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Walden University

College of Allied Health

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Selena Sanchez

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Law Enforcement Officers' Lived Experiences with Male Victims of Intimate Partner Violence

by

Selena Sanchez

MA, Argosy University, 2014

BS, University of Phoenix, 2004

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

June 2022

Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects every race, culture, orientation, and sex. However, researchers focus largely on women as victims of IPV by men. Unfortunately, social and gender norms contribute to the focus on women as victims while adult heterosexual men remain underreported, underrepresented, and viewed predominantly as perpetrators. For example, 91% of men were arrested when IPV was reported, and officers responded to the call. This was referred to as gendered stigmatization. This transcendental qualitative phenomenological approach focused on the lived experiences of law enforcement officers who were called to the scene where IPV had occurred or was occurring, and adult heterosexual males were the victim. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews of nine law enforcement officers from various counties. The law enforcement officers were male, female, veteran and newer; they also had direct experience with adult heterosexual male victims of IPV. Three research questions guided the study and were based on their perspectives on gender in general related to IPV, how they perceive male victims of IPV, and their lived experiences with victims of IPV. Key findings demonstrated that although law enforcement officers acknowledged adult heterosexual males were victims of IPV, women were victims more often and their perspectives aligned with gender asymmetry. The officers acknowledged that the male victims minimized their experiences with their partner for fear of them or their partner being arrested and due to societal norms of masculinity. The results also confirmed that drug and alcohol intoxication and cheating or assumptions of cheating played a role. Findings may be used by law enforcement for positive social change for IPV guidance.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to all the men who believe there is nowhere to turn when faced with these situations. Do not give up. This is also dedicated to my dad, who passed away from COVID. It is because of you that I learned how to treasure and value people from all walks of life and that no one should be unheard, and everyone should have access to help. I know you would be proud of me for accomplishing such a feat, but your love, and pushing me are at the root of this accomplishment. This is also dedicated to my stepdad Rick Phillips, who passed away this year, and my ex and my daughter's dad, who passed away in 2015. You are always loved.

To my girls LaRissa Sanchez and Chrystina Crafa, who supported me during this journey and the countless hours it took to get here.

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Thank you to my faculty members who helped me accomplish this study that led to the ultimate goal of achieving a doctorate. I am grateful for your time and appreciative of your knowledge.

Manuel, though we do not share a life together anymore, I know that I would not have accomplished this degree without you as you made it possible for me to put so much focus on it over the years. I miss you but it would be unfortunate not to share this moment with you. Thank you for all you did, and I wish you the best of luck in your life.

To my classmates with whom I shared this journey in the online classroom and through those wonderful academic year residencies. I rather enjoyed them and have to say, hands down, you were the best class I have ever had the pleasure of learning with. Also, to Morgan and Tasha, I met you at a residency and you turned into someone who encouraged me and motivated me despite the setbacks I faced. I was not expecting you, but I am grateful for you. Thank you for becoming a blessing in my life. Chrystina, you accompanied me on these journeys to Minnesota, California, Florida, and Puerto Rico, and you made them fun and enjoyable. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Intimate Partner Violence Victimization

According to Graham-Kevan et al. (2017), much of the world has recognized intimate partner violence (IPV) as the act of men abusing women in intimate relationships. One reason for this was because men were generally seen as aggressive and violent, based on gender stereotypes (Hammock et al., 2017). Similarly, Scarduzio et al. (2016) noted that men were labeled as violent, controlling, and aggressive. This view of men as aggressors likely played a role in why police officers responded as though men were perpetrators of IPV (Lockwood & Prohaska, 2015). Along this line, several male participants in a qualitative study conducted by Robertson (2018) stated men who were abused by women were generally unacknowledged as victims.

Ahmadi et al. (2017) noted that some implications of IPV victimization included anxiety, depression, traumatic stress, and suicidal tendencies. Beaumont (2017) described effects on a social level such as job losses, hospitalizations, stress, and death. However, these acknowledgments were directed toward the effects of women who were abused by men.

