior. Among the women abused, 114 (66.7%) women said the violence occurred because of the instant anger of their partners, and 69 (44.2%) said they did not apply to any official institution for help. The study's conclusion indicates that women preferred to remain silent about domestic violence. The study noted that there is a need to end domestic violence.

Gharacheh, Azadi, Mohammadi, Montazeri, and Khalajinia (2015) note that domestic pregnancy-related violence is a significant health issue and has psychological and physical risks for these victims. The study was a cross-sectional study, and it was

conducted on 341 postnatal women who were referred to urban health care centers in Gachsaran, Islamic Republic of Iran. Domestic violence was assessed using a questionnaire modified from the Abuse Assessment Screen (AAS), and the Iranian version of the Short Form-36 questionnaire was used to evaluate women's HRQoL. The findings from the study showed 44.5% of women reported experiencing domestic violence during pregnancy. All the SF-36 subscales, including physical and mental health dimensions, scored lower in abused women than in non-abused women. Differences between the groups in the six subscales of SF-36, except for 'physical functioning' and 'bodily pain,' were statistically significant ($P < .05$). These results suggest that domestic violence during pregnancy is associated with poor HRQoL in abused women.

The Valandra, Murphy-Erby, Higgins, and Brown (2019) study, explores domestic violence from diverse African American viewpoints, experiences, and socio-demographic backgrounds within rural African American communities. The researcher used Community-based participatory action research methods to investigate domestic violence perceptions of African Americans with heterogeneous environments and experiences of violence. Three major themes emerged, during the study, including a heightened awareness of race, gender, and class differences. Another set includes the imbalanced and mixed messages from media, and the last were multi-systemic dynamics influencing abusive behavior and relationships. The result from the study indicates that participants' perspectives and experiences with domestic violence reflect a complex interrelated gamut of societal, community, familial, and individual dynamics. Current healthcare practice policies recommend screening for Intimate Partner Violence,

including reproductive coercion RC. These practices are recommended for an extension to women receiving services in community-based settings, consequently strengthening the connection to referral for supplementary mental health treatment and victim service support. Alexander, Willie, McDonald-Mosley, Campbell, Miller, & Decker (2019) argued that in the environment of the social burdens affecting young Black women's health, a comprehensive approach integrates mental health and reproductive/sexual health care is essential for women reporting RC experiences. This study examined the associations of reproductive coercion (RC) with the mental health of Black adolescent and young adult women. The findings from the study propose that RC. and IPV independently contribute to mental health morbidities among this population of women.

The Basile, Smith, Fowler, Walters, & Hamburger (2016) study used data from a community sample of African American women, examining the association between current health and lifetime experiences of sexual violence. In-person interviews were completed in 2010. Among interviewees, 53.7% of women reported rape victimization, and 44.8% reported sexual coercion in their lifetime. The result of the study shows that Among victims whose first unwanted sexual experience was rape or sexual coercion, perpetrators were mostly acquaintances and intimate partners, and over one-third were injured and needed services. More attention is required on the health needs of African American women and their association with victimization status. The study also recommends that more attention is required on the health needs of African American women and their association with victimization status.

Domestic violence during pregnancy is an essential social & health issue in all societies. Domestic violence is often under-reported in the Muslim world and particularly in underdeveloped countries. Habib, Abbasi, Khan, Danish, & Nazir (2018) emphasize the need of the hour to encourage reporting of such events & implementation of research-based policies for the prevention of women abuse & support of the victims of domestic violence (DV). This study aimed to highlight this neglected social problem of our society & to identify at-risk populations.

This cross-sectional study was conducted at Ayub Teaching Hospital & Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Teaching Hospital, Abbottabad (January 2014 to December, 2016). Pregnant women were inquired regarding a history of abuse by their husbands, and sociodemographic characteristics were noted in a Performa to analyze the risk factors for domestic violence. The overall prevalence was found to be 35%. Of 1000 pregnant women, 270 (27%) suffered from simple violence, and 60 (6%) were victims of grievous assault. Violence among pregnant women is found to be more prevalent among residents of urban areas, women of older age being uneducated & belonging to poor socioeconomic status. Domestic violence during pregnancy is a common & often neglected psychosocial health problem. A high-risk population needs to be identified so that preventive strategies can be planned & implemented.

The Mohhamadian, Mohtashami, Rohani, & Jamshidi (2018) article notes that Domestic violence is the third sociopathology after addiction and child abuse in Iran. Fifty-six percent of Iranian women aged 17-32 are exposed to the highest domestic violence. Objective: This study aimed to design and psychoanalyze a comprehensive

questionnaire on coping with domestic violence against women in Iranian society. This study was conducted on a random sample of women exposed to domestic violence and referred to the health and care center of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, and Forensic Medical Centers in Urmia city (Iran), in 2017. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed among the participants. One hundred sixty-eight questionnaires were returned to the researchers for data analysis. Eight of those were excluded from the analysis because of incompleteness. Finally, exploratory factor analysis was performed. After reviewing the literature, a questionnaire with 32 items was developed. The content validity ratio (0.95) and content validity index (0.97) were obtained. The results of exploratory factor analysis indicated that the questionnaire explained 69.34% of the data variance. Cronbach's alpha coefficient and test-retest methods were used to determine the reliability and the obtained value, which were 0.82 and 0.81, respectively. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire with 32 items were confirmed by the Cronbach method. The tool can be utilized to measure how women cope with domestic violence.

Domestic violence is recognized as a public health problem with a high prevalence in the general population. Healthcare professionals play an essential role in identifying and treating domestic violence. Hence, researching factors that facilitate or inhibit appropriate actions by healthcare professionals is of the utmost importance. The objective of the Zorjan, Smrke & Lilijana (2017) study was to examine the relationship between healthcare professionals' attitudes toward the acceptability of domestic violence and their responses when dealing with victims of domestic violence. The sample

comprised 322 healthcare professionals (physicians, dentists, nursing staff, and other healthcare workers; 85.2% female) who completed a questionnaire assessing their attitudes towards domestic violence, experience, behavior, and perceived barriers in recognizing and treating domestic violence in the healthcare sector. The study was cross-sectional and used availability sampling.

The results showed no significant differences in domestic violence acceptability attitudes when comparing groups of healthcare professionals who reported low or high frequency of domestic violence case encounters. Furthermore, we found that domestic violence acceptability attitudes were negatively associated with action taken when the frequency of meetings with domestic violence cases was high and medium. However, the attitudes were not associated with action taken when the frequency of encounters with domestic violence cases was low. The results highlight the critical role of mindsets in the action taking of healthcare professionals when it comes to domestic violence. This indicates the need for educational interventions targeting healthcare professionals' attitudes toward domestic violence.

Borras-Guevara, M. L., Batres, C., & Perrett, D. I. (2017) note that potential protection from violence has been suggested to explain women's preferences for more masculine partners. However, previous studies have not considered that violence may be multi-modal and come from different sources. Therefore, a test was done for the effect of other fears of violence (i.e., vulnerability to public crime, the likelihood of within-partnership violence) on the masculinity preferences of women from Colombia, a country known for its high rates of violence. Eighty-three adult heterosexual women answered a

survey that included questions about health (e.g., frequency of illnesses during the last year and childhood), access to media (e.g., time spent watching television, frequency of internet use), education (i.e., the highest level achieved), and violence perceptions. Participants' masculinity preferences for Salvadoran, European, and Colombian male faces were recorded by the Borrás-Guevara study.

Factor analysis revealed two different factors for answering questions related to violence. One aspect is loaded mainly with inquiries related to public violence, and the second factor is related to domestic violence. We found that women with higher scores on the domestic violence factor preferred significantly less masculine Colombian male faces. Even after controlling for participant age, education, access to media (TV and internet), and health-related factors, the domestic violence factor contributed significantly to explaining masculinity preferences. The results presented here suggest that women's preferences for masculinity may be a strategy to avoid aggressive partners and that the source of violence matters in mate choice. Women who perceive higher risks of domestic violence prefer less masculine-looking partners.

Domestic violence poses a significant challenge for social workers. Low-income families are significantly more likely to have to contend with domestic violence, as poverty can act as a fueling factor in this type of conflict. The objective of the Slabbert (2017) study was to explore and describe the experiences of low-income abused women.

The aim of the Turk, Celik, Aetin, & Soydan (2017) study was to determine the experiences and views of married women about domestic violence. This research was planned as a mixed methods study with an in-depth interview and descriptive approach.

The study was conducted between November 2011 and December 2012 with 24 married women living in Ankara, Turkey. The study used two main data-collection tools: the "Personal Information Form" and the "In-depth Interview Questionnaire." Data from this study were evaluated by content analysis. A majority of the participants (83.3%) stated that they had been exposed to domestic violence committed primarily by their husbands. The actual reasons for the violence were reported to be such factors as "financial problems and lack of education and love and respect between the couples." It was determined that as the victims became more desperate, they turned to reading the Koran, praying, and smoking.

Domestic violence adversely affects the physical and mental health of individuals, families, and the entire community. Therefore, it will take a community effort to address the causes of domestic violence and to create viable solutions that will improve the health of everyone. In recent decades, significant effort and money have been spent to change social and legal responses to domestic violence and affect public perceptions.

A small body of research has examined individuals' opinions about what behaviors are considered domestic violence. Using a sample of college students, the Wagers, Wareham, & Boots (2017) study examined a modified version of a somewhat popular instrument used to measure beliefs about domestic violence, extending previous work by Carlson and Worden. Results indicated assumptions about domestic violence are multidimensional, depending on the nature of the behavior and, in part, the gender of the perpetrator. Opinions about the lawfulness of these behaviors fit the same factor structure as beliefs about domestic violence. Demographic characteristics, current relationship

status, secondhand experiences with domestic violence, and perceived prevalence of domestic violence in the community are generally unrelated to beliefs about domestic violence or the lawfulness of these behaviors. However, attributions of the blame on the victim are negatively related to domestic violence beliefs and legality.

Moreover, lawfulness is a key covariate for domestic violence beliefs. In addition, results also indicate that the gender of the perpetrator is an important variable affecting students' beliefs about sexual assault behaviors. Results from this study support the prevailing ideas behind the Battered Women's Movement that enacting policies and educational programs deeming domestic violence socially, morally, and legally wrong could shift long-standing sociocultural beliefs about men's use of violence against women. Implications of this study for research and policy specific to college students are discussed.