While understanding the impact of IPV against women is crucial, it is also important to spotlight adult heterosexual male victims of IPV. This was because men also faced personal and societal implications, like women (Douglas & Hines, 2015). Douglas and Hines (2015) elaborated by stating adult heterosexual men required medical and mental health care when they were physically abused by women. Furthermore, they

acknowledged that adult heterosexual men also feared for their safety, including death, when faced with IPV situations perpetrated by women (Douglas & Hines, 2015).

Unfortunately, stigma may have been attached to men who sought help from law enforcement officers as victims of violence by women. Gover et al. (2017) stated that 78% of American law enforcement officers in their sample agreed adult heterosexual men were less likely to report IPV than women if they were abused by their spouses or girlfriends. Arnocky and Villaincourt (2014) also summarized their findings and stated that men who were abused in IPV situations faced more stigma than women because of masculine norms.

The study is unique because the focus is solely on law enforcement officers' experiences with adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV, as opposed to women, respectively. Law enforcement officers' lived experiences that focus on adult heterosexual male victims of IPV can bring awareness to how or why men may be deterred from reporting abuse and seeking help when faced with IPV victimization. The social implications of conducting the study were two-fold. First, the results confirmed that law enforcement officers viewed adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV by women though they viewed women as victims more often. Second, the results demonstrated that gendered stigma toward adult heterosexual men was present in some situations.

Background

IPV has been a topic of in-depth focus on women as victims by their male spouses or partners. Men who perpetrated IPV against women reached a point of outrage and

eventually paved the way for women's movements. Laws were enacted to bring awareness and promote legal consequences (Fleck-Henderson, 2017). One group that was formed was the Women's Liberation Act, which included the Battered Women's Movement. Further, the first battered women's shelter was established in 1976. In 1999, congress made it unconstitutional to discriminate by gender, who received protection from the law when IPV occurred (Brief of the United States, 1999).

The discrimination of IPV and laws made in 1999 deemed that IPV was gender based with women as victims and men as perpetrators who must be punished accordingly (Brief of the United States, 1999). Five men in California presented to legislators the exclusion of men as a gender in IPV situations when abused by women. This exclusion was presented as discrimination (Lewis, 2015).

Allen and Bradley (2017) and Pence and Tatum (2015) noted the exclusion of men as a gender was likely due to cultural biases where law enforcement officers did not perceive adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV when perpetrated by women. Lockwood and Prohaska (2015) stated that when it came to gender in IPV cases, both male and female officers viewed men as the aggressor and women who engaged in self-defense. In addition to cultural biases from police officers, other professionals shared similar biases. For example, Arestedt et al. (2013) noted that hospital workers in Sweden turned men away as victims of violence at much higher rates than women, despite the higher numbers of males who sought treatment. Appleton and Perryman (2016) opined that men were turned away from counselors at higher rates as well due to the belief that a woman could not cause or inflict physical harm on an adult male. Lewis (2015) and

Medero et al. (2018) brought to light the acknowledgement that men were turned away by the judicial system even after being stabbed or beaten by women.

There appears to be a gap in the literature because there is minimal acknowledgement of adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV from law enforcement officers' perspectives. Roark (2016) hoped her research would place more emphasis on how law enforcement officers responded to male victims of IPV. The purpose of the study is to focus on the lived experiences police officers have with adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV, as opposed to perpetrators of IPV.

Problem Statement

Adult heterosexual men were less likely than adult heterosexual women to report IPV by their female partners (McCarrick et al., 2016). One reason for this was that women were arrested 62% of the time as compared to men who were arrested 91% of the time by law enforcement officers (Espinoza & Warner, 2016). This was referred to as gendered stigmatization (Espinoza &Warner, 2016). Ceelan et al. (2013) found that out of 372 men who participated in a study as victims of IPV from women partners, less than 32% spoke to the police, and less than 15% of them officially reported the abuse.

Ceelan et al. (2013) speculated men feared being dismissed by police officers and were embarrassed that they were abused by women. Graham-Kevan et al. (2017) confirmed that police dismissed male victims also by not responding to the calls after repeated attempts. According to Entilli and Cipolletta (2016), men likely feared that law enforcement officers and health professionals, would see them as perpetrators and not victims.