Research indicates that women victims of domestic violence show significant cognitive changes, emotional numbing, and avoidance of interpersonal relationships. The aim of Avdibegovic, Brkic, & Sinanovic (2017) was to analyze the dynamic profile of women victims of domestic violence and to determine the relationship between dimensions of emotions and the frequency of women's exposure to domestic violence.

The research was conducted on a sample of 169 women, 111 were victims of domestic violence, and 58 were women who did not experience domestic violence. Plutchik's Emotions Profile Index (EPI) was used to measure the emotion profile, and the Modified Inventory of Domestic Violence was used to measure experiences of different types of violence. Primary socio-demographic data were also collected. Significant

differences between women victims of domestic violence and women who did not experience domestic violence were found in a few dimensions of emotional profile.

The aim of the Drieskens, Demarest, D'Hoker, Ortiz, & Tafforeau (2017) study assesses if a Health Interview Survey (HIS) targeting the general population is appropriate for collecting valid data on domestic violence. Studying item non-response to the question on domestic violence and its association with socio-demographic and health characteristics compared with victims of domestic violence can contribute to this. Cross-sectional data from the Belgian HIS 2013 were analyzed. The question of whether the perpetrator of a violent event was a member of the respondents' household was embedded in a general topic on violence in the self-administered questionnaire. This study was limited to people aged 15+ who at least completed this topic's first question. Socio-demographic characteristics of item non-respondents and victims of domestic violence were explored, and the association with health status was assessed through ORs calculated via logistic regression. The yearly prevalence of domestic violence is 1.1%. Although the question on domestic violence yields a high level of non-response (62%), this does not hinder the further completion of the questionnaire.

When compared with victims of domestic violence, those not responding to the question of the perpetrator have better (mental) health. Compared with those not being a victim of domestic violence, victims report poorer physical and psychological health. A HIS can be an appropriate tool to assess domestic violence in the general population and its association with health. Knight & Hester (2016) note that domestic violence affects every age group and is present throughout the life span, but while the mental health

impact of domestic violence is established in working-age adults, less is known about the nature and effect of domestic violence among older adults. This review, therefore, aimed to synthesize findings on the prevalence, nature, and impact of domestic violence among older adults and its identification and management. Results suggested that, although prevalence figures are variable, the likely lifetime prevalence for women over 65 is between 20-30%.

Physical abuse is suggested to decrease with age, but rates of older adults, domestic violence is strongly associated with physical and mental health problems, and the scarce research comparing the impact of domestic violence across the age cohorts suggests that the physical health of older victims may be more severely affected than younger victims. In contrast, there is evidence that older victims may experience less psychological distress in response to domestic violence than younger victims.

Background Experience of domestic violence has negative mental health consequences for women. The association of cumulative and specific forms of domestic violence, particularly emotional violence and controlling behavior, with common mental disorders and stress has rarely been studied in pregnant women. The Frith, Ekström, & Naved (2018) study evaluates associations of specific and multiple forms of lifetime domestic violence and controlling behavior with distress and cortisol levels during pregnancy in rural Bangladeshi women. Methods and findings in this observational sub-study of larger MINI at trial, 3504 pregnant women were interviewed using a shortened Conflict Tactic Scale about their life experience of domestic violence, including physical, sexual, emotional domestic violence, and controlling behavior. All forms of domestic

violence were associated with higher levels of emotional distress. Women who experienced either emotional violence or controlling behavior had the highest levels of emotional distress.

The Jahromi, Jamali, Koshkaki & Javadpour (2016) article note that domestic violence against women is a health problem. Research on domestic violence to clarify the relationship between the different forms of violence and health outcomes is needed. This study aimed to determine the frequency and risk factors of domestic violence in women. It also assessed the association between risk factors and psychological, physical, and sexual violence against women by their intimate partners. Materials and Methods: This cross-sectional study was done on married women 16-80 years of age living in Jahrom, south of Iran, between August 2013 and December 2014. This research was implemented through questionnaires including the demographic characteristics. The form of partner violence, including emotional abuse, physical violence, and sexual violence, was assessed with a validated questionnaire.

Community involvement is another method to decrease domestic violence. Violence against women is an emerging problem worldwide and more so in India. Considering its adverse effects on women's health, assessing the community's violence burden will help plan services for the victims. To determine the prevalence of domestic violence and to identify factors associated with domestic violence among married women in the reproductive age group in rural Puducherry. This community-based cross-sectional study, by George, Nair, Premkumar, Saravanan, Chinnakali & Roy (2016), was carried out in a rural area of Puducherry, South India. Married women in the reproductive age

group were interviewed using a structured pretested questionnaire. Domestic violence was assessed using 12 questions that were used in the National Family Health Survey-3.

The Tonsing (2016). the study examines South Asian women's experience of domestic violence in Hong Kong. Despite the proliferation of literature on domestic violence, this issue remains unexplored in the discourse of domestic violence in Hong Kong. A qualitative research approach through face-to-face interviews with 14 women was employed. Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Findings from this study highlight the importance of considering the social and cultural influence on how women perceive and construct their experiences of abuse. Implications for practice and policies are highlighted.

This qualitative study by Laing (2016) explored the experiences of 22 domestic violence survivors attempting to negotiate safe post-separation parenting arrangements through the Australian family law system. Their allegations of violence put them at odds with a design that values mediated settlements and shared parenting. Skeptical responses, accusations of parental alienation, and pressure to agree to unsafe arrangements exacerbated the effects of post-separation violence. Core themes in the women's narratives of engagement with the family law system-silencing, control, and undermining the mother-child relationship-mirrored domestic violence dynamics, suggest the concept of secondary victimization as a valuable lens for understanding their experiences.

Summary and Conclusion

The literature review examined further existing research on the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women. The most important areas concerning domestic violence against African American women were showcased in the literature. The recent evidence-based literature on the topic discussed how education could be a risk factor and prevention for domestic violence in African American community. The studies included in this chapter discussed different relevant areas such as intimate partner violence, domestic violence, the impact of education on domestic abuse, domestic violence risk factors, and access to education and employment by African American women. The specific examples include the works of Choi and Ting (2008), Anderson (2010), Thomas (2000), Stinson and Robinson (2006), O'Neal and Beckman (2017), Rennison and Welchans (2000), Reed, Raj, Miller, and Silverman (2010), West (2014), Bhandari (2020), BabuandKar (2010) and Akers and Jennings (2019). Power and education differences were discussed in studies done by Anderson (2010), Bonnes (2016), and Choi and Ting (2008).

Research on the lack of access to education and other essential resources by African American community was discussed by Bent-Goodley (2001), Cook and Nash (2017), and Gracia and Herrer (2006). The literature review concluded that education could be used in the prevention of domestic violence against African American women. The next chapter will discuss the methodology implemented in addressing the gaps concerning the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

A phenomenological qualitative research design was used in this study to explore African American "lived" experiences and perspectives of domestic violence. Chapter 3 of the study discusses the research design, data collection process, data analysis, and results from the presentation. This study aimed to describe the lived experiences of African American women as it relates to domestic violence and its disproportionate impact on African American women. The qualitative open and closed-ended survey questions were used to gather the data from 20 African American women in the southern state. The direct and logical link to the research questions identified ways to allow this community and people to realize that this issue can lead to a fatal ending. Identifying and minimizing this problem is discussed, which might help this population find the resources they need.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative research design enables researchers to obtain in-depth information about participants' experiences and viewpoints on domestic violence. Qualitative research was selected as a helpful approach because of its exploratory nature. While survey research oversimplifies findings, facilitates the formulation of hypotheses, and relies on deductive reasoning, qualitative research is mainly descriptive and interpretive. One of the most popular types of research design used in the qualitative tradition is phenomenology.

The Byrne (2020) article reported that a phenomenological study's primary objective is to describe the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived familiarities of a person or a group of people about a specific occurrence. The phenomenologist goes to understand human behavior through the eyes of the participants in the study. Byrne called it "verstehen," a German word meaning the interpretative understanding of human interaction. Moustakas (1994) used the term "co-researcher" for participants because participants are included in discovering the meaning of the phenomenon alongside the researcher. My primary goal was to inform the co-researchers of their status and role. At the beginning of the study, researchers should tell the co-researchers how they fit into the research purposes and questions.

Role of the Researcher

Phenomenology is one of the popular types of research used in qualitative study. Byrne (2020) noted that a phenomenological study's primary objective is to explain the meaning, structure, and essence of a person's or group of people's lived experiences of a specific phenomenon. The phenomenologist endeavors to understand human behavior through the eyes of the participants in the study. In this research study, my role was to collect data and code the notes. It is important as a researcher to collect clear and precise data and the data using code so that no one can understand and interfere with the data. In a study, direct observation is the key as it is always needed; the observer must pay keen attention to the coding and the triangulation process. When a researcher decides to serve as a participant in their study, they must have a research team member to serve as a participant. However, a student researcher must consider their school IRB's stipulations

or regulatory process. Self-experimentation can always raise an ethical concern with the Belmont Report.

The researcher plays the role of observer-participant. This form of research is, in some ways, one of the most natural and challenging of qualitative study. Many disciplines use this form of methodology; that is why this study has adopted this methodology and all the methods that is associated with the process.

Throughout the study, my role was to oversee the process and procedure and ask the participants about their experiences through an online survey with the goal of understanding the research topic under investigation. According to Sutton and Austin (2015), the role of a qualitative researcher is to access the thoughts and feelings of the participants.

A qualitative researcher must also safeguard the data, protect the participants, and assess all risk factors before conducting the research (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I achieved these protections by gaining the approval of the research from my mentor and Walden University's IRB. Since the data collection is a process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion, it will enable one to answer a stated research question test hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes. Before the start of the project, I designed a written consent and attached it to the survey for the participants to read and understand before participating in the study (Appendix A).

With this qualitative inquiry, there were significant variations between its different paradigms and traditions, proposes to reduce power differences and encourages disclosure and authenticity between researchers and participants. This study promoted the

participants' equality in the research process, and less ultimate source of authority by the researcher. There is always some ongoing discussion of issues and concerns that constitute a review process, ensuring no unethical issues. These address more specific areas of activity associated with professional standards of practice; for the profession, that could be included in an ethical guideline.