It was acknowledged by Morgan and Wells (2016) that little work had been done to recognize men as victims of domestic abuse. Much of the research on this topic and with these types of abuses had mainly been conducted to spotlight female victims. While some studies (Allen et al., 2014; Blumstein et al., 2014; Bradley et al., 2014) recognized more mutual levels of aggression in intimate relationships, again, most of the studies (Conroy, 2014; Edwards & Neal, 2016; Hamberger & Larsen, 2015; Umubyeyi et al., 2014) assumed the male was the batterer. Roark (2016) suggested further research was needed to examine law enforcement officers' perspectives of adult heterosexual men who reported IPV.

This study fills in a gap in the research by focusing on the lived experiences police officers have with male victims of IPV. More specifically, the results helped determine if adult heterosexual men were discounted as victims of IPV. The results also yielded insight into law enforcement officers' perceptions of adult heterosexual men as victims, and if those perceptions served as a barrier to men reporting abuse (Morgan & Wells, 2016).

Purpose

There was an abundance of research on women as victims of IPV from adult men who engaged in physical, sexual, emotional, and other forms of violence (Armour et al., 2014; Calmet et al., 2019; North et al., 2019). However, there was limited research on how men were viewed as victims of physical violence from women, through the perspective and experiences of law enforcement officers. The purpose of this qualitative

phenomenological study was to focus on law enforcement officers lived experiences with adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

RQ1: What perspectives do law enforcement officers have on gender in general in IPV situations?

RQ2: How do law enforcement officers perceive adult heterosexual men who report they are victims of physical abuse from their partners?

RQ3: What experiences have law enforcement officers had with adult heterosexual men in IPV situations when their abuser was their female partner?

Framework

A concept that can explain why men are often unacknowledged as victims of abuse by women is the gender paradigm. The gender paradigm, in relation to IPV, included two components (Straus & Winstok, 2016). The first component was gender asymmetry, and the other was gender symmetry (Straus & Winstok, 2016). According to Falke et al. (2017), a theory that described men who abused women in IPV was gender asymmetry. Falke et al. further explained that gender asymmetry reinforced the differences in genders, making men the perpetrators and women the victims. Symmetry, in the gender paradigm, was explained as mutually combative IPV (Straus & Winstok, 2016).

Akers et al. (2016) stated adult men were dismissed as victims in society because women were notoriously victimized, not men; acknowledgement and prevention catered

to the women. This can potentially lead to creating a stigma for men who report their abuse. In continuing with the notion of stigma, men were aware that society looked at them as strong, powerful, and patriarchal, so their desire to report abuse by women diminished (Rakovec-Felser, 2014). Additionally, when these characteristics were attached to men, it did little to support law enforcement officers' empathy toward them (Rakovec-Felser, 2014). In a trickle-down effect, men suppressed their feelings to maintain their status as provider and protector of women and children (Rakovec-Felser, 2014). If adult heterosexual men reported abuse, it was these characteristics that often worked against them (Eckstein & Cherry, 2015). Stigma will be further reviewed in the following chapter.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative phenomenological approach because its purpose was to gather information from the lived experiences of the participants (Patton, 2015). In this research, participants were law enforcement officers who have daily interactions with adult heterosexual couples involved in IPV. Previous research (Ceelan et al., 2013; Entilli & Cipolletta 2016) indicated male victims of physical violence by females had negative experiences with law enforcement officers. Few articles regarding the lived experiences of law enforcement officers' interactions with men as victims of violence by women could be found. This study focused on the lived experiences' police officers have with adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV as opposed to perpetrators of IPV.

Definitions

Intimate partner violence: An actual or threatened act of violence from a person who was, or is in, an intimate relationship. IPV was further defined as a crime against a person or property, animal, or municipality in which coercion, control, punishment, intimidation, or revenge was used by one intimate partner toward another (CO Rev Stat § 18-6-800.3, 2017).

Intimate relationship: A relationship between current or former spouses, whether married or unmarried, who parent the same child regardless of having lived together at any point in time (CO Rev Stat § 18-6-800.3, 2017).

Physical acts of violence: Hitting, shoving, biting, kicking, and using weapons like knives (Augustine & Idowu, 2016).

Assumptions

The first assumption for the study was that participants answered the interview questions honestly. Interview questions included identifying if their beliefs on gender impacted who they saw as victims, as well as who they saw as perpetrators, in heterosexual relationships. Another assumption was the participants disclosed their experiences with as much detail as possible, when relevant. This is an assumption based on a combination of the expected honesty in their interview responses and their real-life experiences, as opposed to societal biases. The last assumption was that the qualitative phenomenological study was the appropriate methodology to use, considering the participants responses were based on lived experiences. The Center for Innovation in

Research and Teaching (n.d.) described the phenomenological approach as one which involved describing human experiences.

Scope and Delimitations

The research problem focused on law enforcement officers' perceptions of male victims of IPV. Research thus far suggests that adult heterosexual men declined to report IPV based on past negative experiences and being approached as the perpetrator. (Falke et al., 2017; Rakovec-Felser, 2014). In this study, male and female law enforcement officers who responded to IPV calls in which heterosexual men were the victim of IPV were selected as participants. Within the inclusion process, the scope of questions asked were limited to the police officers' experiences with adult heterosexual men who were victimized by women in IPV situations. Therefore, this study excluded police officers who dealt only with females or LGBTQ victims of IPV. Other first responders, such as firefighters and paramedics, were excluded, as the focus was on law enforcement officers.

Regarding theory, the scope of this study was to focus on the gender paradigm approach, and more specifically gender asymmetry. I chose gender asymmetry was because it explained why men were viewed as perpetrators and not victims. Additionally, since this was a phenomenological qualitative approach, the results were not generalizable to other professionals, as it focused specifically on the lived experiences of law enforcement officers.

Limitations

One limitation was that the study was restricted to male and female law enforcement officers' perceptions of adult male heterosexual victims of IPV. All the responses from the law enforcement officers acknowledged consistency with social norms of who commits IPV in terms of gender and therefore the results were less favorable for male victims of IPV. While how law enforcement officers viewed male IPV was important, other sources of information, such as from the male victims themselves, could have been more impactful.

Law enforcement officers with different demographics such as culture, race, language, and beliefs likely responded in ways that contributed to their understanding of what IPV was, regardless of the definitions based on state law. Officers' demographics also likely attributed to their experiences of IPV either directly or indirectly. These factors were considered when interviewing police officers, as they are out of the realm of my control.

In qualitative research, bias can be presented either intentionally or unintentionally. Because heterosexual males are so underreported and underrepresented as victims of IPV, it was important to be mindful of the tone of voice and interjections I used when their responses did not go in favor of acknowledging adult heterosexual male IPV. Police officers' responses to discussing IPV in general could have triggered some reactions that I was unaware of. Their responses were out of my control initially, though it was important to acknowledge and redirect when an emotional or verbal response was elicited.

Significance

According to Graham-Kevan et al. (2017), much of the world recognized that women being physically abused by men in intimate relationships was a social problem and a public health concern. Ahmadi et al. (2017) noted that some implications of violence included medical illnesses, mental illnesses, and modeled behavior that led to intergenerational violence and suicidal tendencies. Authors like Beaumont (2017) understood effects on a social level such as job losses, hospitalizations, stress, and death. However, those acknowledgments were directed toward understanding and changing the society standards. Interestingly, male IPV goes unheard, and opening doorways to understanding this phenomenon can lead to a better understanding of female to male abuse.

The law enforcement officers responses afforded opportunities that have the potential to lead to positive social change for understanding and assisting male victims of IPV. Additionally, community leaders and personnel in various positions, who work with the male IPV population, can provide more empathy, resources, and assistance. Men who sought services within the system were often shut down, and revictimized, by the same system that was in place to help victims (Graham-Kevan et al., 2017). Listening to the perspectives of members of law enforcement within this system led to insight into why this occurs.