I was mindful of misconduct, including conflicts of interest, and calls for professional accountability. Soskolne (1996) stated that guidelines among some health professions now address vulnerable and dependent groups, but these are silent on biomarkers' issues. In comparison, attention must be drawn to human rights concerns associated with detecting hyper susceptible workers, especially in democratic countries. Therefore, this study complied with all guidelines to address the issues associated with the vulnerable and dependent group, such as protecting them from harm and injury. Furthermore, some safeguards maintain the privacy of data derived from biomarker studies, and the research should develop and implement them to develop application of these new technologies. I incorporated ethical, social, and legal considerations surrounding introducing new technology to susceptible populations and individuals who may be vulnerable to environmental exposures. The data of this study was collected from participants in the metropolitan Atlanta area, and the qualitative survey questions method guided the research design.

The goal of my project was to gain first-hand knowledge from the participants, since the study is focused on African American women and their lived experience of domestic violence. Qualitative studies characteristically require a smaller sample size

than quantitative studies. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain enough data to adequately describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. The goal of qualitative researchers should be the fulfilment of saturation. Once saturation is reached, adding more participants to the study does not result in additional viewpoints or information. Other studies have given different sample sizes, but Creswell (2007) recommended five to 25 for phenomenological studies as an appropriate size to get the maximum results. The study required the participation of 20 African American women who had experienced domestic/intimate partner violence within the past 5 years. The women were selected using the purposeful sampling. Creswell observed that the purposeful sampling strategy involves the researcher selecting the participants purposively, since they understand the phenomenon.

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive psychological phenomenological design, as outlined by Giorgi (2009), was employed for this research. I used a survey questionnaire to guide the process of collecting data from participants. Screening materials in this study included a flyer for recruitment, semi-structured, closed, and open-ended questions, inclusive of demographic questions, types of abused, education, etc. to determine participants' eligibility. The use of semi-structured questions is a qualitative method used to collect data using open-ended questions that are developed in advance (Chan et al., 2013; Morse & Richards, 2002). The questions were analyzed using the descriptive phenomenological method (Giorgi, 2009) to develop a description of the phenomena. Purposeful sampling, which is often used in qualitative research, helped identify and select participants who

could provide information that related to the phenomenon of interest (S. Campbell et al., 2020; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Protection of Participants

The participants' well-being and safety was of utmost importance. Each participant was treated with respect, and no harm occurred to them. Each participant was provided the contact information of free counseling services if they became distressed during or after the survey. During the process, if the participant felt distressed, they were permitted to stop. At the end of the survey, the participants were reminded about the availability of counseling services if needed. Another form of protection was to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all data and information. The participants were made aware that any information that would identify them would be removed, and each participant was referred to using a unique alphanumeric code (Participant 1 [P01], Participant 2 [P02], etc.). The participant's data, and informed consent forms, were done online, which gave me, as the researcher, the only individual who would have access to the study data.

Data Collection

The data collection process was reviewed and approved by both Walden University's IRB and the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee was made up of one professor and the committee chair, all of whom had earned a PhDs. A conference call was held, which included all the committee members and I. Only minor editing was suggested and made. The chair of the committee provided expert review during the data collection and analysis.

I used a semi-structured survey method to collect data from participants. Semi-structured interviewing is a qualitative method used to collect data (Chan et al., 2013; Morse & Richards, 2002). The data collection instruments for this study consisted of a recruitment flyer, consent, and open and closed ended interview questions structured as a survey. I assembled questions into an interview guide developed specifically for this study. Building trust with the participants is an important factor in making participants comfortable to share their experience (Bell et al., 2016), so I took care to ensure an effective data collection process.

Participant Selection

The recruitment process for participants began once Walden University's IRB granted permission for the research to commence. The recruitment processes unfolded in the following steps:

1. Flyers containing information about the study were created and approved.
2. The research consent was approved.
3. Online survey questions and confidential processes were developed and approved.
4. The confidentiality and ethical process was created and approved by the IRB.

Setting and Sample of the Study

A researcher can ask the co-researcher about their experiences to seek answers to the research questions. Seidman (2016) suggested that it is necessary to build amity with the participant during the study. If the researcher can develop appropriate amity with each

participant, it will encourage them to share their experience about the phenomena during the investigation.

This study's setting is metropolitan Atlanta, the capital of Georgia, the second largest city of Georgia and the 36th largest city in the United States. Atlanta serves as the cultural and economic hub of Georgia, home to more than six million residents.

This study's sample size consists of 20 African American women selected purposively out of a population of 23 African American women who have experienced domestic/intimate partner violence within the last 5 years and were the first qualified to answer the survey questions. There was no co-researcher, nor was there any face-to-face interaction.

Data Analysis

This study initially planned to use the face-to-face in-depth interview process for data collection, which provides a relaxed atmosphere for the participants to converse and participate freely without interruption. The process was later changed by the IRB; the new process recommended by the IRB was to use an online survey question for the data collection purpose. Creswell (2005) stated that the data collection method in qualitative research is useful when a researcher is interested in collecting exhaustive information on participants' thoughts and behaviors or examining issues in depth. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis and codes. This approach is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and themes with data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The Merriam (2002) article indicated that thematic analysis has been proven to be a useful method for analyzing qualitative data because it provides essential skills for

analyzing data. Unlike other methods, thematic analysis emphasizes working with data, systematic and objective coding, organizing data, and searching for patterns to develop themes. I initially intended to conduct this study using face-to-face in-depth interviews for data collection, which can be useful for collecting extensive information on participants thoughts and behaviors or issues in depth. However, the process was changed by the IRB, and I conducted an online survey questionnaire to collect the data.

Research Questions

This study aimed at exploring African American women "lived" experiences and perspectives of domestic violence. There are three research questions that were used for the study:

Research Question 1: Why do African American women stay in domestic/intimate partner abusive relationships?

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of domestic/intimate partner violence on the health and wellbeing of African American women?

Research Question 3: What are some of the barriers preventing African American women from seeking professional help with respect to domestic/intimate partner violence?

Central Concept is an image of things held in mind; and an element used in developing a theory. The central concept of this study was Domestic violence, and its causes. The study did involve 20 African American women who experienced domestic/intimate partner violence, during the past five years. This study did aim to better understand through firsthand experience, truthful reporting, and questions of actual

conversations. It seeks to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings and how their purpose influences their behavior.

Methodology

Domestic violence affects every race and gender, regardless of status. But the study focused on African American women and the impact of domestic violence amongst African American Women. What can we do to decrease this violence in the Black community? The qualitative method was best suited for the research questions for this study. Qualitative research makes one understand how people experience the world.

In comparison qualitative research approaches, tend to be flexible and focus on retaining rich meaning when interpreting data. Qualitative is predominately used in the social sciences field to explore social interactions, organizations, and processes. It provides an in-depth understanding of how people understand, act, and manage their day-to-day situations in particular settings. For this study, qualitative research was the best because it was a day when these women experienced domestic violence from the hands of their abusers. It did help one understand the behavior pattern and how to help these victims.

This phenomenological qualitative research utilized the interview method to assess the impact of domestic violence amongst African American women. Twenty women aged 18 to 45 in Atlanta participated in the study. I constructed the semi-structured survey questionnaire to collect data from the lived experiences of African American women relative to the topic of domestic violence. I collected data via the survey questionnaire. Participants were given detailed information about the study design

and assurances about ethics, such as anonymity, and confidentiality, via a flyer (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, and Chadwick, 2008).

Sample Size

The population for this study was initially to be 300 African American women residing in Metropolitan Atlanta. However, the sample population should have been 15 African American, ages 18-45. During a meeting with the mentor, he recommended a sample size of 20, and a discussion with the IRB suggested having fewer than 300. During the data collection process, there were 23 participants, and the data collection was from 20 women. The setting was via an online survey collection. Purposeful sampling, also known as purposive and selective sampling, was used to select the participants. Creswell (2007) explains that the purposeful sampling strategy involves choosing the participants purposefully since they understand the phenomena. This method was helpful because, as Creswell (1988) argued, open, -ended, semi-structured phenomenological research is suited to understanding the lived experiences of participants in their natural setting, while Seidman (1988) observed that qualitative phenomenological research helps us to understand participants' point of view and their thoughts.

Purposeful sampling is a sampling technique that qualitative researchers use to recruit participants that can provide in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation. We may use a population sample for any study in qualitative research. The study's research objectives and population characteristics (such as size and diversity) determine the number of people to select. The sample size refers to the number of participants or observations included in a study, and n represents the number. The size of

a sample influences two statistical properties; the first is the precision of our estimates, and the second is the study's power to conclude. In a qualitative study, saturation is a reflection of the sample size. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or new information (Creswell, 2007).

For interview studies, Creswell (2007) suggests 5 to 20 participants. Likewise, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) indicate that the number of participants to be used in a qualitative study to minimize validity threats and provide in-depth data should be 20. Lathan (2013) suggests a sample size of 15 and 20 homogenous participants is enough for qualitative studies. Most qualitative researchers classically make sampling choices that allow them to intensely understand whatever phenomenon they are studying. Qualitative research requires options to enable a deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. I seek responses from 20 African American females who have experienced domestic/intimate partner violence within the past five years. I distributed the flyers in the North Fulton County area.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

The 20 African American women were selected for this study because they experienced domestic/intimate violence within the last five years. If you are not an African American female living in metropolitan Atlanta between the ages of 18-45, you were not eligible to be a study participant. Inclusion and exclusion methods or criteria included African American females aged 18-45 who experienced abuse within the last five years. And the listing states African American female. Concerning education, all were at least high school graduates.

The selected sample was goal-oriented, which is related to the sample design. It was an accurate representation of the study. It will be proportional, and the population will be randomly selected. The study will include many sample factors to identify a sample's characteristics in the survey. They will consist of gender, age, race, ethnicity, and victim of domestic violence. All four of these characteristics were proportional to that of the population. There were considerations of geographic location and the final sample size of 20. The flyers allowed the recruitment and participation process. The Metropolitan Atlanta area has 25 neighborhoods, and the Southeast is said to have the largest concentration of African Americans Women. The researcher focused on the Demographics of Atlanta-Race and Ethnicity by communities and distributed flyers in those areas.