Summary

This chapter introduced the abundance of literature in which women were recognized to be victims of IPV by male perpetrators. Key points included the

acknowledgement of women-led advocacy groups, such as the Battered Women's Movement, and the Violence Against Women's Act. The importance of these movements was included because they paved the way for legislators to pay attention to women who were battered. However, this was also a segue into the lack of recognition that men received in similar situations. This chapter also highlighted the extent to which men underreported acts of physical violence by their wives or spouses to law enforcement officers. Last, it touched on why adult heterosexual men either hesitated to report or refused to report IPV, which included reasons such as feeling emasculated if they did and being fearful of not being believed by law enforcement officers.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

On average, men were reported to be victims of IPV at a mere 10%, while 29% of women reported (National IPV Hotline, n.d.). According to Voce and Boxall (2018), the population least likely to report IPV to law enforcement was adult males. Upon further examination, adult heterosexual men who were abused by their female partners were even less likely to report such abuse (Entilli & Cipolletta, 2016). In instances when adult heterosexual males reported physical abuse, they experienced hostility towards them because they were assumed to be the batterer, or bias towards the woman because they were assumed to be the victim (Entilli & Cipolletta, 2016). For other male victims, they refrained from reporting IPV to law enforcement officers due to past negative experiences of being ridiculed by them and being treated as perpetrators rather than victims (Graham-Kevan et al., 2017). The purpose of the study was to explore law enforcement officers' lived experiences with adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV.

The literature review process was helpful in determining the strategy and pinpointing relevant key words used to locate relevant research on adult heterosexual IPV. Additionally, the literature review allowed for a thorough examination of the theoretical concepts that were relevant to this topic. Along the lines of gendered beliefs, this chapter will allow for insight on police officers' views of who perpetrates IPV and what their experiences with men as victims of IPV have involved.

This chapter is organized with heading and subheadings to more specifically identify core concepts. The headings discuss theories and conceptual frameworks then

specific theories as subheadings. Additionally, this method was used within the main sections of the literature review when describing various topics of male victims of IPV.

Search Strategy

The methodology used to produce relevant searches related to physical abuse in male IPV victimization included keyword combinations such as: *IPV, intimate partner violence,* and *intimate partner abuse*. Due to the selection being too big, more specific keyword phrases were added such as *physical abuse towards men, physical abuse,* and *IPV victimization*. Other variations of these search words were used.

IPV as seen from law enforcement officers' perspectives prompted an additional search which focused on *perspectives, beliefs, perceptions, views or attitudes, belief system, values, lived experiences and opinions*. Because the topic was also specific to male victims, keyword searches entailed: *men or man or male or males, or masculinity*. Additional keywords consisted of *heterosexual men, adult heterosexual men, men as victims of IPV by women, men as victims of intimate partner violence, gender stereotypes* and *intimate partner violence*, and variations of those keywords. The keywords were automatically prompted as part of the search in the Thoreau database and others. Many results were returned, though few focused on law enforcement officers' perceptions of male IPV victimization. Some of the articles that were found were relevant and useful.

Initially, many articles were found in Academic Search Complete in the Walden University library. *All Databases* was further selected as an option to expand the search with multiple databases. The databases within *Academic Search Complete* that were utilized comprised of: *Academic Search Complete, CINAHL Plus with Full Text,*

Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, Cochrane methodology, Primary Search, PsycArticles, PsycExtra, PsycTests, and *Soc Index with Full Text*. Various other databases used were *SAGE, Criminal Justice and Criminology, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Gale Academic OneFile Select, Health and Psychosocial Instruments, Nexis Uni*, and *Science Direct*.

Many of the results were related to women as victims of IPV and men as perpetrators regardless of what keywords were used. For example, if adult heterosexual male victims in IPV was searched, more results yielded females as victims of IPV. If too many specifics were included to focus on men as victims of IPV, again, fewer results were displayed. To compensate for the limited number of articles on male victims versus female victims of IPV, an extensive search was helpful. *Google Scholar* was used in addition to the *Walden University library* as were professional and educational organizations. Extensive reading within articles that seemed to be restricted to identifying women as victims of IPV allowed for more information to surface on male victims as well.

Theoretical Framework

Imenda (2014) indicated both theoretical and conceptual frameworks produce knowledge of a topic in conjunction with the assumptions and beliefs a person holds. Grant and Osanloo (2014) stated that theoretical frameworks were essentially the foundation in which all knowledge on a topic was founded. I embrace these explanations with high regard, as I believe assumptions and beliefs can lead to exploring knowledge that can become scholarly and sound research.

For this study, gender asymmetry (Straus & Winstok, 2016) was chosen as a framework to build upon based on the belief that men are not viewed as victims of IPV simply because they are men. Thobejane and Luthada (2019) expressed that a problem with the concept of adult heterosexual male IPV was that the feminist theory denied that men were victimized, or not victimized as often, as women. They also added that in Africa, adult heterosexual male IPV was a bigger problem than was acknowledged (Thobejane & Luthada, 2019).

IPV and gender were consistently debated among researchers (Straus & Winstok, 2016). According to Sylaska and Walters (2014), people generally believed women were victims of IPV more frequently than men. These beliefs aligned with gender asymmetry, and the feminist approach, regardless of the abuse men endured.

A qualitative study conducted by Yates (2020) included interpreting material from a previous study conducted in Canada, in which domestic family violence victimization was the focus. The study included 18 expert witnesses on family violence and two commissioners from the Commission of Family Violence, a combination of 69 oral and written testimonial from witnesses, and references and chapters from other material gathered. She categorized the information using NVivo and concluded that the women and children were consistently considered the victims, and the men were the perpetrators (Yates, 2020). Mottram and Salter (2015) interviewed eight women who worked as IPV counselors for female offenders, anywhere from 5 months to 25 years. Though the women they interacted with acknowledged that they were perpetrators, the therapists believed that the women engaged in self-defense against abusive men (Mottram & Salter,

2015). Breckenridge et al. (2018) sought to find out if gender was relevant in heterosexual Chinese relationships and if it was, which gender was most likely to be a victim. The researchers reviewed 54 previously written articles that involved only Chinese heterosexual IPV relationships (Breckenridge et al., 2018). While Breckenridge et al. acknowledged in their results that men were victims of psychological violence at higher rates than women, women were victimized more frequently than men, when physical violence was involved. The results of these studies demonstrated that women were believed to be abused more than men, even if men were victimized more.

In a study with contradictory results, four hypotheses were identified. One hypothesis was specific to physical IPV which stated Mexican men and women had similar rates of chronic abuse towards one another (Esquivel-Santovena et al., 2017). Esquivel-Santovena et al. (2017) gathered 437 heterosexual men and women, and provided them with a Spanish version of the Controlling Behaviors Scale. The participants were also given 28 vignettes of different scenarios in which conflict could be handled. Interestingly, the results indicated men were abused at higher rates than the women, in turn, discrediting gender asymmetry. The limitations they presented were that the participants were focused on a dyadic basis (Esquivel-Santovena et al., 2017). This proved to be a strength for this study. Similarly, Daigle and Policastro (2016) performed a longitudinal study follow-up from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. The study began when participants were 11 years of age in 1994, and ended when they were 34 years of age, in 2002. The participants consisted of boys and girls. Further, they used a quantitative approach IPV as an independent variable, and other factors such

as maternal attachment, substance abuse, and peer support as dependent variables (Daigle & Policastro, 2016). Esquivel-Santovena et al. and Daigle and Policastro also found more men than women had a long-term history of being abused by their heterosexual partner.

Straus and Winstok (2016) brought gender asymmetry and symmetry into more of a mutual context. They found that gender symmetry was becoming a dominant theoretical framework based on proposals from different researchers. They also noted there was not an attempt for those whose beliefs aligned with symmetry, to eradicate the idea of asymmetry (Straus & Winstok, 2016). A literature review conducted by Holmes et al. (2016) noted valid points on both sides. They concluded that there should be more of a "both" approach as opposed to an and/or approach. Holmes et al. specified that when researchers on either side expressed their points of view, it was based on more of a political agenda, as opposed to the recognition of context, operationalization, and sample type. For example, McLaren (2019) expressed how liberalism, colonialism, individualism, and the criminal justice system imposed IPV awareness as rights for women, while they highlighted that the abuse men suffered was different. Mace (2018) stated the *institution* of patriarchy in asymmetry was a necessity to address. Straus and Winstok noted that the ongoing debate of gender symmetry and asymmetry did a disservice to the topic and to the field.

The role of law enforcement officers is to ensure the safety of IPV across all populations and demographics. In areas like Finland, law enforcement officers detected a major increase in IPV over the years, making it the third biggest police matter to address (Fagerlund & Kaariainen, 2018). According to Birdsall et al. (2017), police officers were

expected to present less of a bias in acknowledging whether adult heterosexual men truly underreport and are victims as much as women.