I had no physical contact, mail, e-mail, or telephone calls with any participant. All communications were via an online survey, with the participant's identity protected—a small enumeration after the survey was completed (\$20.00) for their participation in the study. The recruitment process did involve several activities, including identifying eligible participants through a flyer that adequately explained the investigation to the potential participants. Recruiting an adequate sample based on the study goals and the design, obtaining informed consent, and maintaining ethical standards, were challenging but followed.

Despite the widely acknowledged fact that recruitment was a challenge, details about recruitment efforts and outcomes were made to identify, recruit, and retain eligible participants. Recruitment was successful through flyers, with all the needed information

and a barcode attached to scan, and it led the participants to the consent and the survey questions.

Data Collection Instrument/Reliability/Validity

This study's data collection consisted of in-depth semi-structured survey questions to improve the quality of information. The interviewer posted questions for participants to willingly share their experiences of thoughts on domestic/intimate partner violence. Some instruments allow the researcher to create powerful forms to help you collect the information you need for the study. The selection of tools used to collect data is a crucial step in the research process. When selecting your instruments, remember the Validity and reliability of the collected data. Comparability with data from previous investigations should be a priority during this phase. A research instrument is reliable when it can consistently generate the same results after being applied repeatedly to the same group of subjects. This concept is significant in multiple stages of the research process and is part of this study. For example, there was a quality control check with the NVivo system when I collected. Validity is to be present in an instrument, procedure, or research as a whole. When they produce results that reflect what they initially aimed to evaluate or measure, when their conclusions are correct for that sample of studied individuals, and external Validity when its effects can be widespread to other backgrounds and population territories, the data collecting instructions used for this study is the NVivo software. The software is helpful for the management and statistical analysis of social science data.

NVivo Statistics is available for Windows and Mac operating systems; quickly understand large and complex data sets with advanced statistical procedures that ensure

high accuracy and quality decision making. Delivers tables and visualizations to communicate results effectively. Classifies cases and predicts the values of target variables based on the importance of predictor variables. Enables accurate modeling of a linear and non-linear relationships,

The number and types of available statistical software packages continue to grow each year. I choose the NVivo because of its popularity in the academic and business worlds. It is the most widely used package of its type. NVivo also has a versatile package that allows many different analyses, data transformations, and output forms. Arkkelin (2014) notes that the researcher's data entry is essential and can be tedious; it is a critical first step in analyzing the research results. Therefore, you must be careful when entering your data to avoid text entry errors. This software is frequently updated and improved; with each significant revision comes a new version of that package.

Experiencing violence is within the context of multiple, complex, and challenging life issues. Domestic abuse is a daily experience, especially for African American females; they face many lives issues every day. African American women are the majority who suffered domestic abuse or violence from their partner's hands. Many victims do not seek redress for various reasons, but the primary one is cultural. African American females often believe traditional program services are based mainly on the values, beliefs, and culture of women of other cultures. They work well for the population they were created by and believe in family values. I do not see specific issues directed explicitly to this population because the tool is general. It relates to women of all ethnic groups and colors. Any group and community can use this instrument.

My study focused on the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, to capture all this. Atlanta is the capital and most populous city in Georgia. It is the 37th most populous city in the United States. It serves as the Atlanta Metropolitan area's cultural and economic center and is home to more than six million people. The consideration of Fulton is because of having the largest population of African American women. The frequency of the data collection was once a week until I met the goal. The duration of the data collection was an ongoing process, with no limitation to the time and date, because it was an online data collection.

Treatment of Data

Because this research data is precious and vital, it was managed to the highest standards throughout the lifecycle to support excellence in my research study and questions. Good data management is fundamental to all stages of the research process. The data was securely stored and maintained according to the Walden University policy. The researcher utilized the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to code and identify a common language among the research participants. NVivo has been used to analyze data from many qualitative research designs, including phenomenological studies. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) advised that researchers should have basic knowledge of the program before using this software. With this software, large amounts of data can be coded and put in transcripts quickly and managed by the researcher. It works well with various qualitative research designs and data analysis methods such as discourse analysis, grounded theory, conversation analysis, ethnography, literature reviews, phenomenology, and mixed methods (Zamawe, 2015). Working with Research Data requires concentration

from its entry to disseminating and archiving valuable results. This process aims to ensure reliable verification of results and permits new and innovative research built on existing information. I did spend time and effort collecting and organizing the research data. I was efficient and effective in saving time and reducing frustration. Because my research data was precious and essential, it was managed to the highest standards throughout the lifecycle to support excellence in my research study. This process did enable data re-use and sharing. Researchers have questioned the trustworthiness of qualitative research because we must consider the concept of validity and reliability. However, several writers have demonstrated how qualitative researchers can incorporate measures that deal with these issues.

Credibility is one aspect of the data treatment process, and ensuring credibility is one of the most critical factors in establishing trustworthiness. One of the key criteria researchers address is internal validity, in which they seek to ensure that their measures or tests are the intentions. Lincoln and Gruba (1986) note that the qualitative investigator's equivalent concept, credibility, deals with this question. Another concept in dealing with trustworthiness is triangulation. Triangulation deals with the use of different methods of data collection strategies in qualitative research. Another form of triangulation may be using a wide range of informants. A member check is another form of reaching trustworthiness. The reflection of the researcher is to record the researcher's initial impressions of each data collection session, patterns appearing to emerge in the data collected, and theories generated.

Saturation is another example. Saturation is when the sample size gives rich and thick data. Thus, in choosing a sample size for qualitative studies, the aim should be to study a few sites or individuals and collect extensive details about each study (Patton, 2002). Peer review is another critical consideration. Opportunities for scrutiny of the project by colleagues, peers, and academics should welcome, as should feedback offered to the researcher. Finally, prolonged contact means being present at the study site long enough to build trust and confidence with the participants. Merriman writes that external validity concerns the extent to which the findings of one study relate to other situations.

The audit trail is critical to this process, which allows any observer to trace the research step-by-step via the decisions and procedures described. Emphasizing the role of triangulation in promoting confirmability is to reduce the effect of investigator bias. Triangulation involves using different methods, which form the data collection strategies for qualitative research.

The trustworthiness of rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure a study's quality (Pilot and Beck, 2014). In each study, researchers should establish the protocols and procedures necessary for a survey to be considered worthy of consideration by readers. Because trustworthiness has become an essential concept in qualitative research, it allows researchers to describe the virtues of qualitative terms outside of the parameters in qualitative analysis, which is why I choose the qualitative method for this study.

Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2003) note that the principles of respect for people should guide any research and that researchers should consider the participant's

rights—the right to information, participation, and withdrawal without penalty. In this qualitative research study, the participants had the right to information, participation, and exit, free of liability at any time. The participants were informed of their rights as autonomous persons to accept or refuse to participate in the study voluntarily. This study did not use the experimental method because exploratory research investigates a problem that has not been studied or thoroughly investigated. Exploratory studies are conducted to understand the existing problem better but usually don't produce a conclusive result.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Domestic violence is a public health problem in the United States. It can be associated with physical, mental, emotional, and psychological problems for the victims. African American (AA) women experience this type of violence more than any other ethnicity or race. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to identify and report AA women's lived experiences of domestic violence. Even though research devoted to understanding domestic/intimate partner violence's consequences contains significant gaps, this problem has devastating consequences for African American women. This problem needs immediate attention. Likewise, there is limited empirical research done on the topic. Why do African Americans experience domestic/intimate partner violence more often than their White counterparts? Some of the barriers preventing African American women from reporting domestic/intimate violence were considered in order to answer the research questions. Bandura's learning theory informed this study, and data were collected from 20 African American women 18 years of age and older, located in the metropolitan area of Georgia. The phenomenological research method was used to explore the lived experiences of African American women. This study includes significant social change implications for social workers, law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and others interested in domestic/intimate violence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experience of African American women who experience domestic violence. This phenomenological qualitative

research aimed to ascertain the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence among 20 African American women between the ages of 18 and 45. Another purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occurs among African American women. The phenomenological approach enabled me to investigate common themes relating to how African American women described their lived experiences. The following research question guided this study: What are the lived experiences of African American women who experienced domestic violence?

The research questions are:

Research Question 1: Why do African American women stay in domestic/intimate partner abusive relationships?

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of domestic/intimate partner violence on the health and wellbeing of African American women?

Research Question 3: What are some of the barriers preventing African American women from seeking professional help with respect to domestic/intimate partner violence?

This phenomenological qualitative research unfolded when I decided to do my dissertation on violence against African American women. I decided it would be qualitative research, and my mentor helped me narrow the topic to the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women. I developed an interview method to assess the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence against African American women. The study recruited 20 women

between the ages of 18 and 45 in the Fulton County, Atlanta area to be used as participants in the study. The process was a semi-structured question, which was used to collect data from the lived experiences of African American women relative to the topic of domestic violence. Data triangulation was done through member check (i.e. flyer and survey questions). There was no pilot study needed or done for this study. Data were collected via the survey given to the participants, with questions that gave detailed information about their lived experiences. Initially, the data collection process was done through interviews and tape recording. After meeting with the IRB and due to the population's vulnerability, the data collection process was changed to a survey done online. The location and setting remained the same, but the process was online, not face-to-face. The confidentiality of the participants was respected and enforced.

The setting for this study was online. Initially, the location was to be in Fulton County at some mega churches, where recruitment would have begun. After meeting with the IRB committee, I changed the data collection plan. The IRB also suggested that I change the interview process; The process was changed to a survey with questions for the participants to answer. The IRB recommended the shift in the research data collection method from a face-to-face interviewing participants and tape-recording, which they felt was not safe for this population. The IRB noted that if the process were done face-to-face, it would defeat the purpose of confidentiality and expose the participants. The confidentiality of the participants was of high priority, and the research method changed to an online survey, which the IRB suggested would protect the participants.

The demographics of the study included 20 African American women that have experienced domestic violence. The women lived in Fulton County; participants were married, divorced, or single and abused within the last 5 years. These participants were willing and could withdraw from the study at any time. The research was done with those who volunteered to partake in the survey. There was no disrespect shown to any participants at any time. They could stop at any time during the study without punitive action. If you were not an African American female living in Fulton County or metropolitan Atlanta between 18 and 45, you were not eligible to be a study participant. Careful considerations were made to avoid common errors regarding inclusion and exclusion of criteria, including the following: using the same variable to define both inclusion and exclusion criteria (for example, in this study, including only African American females, ages 18-45, who lives in Fulton County). The recruitment flyer stated all the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The study data was collected through an online survey suggested by the IRB. The process was recommended to secure the participants' privacy and confidentiality. A highly secure survey service was established, providing a mechanism for the participants' privacy; there was no room allotted for identifiers. Only numbers were used for identity; 23 women responded to the survey. The first qualified 20 were chosen to participate in the study. The numbers for each participant for identity were 01-20. The other three participants were not included in the data collection process. Data were collected through the survey provided. Step 1, recruitment was done via a flyer; in Step 2, the content on the flyer was read and understood by the participants; if they decided to participate in the

study, then the barcode on the flyer was scanned, which took them directly to the consent. After the consent was read and understood, the participants proceeded to the first question. After answering Question 1, participants were allowed to continue or stopped from taking part in the survey.

In analyzing the qualitative data, thematic analysis was implied. This method is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes). The data were coded about the research questions. Although there are many types of software for analyzing qualitative data, the data for this study were analyzed by NVivo 10 Software. Ethical considerations were taken and outlined what is acceptable and unacceptable in conducting research. It was a process that mainly ensured that the rights of human subjects were not violated, and it minimized the risks while conducting the research. Participants were assured that their rights, dignity, and identity were protected for this study.

The trustworthiness of rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure a study's quality (Pilot & Beck, 2014). When the data were collected, there was a quality control check, reapplying some questions to the same subjects already interviewed. The reliability and consistency of the given answers were examined. Overall, validity is present in an instrument, procedure, or research. When the instrument produce results that reflect what they initially aimed to evaluate or measure, research can be judged both in terms of internal Validity. The data collecting instrument used for this study was the NVivo 10 software. This instrument helps with data preparation. The data were collected using a survey for the participants to

give a view of their life experience of domestic violence. It features automated data preparation. It enhanced the model viewer for computerized data preparation, validated data, and streamlined the process of validating data before analyzing it. Each question was broken down into how many participants answered yes and no.

As such, the phenomenological qualitative study was used to unpack the lived experiences and perspectives of domestic violence as it relates to African American women. The phenomenological inquiry allowed 20 African American women to give insight about their lived experiences without judgment from the researcher.

Phenomenological inquiry provides a rich description of human experiences and helps researchers understand the meaning of people's lived experiences. The qualitative data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. This method was used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes). The data was collected using the participants numbers as they enrolled in the survey. The first participants were coded as participant 01.

The budget was one of the conditions that influenced participants and interpretation of the study result. Good research is expensive because people drive it. Budget restraints affect the quality of the study. Qualitative research requires a lot of funding (sample size, travel, hotel, meals, printed materials, participant compensation).

The goal of this researcher was to get a broad cross-section of African American women from the north area of Atlanta, Fulton County to generate more depth or insight on the topic of domestic violence. The study did generate a representative sample.

Representative samples are essential, but this study required 20 African American women

that experienced domestic violence in the last 5 years. The age requirements were 18-45. There was no specification or conditions related to their educational level. No pilot study was done, so there was no change in personnel, budget cuts, and other trauma. The study did not involve any personal or organizational conditions that influenced participants or their experiences at the time of the study that could influence the interpretation of the study results. This study was done on a solo basis, and participants were anonymous. The only budget involved in this study was my own; I gave \$20 gift cards to the first participants who qualified for the study. That did not influence any decision or result of the study.

Data Collection

Walden University's IRB and the dissertation committee reviewed and approved the data collection process. The dissertation committee comprises one professor and the committee chair, who have earned PhDs. The process was initially to host a data collection process of interviewing participants, but the IRB did not accept that process. They suggested changing the process to a survey through an online process for confidentiality purposes. The IRB approved the flyer with a barcode inserted. After the participant scans the barcode, it takes them to the consent and survey. The permission was on the first page, and the questions were on the second and other pages. After the questions were developed and sent to the IRB, there were some modifications done and accepted by the IRB.

The consent form was approved by the IRB and attached to the survey. I used a data collection process that was a semi-structured question with one question used for

screening purposes before moving forward. Semi-structured interviewing is a qualitative method used to collect data; even though there was no interview done for this study, the questions were in the form of an interview with some yes, and no questions that needed some definitive answers. The data collection instruments for this study consisted of a screening tool, demographic questions, and open-ended and close-ended interview questions. I gathered two queries in an interview guide developed specifically for this study. An overview of the process was listed on the flyer, as was the consent to inform the participants of the study, the criteria of the study, and what to expect. There was no face-to-face study, and everything was done online.

The plan in Chapter 3 was to have an interview with African American women and record the interview. This was to extract accurate and reliable information about the participant's lived experience. The process involved asking interviewees specific questions about their lived experiences and recording via tape recorder. Because tape recording is a more accurate and transparent method of capturing than the traditional method, this method is thought to be more effective. One of the primary benefits of recording the interview was to allow me to concentrate on the discussion rather than writing notes, which could have been a distraction to both the interviewer and interviewees.

The research question has been discussed in question #2; the questions speak on the consequences, health, and well-being of the victim/participant. Physical abuse impacts the victim, such as injuries, bruises, broken bones, or even death. Emotional health is as important; it affects the individual's overall health. The World Health

Organization (WHO) (2013), notes that physical, sexual, and psychological can cause serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health problems for women. It is associated with high social and economic prices for women, their families, and society. Violence of such nature can be related to homicide or suicide, unwanted pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Most participants stated that they suffered consequences related to their health and well-being. Some questions asked about the types of abuse; there was a question that asked if they told friends and family about the abuse, and the majority stated no because they were afraid of being harmed by their abuser.

Participant 01 Is an African American Female, single, with unknown educational and religious status. She lives in Fulton County and is 18 or above, which qualified her to partake in the study. She has been in an abusive relationship for the past two years and finally decided to get out. She told her clergyman that she was experiencing abuse at the hands of her boyfriend. She is not married and is choosing to return to school to advance her career.

Research Question #2: What are the consequences of domestic/intimate partner violence on the health and well-being of African American women? Interview questions # 8,9,10, and 11, will answer research question #2. The participants will identify and answer the health and well-being of Abuse African American women. These questions will intrigue the participants' minds in explaining their health and well-being during the time of the abuse and after, and it will also give the research the needed answer to this question.

Furthermore, research has shown that recorded interviews allow the interviewee and interviewer to develop and foster a better relationship and rapport during the proceedings, which can lead to the interviewee disclosing more detailed and in-depth information. But during the research, there were some challenges and changes in the plan. One of the significant challenges was switching from a face-to-face to an online process. No direct contact and there were no way to recruit these participants except through the flyer posted or left at specific locations. The survey was done online to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

The data-collecting process encountered unusual circumstances in that the recruitment process was tedious. First, it started with the IRB scrutinizing the process. The face-to-face interview and tape-recording process, initially proposed, was rejected by the IRB committee due to the population's vulnerability. The data collection process started after the IRB approved the process and the steps. The process was asked to be changed due to the population's exposure. Because of the Covid 19, locating these women were difficult. Another unusual circumstance was some of the participants navigating to the survey. Some complained of trying to scan the barcode, which wasn't working. Others found it easy to check and participate in the survey, while others found it challenging. Besides the barcode not working for some, there were no other unusual circumstances. The data collection process took about ten weeks. The process was expected to begin and end in six weeks, but it took longer. The survey was opened on July 20th, 2022 and finished on September 10th, 2022. The survey was closed when 23

women successfully answered the questions. Then the analysis process begun and was completed.

A research question defines what you will examine, within which population, and what the outcome of interest will be. Defining a straightforward research question is the project's first and most important part. This phenomenological qualitative research aims to ascertain the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence among African American women between the ages of 18 to 45. Another purpose was to understand the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occurs among African American women.

When the participants answered the questions on the survey about their lived experiences, they provided a clearer picture of how these relationships slowly unfolded. They were able to give a detailed pattern of their experiences. The questions and answers described were to the point of being controlled, abused, and manipulated. Even though there were no direct quotes from most of the questions, some of the questions allowed the participants to write out their experiences and feelings. The intent was to give an in-depth investigation of the different aspects of abuse these participants experienced.

This phenomenological qualitative research goal was to ascertain the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence among African American women between the ages of 18 to 45. Another purpose is to understand the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occurs among African American women. It begins with addressing the age of the participants, they had to be 18 years or older, or they were not qualified to partake in the study. Research question # 1 will relate to interview

questions # 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7, which speak or give an insight into research question #1:

Why do African American women stay in domestic/intimate partner abusive relationships? A few reasons why some women stay in an abusive relationship are because they think the relationship is normal or healthy; others think about social, peer, societal, cultural, religious, financial, economic, and family pressure. The interview questions help the participants answer the questions and dig deeper into the research question. minds in explaining their health and wellbeing during the time of the abuse and after, and it will also give the research the needed answer to this question.

Research question #3: What are some of the barriers preventing African American women from seeking professional help with respect to domestic/intimate partner violence?

Research question #3: What are some of the barriers preventing African American women from seeking professional help concerning domestic/intimate partner violence? This research question relates to survey question # 12,13,14,15,16, and 17. Where it relates to the participant's health and well-being. It also relates to fear and life improvement after the abuse.

Because this research data is precious and vital, it must be managed to the highest standards throughout the lifecycle to support excellence in my research study and research questions. This process enabled data treatment and integrity. The data for this study was not opened and accessible to other researchers due to the confidentiality of the participant. No other researcher was involved in this study. There were 20 participants or cases; each case was unique. There were 23 participants, and three were disqualified,

because of the need for 20 participants. The patterns were similar, the written portion had detailed information. There were yes and no questions and questions that needed written answers. There were no discrepant cases because each person's questions were direct and unique. Everyone gives their life experiences in detail, what happened during the abuse, and how it affected their well-being and health. How did this change their lives? Most of these women's lives have changed for the better, and some have remained the same. The data give the percentage of single, married, and divorced women and the age ranges of these women. More details were given related to why some women refused to seek help from friends and family. Most fear their abusers because of the threat they make of killing the victims. The online survey was divided into sections to show the percentage of women who answered yes or no.