Russell and Sturgeon (2018) stated adult heterosexual men in IPV situations were treated less fairly than women, likely due to gender norms and roles that aligned with Morgan and Davis-Delano's (2016) active and passive roles. To elaborate, the police officers that were interviewed in Morgan and Davis-Delano's study acknowledged that men were more likely to be treated unfairly in IPV mediations due to being thought of as active players of abuse in intimate relationships. Further, Dawson and Hotton (2014) had results that were mirrored in Russell and Sturgeon that indicated men were more likely to be arrested in an IPV situation if a woman was involved. Barkhuizen (2015) interviewed several male participants who acknowledged they were victims of IPV by their female counterparts. Unfortunately, each participant had an experience in which law enforcement officers did nothing despite the abuse received. Distinct types of abuse ranged anywhere from physical, to emotional, to verbal (Barkhuizen, 2015). Other adult heterosexual men in Tsui's (2014) study acknowledged that police officers were unhelpful and opted to help the women while bypassing their needs. They noted this was due to the discrimination they faced as men because they were not believed (Tsui, 2014). The experiences the participants had was that law enforcement did not look at them as though they were victims because they were men (Barkhuizen, 2015).

McCarrick (2015) expounded on the phenomenon of male IPV victimization and included how gender stereotypes dismissed men as having experienced violence from women. Consequently, women were found to be more violent than men when confronted

by police (Hine et al., 2018). Though the Hine et al. (2018) study was not geared toward intimate partners, it indicated that despite the assumed active and passive roles of gender, the women were not passive. McCarrick also noted that women were more likely than men to use physical aggression. However, gender stereotyping against men deterred the victims from reporting IPV to police. Costa et al. (2015) had comparable results in their study. They found that women were more likely than men to be physically aggressive, the difference being that when men were physical, more serious injuries were inflicted upon the women. Severity of IPV related injuries as a factor will be discussed in a later section.

Bentley et al. (2019) discussed the contention in which police officers believed whether heterosexual males or females were victims of IPV by their partners based on stereotypes. They concluded that police officers did not believe the men who were abused (Bentley et al. 2019). They were mocked by the police when the victims reported the abuse, and the police officers told the male victims they did not have time to hear such allegations (Bentley et al., 2019). The allegations police had no interest or time in hearing included the disbelief or impossibility that a woman, especially a smaller woman, could cause or inflict pain or injury on an adult man (Bentley et al., 2019).

Law enforcement officers outside of the United States work with IPV victims in which they have their gendered beliefs as well. One quantitative study, conducted in China, found that many officers believed women to be men's property in a patriarchal society (Jiang et al., 2018). They also found that law enforcement officers perceived women to be virtuous and obedient with qualities like their physical being, their presentation of speech as conforming, and their loyalty to the males in their family (Jiang

et al., 2018). Cruze and Muftic (2014) interviewed police officers in Bosnia and found that some officers discarded the patriarchal view of women being at fault for their own abuse and adopted a more liberal view that IPV should be taken seriously.

In continuing with the acknowledgement of police officers' perspectives of gender beliefs in IPV cases, it may be important to look beyond simply who is arrested and look more into the common vernacular used when police officers discuss IPV. In one case, police officers in Diemer et al.'s (2017) study constantly referred to the victim as she, while the perpetrator was referred to as he. This relayed the message that stereotyping and gender-bias confirmed men were perpetrators and women were victims. Police officers in Guthrie et al.'s (2015) research also demonstrated that in hypothetical non-violent (coercion, harassment via phone calls at work) and violent (physical abuse) situations, "Emily" was more likely to receive assistance from officers regardless of the situation (Guthrie et al., 2015). In the same scenarios, "John" was more likely than Emily to be arrested in both. At least one law enforcement officer believed (Guthrie et al., 2015) "Emily" was a vulnerable person and "John" was the "aggressor." These terms indicated the use of gendered stereotypes held in favor of women.