The data collection process was designed to protect the identity of the participants. When the Walden University IRB approved the study, there were recommendations and input from the committee on how the questions should be phrased. The corrections were made by the IRB and sent back to me. Some questions were yes or no, and some needed specific answers. Some questions were open-ended, and some were closed-ended. Chen, Wang, & Hung (2015), state that Semi-structured interviewing is a qualitative method used to collect data. The data collection instruments for this study consisted of consent, a screening tool, demographic questions, and open-ended and closed-ended questions. A survey was recommended and used for this study; no interview or tape-recording interview was allowed.

The themes guided the questions; the first theme was about abuse and how it began. The second theme was related to fear, and the third was related to health and well-being. The participants were coded according to the time of enrolling in the survey. The Participants shared the emotional issues and health concerns they faced with their abusers. Some quotes from the participants were, “The abused started right from the beginning of the relationship.” Another participant wrote, “I did not report the abuse for fear that I would have been killed.” Another wrote that I ran away because I was depressed from the combination of abuse and wanted a better life.

Some quotes from the participants: “The abuse started right from the beginning of the relationship.” another participant wrote, “I did not report the abuse for fear that I would have been killed.”, Another wrote, I ran away because I wanted a better life for myself.” As explained in chapter three, the researcher used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to code to identify and sort out the data. The NVivo software was recommended and used for this research study. The NVivo software has been used to analyze data from many qualitative research designs, including phenomenological studies, such as this study (Zamawe, 2015). Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007), Zamawe, (2015). recommends that the researcher have some knowledge of the program because large amounts of data can be coded and put in transcripts during a period. The research efficiently manages the software.

The validity of this research study did require a thorough process from the design to the data collection process and to the analysis. What made this study unique, was the method of data collect, which was different from the normal interview process. With the

process, it was difficult to detect discrepant cases, because the process was straightly done via an online process. There was no contact with the participants and no method of conversing with them. Whatever the participant wrote down, is what the researcher took into consideration. Different study designs have different strengths and weaknesses. The selected design that the researcher chose was appropriate to answer the objectives of the research questions. The sample size and other design aspects of the study were aimed at achieving valid conclusions of the study. It was important to the researcher for this study to strive for compatibility between study design and analysis plan. As researcher I chose the study designs at the time of the development of this study before the investigation was carryout. This eliminated the discrepancy cases. There were 3 participants eliminated from the study due to their time of enrollment. The study needed 20 participants and 23 answered the survey. The last three where not included into the data analysis process.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

As stated in Chapter 3, the trustworthiness of qualitative research has been questioned by researchers because the concept of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work. However, several writers have demonstrated how qualitative researchers can incorporate measures that deal with these issues. One such measure is credibility. One of the key criteria addressed by researchers is that of internal validity, in which they seek to ensure that their measures or tests what is intended. The qualitative investigator's equivalent concept, credibility deals with this question. Lincoln and Grub (1985), argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Another concept in dealing with

trustworthiness is triangulation. Triangulation deals with the use of different methods of data collection strategies in qualitative research. Another form of triangulation may be the use of a wide range of informants. Member check is another form of reaching trustworthiness. Lincoln and Gub (1985), consider member check to be one of the most important provisions that can be made to bolster a study's credibility. Reflexivity is another example. The investigator should seek to evaluate the project again as it develops. This can be done through a reflective commentary. The reflective commentary may be used to record the researcher's initial impressions of each data collection session, patterns appearing to emerge in the data collected and theories generated. Saturation is another example. Saturation is reached when the sample size gives rich and thick data.

Thus, in choosing a sample size in qualitative studies, the aim should not only to study a few sites or individuals but also to collect extensive detail about each site or individuals studied (Patton, 2002). This study follows these steps to ensure the credibility of this study.

Conclusion

Domestic/intimate partner violence is a severe social, mental, and public health problem in the African American community. The adverse effects of domestic/intimate partner violence are far beyond reach. (Zorjan, Smrke, Lilijana, 2017). Each year, African American women are traumatized, stabbed, brutalized, and murdered in the United States. A qualitative study was conducted to capture the lived experiences of African American women lived experienced as it relates to domestic/intimate violence. Twenty participants, ages 18 to 45, participated in the study. Participants were required to

have been in an abusive relationship. The researcher used open-ended and closed-ended questions via an online survey to collect the data. No participant's name was documented on any form, and no email addresses of any participant were released to ensure that the rights of the participants were not violated.

For reasons such as ethical issues, confidentiality, informed consent, and respect for privacy, the participants did not use any identifiers, and the researcher adhered to that strict rule. The participants were instructed to withdraw from the study at any time without punishment. The participants were recruited at will and could stop the process at will. The consent had a number embedded, for participants to call, in case of any anxiety, stress or trauma from the research study and survey. The flyer gives the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, and a bar-code to scan, which took them to a confidential survey, that only the participant had access to.

Significant themes that emerged from the survey were: power and control, sexual abuse, psychological/emotional abuse, physical abuse, and financial and economic hardship. The researcher took into consideration the issue of trustworthiness to ensure credibility. Framework for ensuring dependability included (1) credibility, which refers to confidence in the truth value of the data and interpretations of them. The concepts of credibility include triangulation, member checks, prolonged engagement, and saturation. The ideas also include dependability, reliability, and stability of the data over time. (3) Confirmability refers to objectivity, the potential for unity between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, (4) transferability, the extent to which qualitative findings have applicability in other settings or groups. The study had a pattern

of yes and no, and there was no surprise with the yes and no questions and answers that emerged from the design. There were questions that needed elaboration by the participants, which gave a better insight into the lived experiences of these participants.

The researcher conducted the research study responsibly and correctly.

Researchers mustn't manipulate their data because if they do, they deceive others, violating both the fundamental values and the widely accepted professional standard of science. Data should be appropriately stored, especially collected from an individual, and should be coded to ensure privacy and for the data to not be altered. Pilot and Beck (2014) state that data should not be manipulated or changed because changing data leads to false results. The online data was secured, and no one could get to the data except the researcher. This process was secured, because there were no personal identifiers included, such as names, date of birth and address. The bar-code that the victims scan from the flyer, could only lead the participants to the consent and survey. There was no other information available to anyone. The researcher was the only person having access to the data but not the personal information of the participants. Treatment is something that a researcher administers to investigational units. The research was shown responsibly and correctly; the findings show a need for the African American community to be educated about this type of violence and for additional resources to be provided. The result also indicates that this community has a problem that needs serious attention.

Chapter 5 will provide a thorough discussion of the research study findings as well as the implications and limitations of the study. Additionally, Chapter 5 will conclude with recommendations for future research on this population.

Transition

Domestic/intimate partner violence is a severe public health problem in the African American community. While many studies have been done on the topic, few have focused exclusively on African American women. This study investigated the lived experiences of 20 African American women, ages 18-45, living in Fulton County, who have experienced domestic/intimate partner violence. The study was guided by a qualitative phenomenological method. The survey questions were constructed to capture the participants' lived experiences through open and closed-ended descriptive questions from the lived experiences of the women that participated in this study. Several significant themes and sub-themes emerged: stalking, physical, emotional/psychological, financial, sexual, and employment. These central themes will be used to explore and discussed in chapter 5 of this study. In chapter 3, the study related to the transferability. External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. Lincoln and Guba (1985), suggest that it is the investigator's responsibility to ensure that sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork sites is provided to enable readers to make such a transfer. They maintain that since the researcher knows only the sending content, they cannot make transferability inferences.

Table 1*Social Demographic Background of Participants*

Participants	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Residence	Religion
	18-45	Married, Single or Divorced			
Participant 01(P01)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 02 (P02)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 03 (P03)	18-45	Married	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 04 (P04)	18-45	Married	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 05 (P05)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 06 (P06)	18-45	Married	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 07 (P07)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 08 (P08)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 09 (P09)	18-45	Divorced	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 10 (P10)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 11 (P11)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 12 (P12)	18-45	Divorced	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown
Participant 13 (P13)	18-45	Single	Unknown	Fulton	Unknown

Table 2*Types of Abuse*

Physical	8.7%
Emotional	13.7
Verbal	17.4%
Sexual	3.7%
Combination	56.5%
Total N=20	100%

Table 3*Was the Abuse Reported to the Police?*

Yes	No
20%	80%
N =4	N=16

Table 4*High School Graduate*

Yes	No
100%	0%
N=20	N=0

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experience of African American women who experience domestic violence. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative research was to ascertain the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence among African American women between the ages of 18 and 45. Another purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occur among African American women. The phenomenological approach enabled me to investigate common themes of how African American women described their lived experiences. The research designed of this study was guided by the phenomenological qualitative method. In the phenomenological qualitative research method, the researcher is interested in people's belief's experiences and meanings from the participants' point of view. Open and closed-ended semi-structured survey questions were used to gather the necessary data. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants.

Discussion

Qualitative phenomenological research is used to understand the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. As such, the phenomenological qualitative study was used to unpack the lived experiences and perspectives of domestic violence as it relates to African American women. The phenomenological inquiry allowed African American women to speak about their lived experiences without judgment from the researcher. Phenomenological inquiry provides a

rich description of human experiences and helps us understand the meaning of people's lived experiences. The phenomenological inquiry allowed 20 African American women to give the perception of their abuse by answering questions related to domestic violence. The study was conducted using flyers for recruitment, and an on-line survey was developed with questions to get an in-dept look at the lived experiences of these women without judgment.

The data collection was an on-line survey, which provided a relaxed atmosphere for the participants to discuss issues of domestic violence in detail. This method is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes). The data was coded in relation to the research questions. Although there are many types of software for analyzing qualitative data, this study used the NVivo software.

The qualitative data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. This method was used for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes). The data were collected using the participants' numbers as they enrolled in the survey. The first participant was coded as Participant 01. The data collection process was reviewed and approved by the Walden University's IRB and the dissertation committee. The dissertation committee is made up of one professor and the committee chair, both of whom had earned PhDs. The process was initially to host a data collection process of interviewing participants, but that process was not accepted by the IRB. They made some suggestions of having the process changed to a survey, though an online process for confidentiality purposes. The flyer was approved by the IRB with a barcode inserted. After the participant scans the barcode, it takes them to the consent and survey. The consent was on the first page and the questions

were on the other pages. After the questions were developed and sent to the IRB, there were some modifications done and accepted by the IRB. The consent form was approved by the IRB and attached to the survey.

I used a data collection process that involved semi-structured questions, with one question used for screening purposes before moving forward. Semi-structured interviewing is a qualitative method used to collect data; even though there was no interview done for this study, the questions were in the form of an interview with some yes and no's and some that needed some expressive answers.

The data collection instruments for this study consisted of a screening tool, demographic questions, and open-ended and close-ended interview questions. I gathered questions into an interview guide, developed specifically for this study. An overview of the process was listed on the flyer and the consent to inform the participants of the study, criteria of the study, and what to expect. There was no face-to-face for this study and everything was done online.

Interpretations of the Findings

Findings from the interviews include results from the questions answered on the survey. A research question is a sentence that defines what you will examine, within which population, and what the outcome of interest will be. This phenomenological qualitative research aimed to ascertain the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence among 20 African American females between the ages of 18 and 45. Another purpose was to understand the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occurs among African American women.

As the participants answered the questions on the survey about their lived experiences, they provided a clearer picture of how these relationships slowly unfolded from what the questions that were asked and their responses to the questions that they answered. The questions and answers concerned the experience of being controlled, abused, and manipulated. Even though there were no direct quotes elicited from the majority of the questions, some of the questions allowed the participants to write out their experience and feelings.

The data collection process was designed to protect the identity of the participants. When the Walden University IRB approved the study, there were recommendations and input from the committee regarding how the questions should be phrased. The corrections were made by the IRB and sent back to me. Some of the questions were answered with a simple yes and no, while others asked for more detailed answers. Some questions were open ended, while some were closed ended. Chen et al. (2015) stated that semi-structured interviewing is a qualitative method used to collect data, and the data collection instruments for this study consisted of a consent, screening tool, demographic questions, open-ended and close ended questions, and a survey, since the study was not approved for a face-to-face interview or tape-recorded interview.

The questions were guided by themes. The first theme was related to the abuse and how it began. The second theme was related to fear, and the third theme was related to health and wellbeing. The participants were coded according to the time of enrolling into the survey. The participants shared the emotional issues and health concerns they faced due to their abusers. According to one participant, the abused started right from the

beginning of the relationship.” Another participant wrote, “I did not report the abuse for fear that I would have been killed.” Another wrote, “I ran away, because I was depressed from the combination of abused and I wanted a better life.”

As explained in Chapter 3, I used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo to code to identify and sort out the data. The NVivo software has been used to analyze data from many qualitative research designs, including phenomenological study, such as this study. Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) recommended that the researcher have some knowledge of the program, because large amounts of data can be coded and put in transcripts during a period. The software is easily managed by the research. The intent was to give an in-dept investigate the different aspects of abuse these participants experienced.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of domestic/intimate partner violence on the health and wellbeing of African American women? Interview Questions 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 helped answer Research Question 2. The health and wellbeing of abused African American women was described by the participants. The findings from the research show that the women’s health and wellbeing were impacted. These women experienced mental anguish, fear and anxiety, distrust, and physical, sexual, and emotional harm. The women also experienced setbacks, such as financial ones, and challenges to live a normal life. The women in the study provided insights into the relationships and how they were about to gain the courage to get out.

Many studies speak about the health and wellbeing of abused women, but this specific study speaks to the how domestic violence leaves the abused with mental

anguish, anxiety, distrust, and physical harm (O'Neal & Beckman, 2017). The data related to the research question were analyzed, and findings showed a great percentage of the women had emotional problems such as anxiety, depression, pain, and physical injury.

Yung-Mei et al. (2014) argued that African American women only seek for help from the authority when the domestic violence is seriously threatening their lives. As compared to Whites and other races, African American women reported cases are very severe (Yung-Mei et al., 2014). Gillum (2017) asserted that African American women were more likely to call police for help as compared to White women. Perpetrators of domestic violence in African American communities show their dominance through violence. Therefore, women are deterred from standing up against men, as it is a sign of lack of respect. above studies notes that about one in three (35%) of women worldwide have experienced physical and sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime. Worldwide, one third (30%) of women who had a relationship report they have experienced domestic violence in some form of physical or sexual abuse by their intimate partner in their lifetime. Globally, as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate male partner.

Salcioglu et al. (2017) conducted a study that involved 27 focus groups consisting of African Americans. An African American woman with extensive experience in psychology led the focus groups. She was assisted by graduate students in guiding and counseling (Salcioglu et al., 2017). The research aimed to understand the extent of domestic violence among the African American women and how it affected their mental

well-being (Salcioglu et al., 2017). Therefore, it was not necessary for participants to have past experiences with domestic violence. Four different factors were examined during the research. The factors included the perception of respondents towards domestic violence in the African American community, barriers to seeking help, perception towards the necessary services, and knowledge of exiting services across the country (Salcioglu et al., 2017). The participants of my research study revealed that one of the reasons why they left was they could not withstand physical abuse any longer.

Domestic/intimate partner violence is a pervasive and recurring problem among African American women. African American women experience domestic/intimate violence at a significantly higher rate than other women in society. The 2010-2012 national personal and sexual violence survey reported that nationally, 46% of African American women experienced contact sexual violence and or physical violence in their lifetime.

This phenomenological qualitative research goal was to ascertain the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence among African American women between the ages of 18 and 45. Another purpose is to understand the cultural and social context in which domestic violence occurs among African American women. It begins with addressing the age of the participants; they had to be 18 years or older, or they were not qualified to partake in the study. Research Question 3 asked, “What are some of the barriers preventing African American women from seeking professional help with respect to domestic/intimate partner violence?” This research question relates to Survey Questions 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17. Recent evidence-based literature on the topic discussed

how education can be a risk factor and prevention for domestic violence in the African American community.

The studies included in this chapter discussed different relevant areas such as intimate partner violence, domestic violence, the impact of education on domestic abuse, domestic violence risk factors, and access to education and employment by African American women. The specific examples include the works of Choi and Ting (2008), Anderson (2010), Thomas (2000), Stinson and Robinson (2006), O'Neal and Beckman (2017), Rennison and Welchans (2000), Reed et al. (2010), West (2014), Bhandari (2020), Babu and Kar (2010), and Akers and Jennings (2019). Power and education differences were discussed in studies done by Anderson (2010), Bonnes (2016), and Choi and Ting (2008). Research on lack of access to education and other important resources by African American community were discussed by Bent-Goodley (2001) and Cook and Nash (2017). The literature review concluded that education can be used in preventing domestic violence against African American women.

Limitations

Domestic violence affects women of all races and sociological background globally. However, this study was limited to 20 African American women residing in a specific geographic area in Atlanta, which is Fulton County. Therefore, the findings of this study were not generalizable to all women in the United States, but to the listed population. Another limitation was changing the option from face-to-face to the on-line survey. Financial constrain was not a major issue, because conducting interviews is an expensive proposition. The study was limited to African American women ages 18 to 45

living in the Atlanta area. The study included domestic violence victims who had experienced partner abuse within the last 5 years. This study was voluntary, and any participant could withdraw at any time without punishment. For the literature review sections of this study, studies that were used as references were related to studies published between 1989 and 2022, and most of the literature were peer-reviewed English language and scientific journals; this was enforced to safeguard the quality, readability, and interpretability of the study.

Recommendations

Findings from the research provided an understanding of the descriptions and created awareness within this population. Also, the women in this study shared that they were afraid of their partners, and some explained that they lived in the abused for years. Others stated that they were afraid to share the abuse with friends and family, while others were afraid to share it with law enforcement officers and clergypersons. The study specifically chose women 18-45, living in Fulton County, and having experienced domestic violence within the last five years. These women experienced mental anguish, fear, anxiety, distrust, and physical, sexual, and emotional harm. The women also experienced setbacks, such as financial challenges in living everyday life. The women in the study provided insights into the relationships and how they were about to gain the courage to get out.

The results from this study also illuminated how some women gained the courage to leave the relationship, even with the threats that if they left the relationship, they could face negative consequences from their partners. The findings from this research will

impact human behavior, criminal justice, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and clinical social worker. The study may also impact public health by shaping the development of programs and interventions that recognize and respect the importance of the many types of domestic violence.

The Heron & Eisma (2021) study notes that the healthcare settings disclosure of domestic violence by their providers is a barrier. The Heron and Eisma study also recommends training healthcare providers to help these individuals understand the complexities of the disclosure process and the potential obstacles.

The researcher disseminates the information through different communication sources. Some include social medial, newspapers, church bulletin, flyers, and community speaking engagements. The results will help the victims to report the abuse and help lower their emotional barriers or shame, blame, and embarrassment. The result will let these women know that they are not alone; they need help and where they can locate service without being judged. The victims will also be aware that exposing the abuse will make their abusers know they are not afraid, and prosecution is possible.

Based on the findings, the conclusion indicates that education can impact the Incidence of Domestic Violence for African American Women. Education can inform the victims of the signs and symptoms before becoming victims. Educating the victims about the resources they have on hand to leave the abuse sooner is essential, and reporting the abuse to your family, friends, and law enforcement officers will significantly decrease this problem. The community will also make a positive impact in helping its people.

Even though this study investigated the impact of education on domestic violence Among African American Females, other studies also noted that education is not the only barrier. Other barriers or lack of opportunities, including financial obstacles, have led to domestic violence (Coburn Place, 2022).

The problem is not just a community problem but a systemic one. The black community has been behind in many ways, including education, healthcare, finances, and a lack of other resources. According to Coburn Place (2022), It's a combination of things we're not given, including opportunities in education that generally would have been made available to other populations, specifically white people. The higher you are in the socioeconomic strata, the more excellent knowledge you will have of education and resources, making it easy for you to know where to get the information and receive services and resources. Education is significant for the victims of the information and things available to make a difference for the many few.

Recommendations for Further Research

Outcomes from this study suggested several opportunities for future research to expand knowledge in human behavior and social science and decrease the gap in the literature regarding African American females and domestic violence. A thorough literature search and review indicated that this study might be the first research focusing on the impact of education on domestic violence among African American females. Giorgi's (2009) descriptive phenomenological approach provided opportunities to gain an understanding of the lived experience of African American females, and the research results also identified areas for future studies. One possibility for further inquiry is

examining the experience of domestic violence among Caucasian women. Expanding the population to additional geographic regions might address questions about cultural differences in expectations and perspectives.

Implications for Social Change

The significance of this phenomenological inquiry was to assess the impact of education on the incidence of Domestic Violence for African American females. This study was significant on many levels. Healthcare providers, social service workers, African American organizations, and sociologists will find this valuable work as they seek to find vexing problems associated with domestic violence among African American females. As Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora (2016) acknowledged in their text, giving voices to their plight will "Contribute significantly to the process of policy making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation" (Trochim, Donnelly, and Arora, 2016, p. 59). On another level, implications for social change for this study will include the potential to enhance opportunities for African American females to acknowledge the different signs of domestic violence.

Moreover, this study can give a voice to a group of victims unseen in current discourse and literature. The study will also fill a gap in the existing literature by examining the relationship that assesses education's impact on the incidence of Domestic Violence for African American females. Other women, healthcare providers, and educators can use the study's findings to bring about awareness to women suffering from this type of abuse. The study will contribute to the criminal justice world by helping to provide knowledge for students and instructors to use as a reference and a resource.

Finally, this study will add to the growing literature on domestic violence related to African American females.

Many studies report data on domestic violence. Still, the 2010-2012 national personal and sexual violence survey says that nationally, 46% of African American women experienced contact sexual violence and or physical violence in their lifetime. Based on existing studies on domestic violence among African American women, the theoretical framework used for this study was Social Cognitive Theory and Social learning theory. The two approaches analyze psychoanalysis and behaviorism. The critical components of these theories include observation, retention, motor reproduction, attention, learning, and motivation (Chen, Wang & Hung, 2015). Based on these ideas, individuals acquire new and desired behaviors through education, which help them self-regulate and develop physical and mental maturation, personal behavior control, and self-efficacy. Albert Bandura's Learning Theory will inform this study.

The phenomenological research method was to explore the lived experiences of African American females. Given that this study method focuses on African American female victims of domestic violence, it also notes that other ethnic groups faced the same problem but at a lower rate. Although the risk of African American female domestic violence rate is higher across racial and ethnic groups, the study suggests that the authorities should duly investigate any crime.

This analysis is vital to this research since it focuses on women's experiences of domestic violence in the African American community. Several studies have applied phenomenological study design to understand domestic violence in different communities

in the United States. The study suggests that the authorities duly investigate any rights violation and then punish the perpetrators accordingly (Ozer & Fidrmuc, 2017).

The research design for this study is a qualitative study, which surveys 20 female African American participants. There was to raise awareness within the Black communities to educate individuals to adhere to accountability and non-impunity. This will restore ethical values in society, hence reducing domestic violence. Effective authority responses are essential in ending gender-based violence. The current study shows a positive correlation between recurring domestic violence and practical measures. Education empowers people economically and socially; hence, it is a protective tool in preventing violence (Rapp, Zoch, Khan, Pollmann & Krämer, 2012). Individuals with low education levels are more likely to experience violence than those with high education levels (Rapp et al., 2012).

However, it is essential to note that domestic violence can occur across all academic levels. “In the simplest of terms, those individuals with less than a college education are at a higher risk of being victims of domestic violence than those with a college degree” (Rapp et al., 2012). Individuals with low education levels are limited to jobs that have low wages. Due to discrimination and racism in the US, African American women do not have access to quality education and hence fall into this low-income class (Rapp et al., 2012). The Black women unwillingly return to their partners, who, in return, abuse them. The women found it difficult to report the cases to the police or leave abusive relationships since they did not have adequate financial resources to support

themselves and their children (Rapp et al., 2012). However, according to Chen et al. (2015), the behaviors acquired through observation depend on the resulting actions.

The theory takes into consideration the past experiences of an individual. These experiences determine whether a behavioral action will occur. Past experiences influence reinforcements, expectancies, and expectations. They are used to explain the reason why a person engages in a particular behavior. Behavioral capability involves the capability of a person to show a particular behavior using their skills and knowledge. For an individual to perform a specific behavior, they must understand how and when to do it. People tend to learn and have experiences based on the consequences of their behavior. Observational learning in Social Cognitive Theory allows individuals to acquire behaviors from those around them.

Though researchers have not reached conclusive ways to stop domestic violence, a growing research base has developed various strategies and approaches to prevent domestic violence. The plans to help solve this problem include:

- Teaching safe and healthy relationship skills.
- Engaging influential peers and adults.
- Disrupting developmental pathways towards domestic violence.
- Creating protective environments.
- Supporting survivors to increase their safety.
- Strengthening the economy for families.

The positive social change of my study will include protection, education, and resources for these abuse victims.

Reflections of the Researcher

Sometimes, when conducting a regular investigation, the researcher may intentionally or unknowingly influence the process. When this happens, it is termed research bias, and like every other type of bias, it can alter your findings. From Plus Blog (2022) notes research bias is one of the dominant reasons for the poor validity of research outcomes. If the researcher pays more attention to the research, errors will not occur. A researcher must be able to identify and ultimately avoid or reduce occurrences to the barest minimum (Form Plus Blog, 2022). Research bias occurs when the researcher twists the entire process towards a specific research outcome, which occurs when the researcher manipulates the process to get the desired result. There was no knowing bias for this study, so there was no need to control the investigation. There could have been some biases in the developed survey, but none existed. My mentor and the IRB reviewed the questions on the survey.

The IRB evaluated the process and made corrections to the study by changing some questions and suggesting other questions to replace the deleted ones. The research stayed within the process after the Walden IRB approved it. All the process was followed according to the agreement between the researcher and the Walden IRB to have no discrepancy in the findings or result by introducing an orderly error into the sample data. In other words, it is a process where the researcher influences the systematic investigation to arrive at specific outcomes. When there is any form of bias in research, it takes the investigation off-course and deviates from its actual results. Research bias can also

happen when the personal choices and preferences of the researchers have undue influence on the study.

Phenomenology is one of the popular types of research design used in a qualitative study. Byrne (2020) notes that a phenomenological study's primary objective is to explain the meaning, structure, and essence of a person's lived experiences or a group of people around a specific phenomenon. The phenomenologist endeavors to understand human behavior through the eyes of the participants, so during this study,

I conducted the data collection and did the final analysis as the researcher. A researcher must collect clear and precise data using code, so no one can understand and interfere with the data. By the time I met with my mentor for the second time the Introduction and Information gathering chapters of the work had been completed, and I received detailed feedback for those chapters of my research study. Also, there were discussions about data analysis and presentation associated with the project. During the final meeting with my mentor, the IRB scrutinized the overall work, and the IRB and my mentor mentioned a set of specific points.

In dealing with research bias, the researcher must have a clear picture of what it is and be able to identify it in any form. To ensure that this research did not have or deal with bias, the data sample was from different or multiple sources and groups in my research population. Even though the people were specific, African American female population, the ages varied from 18-45. The data collected was collected and verified before analysis. In other instances, I could have asked other research participants or team

members to review and help interpret my finding. This study was a small sample size, and I had to carry the burden by myself because of the vulnerable population.

This research aimed to fill in the gap and contribute to the literature on domestic violence, which is high among African American females. Findings from the analysis provided an understanding of the descriptions and created awareness within this population. Also, the women in this study shared that they were afraid of their partners, and some explained that they lived in the abused for years. Others stated that they were afraid to share the abuse with friends and family, while others were afraid to share it with law enforcement officers and clergy members.

The study specifically chose 20 African American females aged 18-45, living in Fulton County, and having experienced domestic violence within the last five years. These women experienced mental anguish, fear, anxiety, distrust, and physical, sexual, and emotional harm. The women also experienced setbacks, such as financial challenges in living everyday life. The women in the study provided insights into their abusive relationships and how they gained the courage to get out.

Findings from this study also illuminated how some women gained the courage to leave the relationship, even though they felt that if they left the relationship, they could face negative consequences from their partners. The findings from this research will impact human behavior, criminal justice, law enforcement, and clinical social work. The study may also impact public health by shaping the development of programs and interventions that recognize and respect the importance of the many types of domestic violence. This study benefits not only the criminal justice field but other disciplines.

Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the impact of education on the incidence of domestic/intimate partner violence against African American women in Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. As such, the phenomenological qualitative study unpacks the lived experiences and perspectives of domestic/intimate partner violence related to African American women. The phenomenological inquiry allowed African American women to speak about their lived experiences without judgment from the researcher.

Phenomenological inquiry provides a detailed description of human experiences and will help us understand the meaning of people's experiences. The study did not use face-to-face in-depth interviews for data collection, as initially planned. A survey with questions was developed and used for data collection. The survey was online, and the participants answered the questions without interacting with the researcher. The qualitative data analysis used a thematic analysis. This method is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes).

The data uses the coding system. Although there are many types of software for analyzing qualitative data, the data for this study was examined by NVivo 10 Software. Ethical considerations outline what is acceptable and unacceptable in conducting research. It ensures that the rights of human subjects are not violated and minimizes risks in conducting research. The researcher protected the participant's rights, dignity, and identity.

Summary

In summary, the present study strengthened the research base on the disclosure of domestic violence in healthcare settings by providing a comprehensive, updated systematic review of qualitative research barriers and facilitators of exposure, advice of victims on disclosure, and the potential outcomes of the disclosure. Results were partly consistent with a prior review but also demonstrated novel themes and issues relevant to disclosure in healthcare settings. The questions answered vexing problems associated with domestic and intimate partner violence, and they answered those questions. The fact that barriers to disclosure persist despite the development of international guidelines and regulations for healthcare services suggests that improving HCP and healthcare service responsiveness to domestic violence remains an important goal for the future.

The study showcases the most important areas concerning domestic violence against African American women. The recent evidence-based literature on the topic presented a discussion. The research study investigated how education can be a risk factor and prevent domestic violence in African American communities. The studies included relevant areas such as intimate partner violence, domestic violence, the impact of education on domestic abuse, risk factors, and access to education.

This phenomenological research assessed the impact of education on the incidence of domestic violence on many levels. Healthcare workers, social service workers, law enforcement officials, sociologists, and African American females of organizations will find this helpful study.

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