When Gracia et al. (2014) conducted their quantitative study on violence, they included non-intimate violence of men against women, non-intimate violence of men against men, and only IPV of men against women. In other words, perspectives of police officers' in female perpetrated violence against males were excluded. The analysis was comprised of high or low scores of benevolent and hostile sexisms (gendered stereotypes such as women were viewed as weak and needing assistance) and empathy in relation to

each group (Gracia et al., 2014). An inclusion of whether law enforcement officers utilized unconditional (assertive and unwilling to work with victims in pressing charges) and conditional (a willingness to work with the victim on the charges against their partner) approaches were used as well. Essentially, the results in the police officers' views of IPV between men and women, and gendered beliefs, demonstrated that the majority of polices officers (male only) held a traditional view of gendered stereotypes. Traditional, meaning they likely acted in favor of the woman when IPV occurred and utilized conditional approaches (Gracia et al., 2014). Recall that a traditional view of sexism was that women were traditionally viewed as weak (Gracia et al., 2014). It should be noted the police officers' perspectives were based on hypothetical situations and therefore actual and valid results could not be confirmed (Gracia et al., 2014).

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU, 2016) defined gender-bias as consciously or unconsciously discriminating against other groups of people. They emphasized that police officers engaged in discrimination against women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community who were victims of sexual assault or IPV, but not adult heterosexual men (Espinoza and Warner, 2016). Wriggins (2018) work also focused on women and the LGBTQ community not receiving protection and fair rights in IPV stalking and sexual assaults, while the mention of adult heterosexual men was limited to more men than women engage in abusing their partner. Along the same vein, the Department of Justice (2017) also emphasized women and the LGBT community as victims of IPV and sexual assault with minimal mention of adult heterosexual males. The report acknowledged that police officers engaged in stereotyping

and were encouraged to stop discriminating and stereotyping against women and the LGBT populations.

In summary, law enforcement officers were unlikely to acknowledge or show interest in men as victims of IPV from women in heterosexual relationships (Bentley et al., 2019). This was due to law enforcement officers traditional views of women as victims in IPV situations and needing more assistance (Gracia et al., 2014). Not only were men disbelieved as victims in IPV, they were treated as the aggressors or active players overall (Russell & Sturgeon, 2018; Delano & Morgan, 2016). These beliefs were categorized as gender stereotyping, in which men were masculine and patriarchal, and women were unable to harm men (Dawson & Hotton, 2014). Law enforcement officers overall believed heterosexual males were not victims of IPV, regardless of the country (Barkhuizen, 2015; Jiang et al., 2018). More of a discussion of male-on-female IPV is warranted to demonstrate male heterosexual IPV.

Male Victims of Female Violence

IPV has been extensively researched over the years. Mostly, literature covered female victims of IPV by their male partners (Epstein & Goodman, 2019; Rada, 2014). While it was necessary to address, the lesser discussed issue of adult heterosexual male victims of IPV was not as established, despite the statistics that were available (Hinsliff-Smith & McGarry, 2017).

An exploratory analysis conducted by Weiss et al. (2016) concluded that 57% of male-on-female violence, and 56% of female-on-male violence, in intimate relationships was reported to police. The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS, 2017) indicated that from

2006 to 2015, 1.3 million people reported nonfatal IPV in general. Women reported 55% of the time in cases of severe injury, and 54% of the time with minor injuries, while men reported serious injuries at 77%, minor injuries at 57%, and, 49% did not report at all (BJS, 2017).

The Zur Institute (1995-2020) estimated roughly 835,000 men each year were victimized in domestic situations by their female counterparts. Adult heterosexual men who declined to report IPV may have feared they would not be believed or they were not previously believed by law enforcement officers (Zur Institute, 1995-2019). Statistics from the Center for Safety and Change (n.d.) showed one in four men were physically abused by an intimate partner to include pushing, shoving, and slapping, and one in seven men were severely abused, to the extent of being hit, slammed against something, choked, and/or burned by a woman (Center for Safety and Change, n.d.).

While some of the men and women in Crane et al. (2014) acknowledged perpetrating IPV 70% of the time, the results indicated that women perpetrated more minor forms of abuse than did men. B'Elanger et al. (2015) found the women in their study reported being more physically violent than the men. Overall, the men were victimized at much the same rates as women (B'Elanger et al., 2015). These results were confirmed in a different study where male and female IPV rates were comparable (Alati et al., 2015). In a study intended to identify women as victims of IPV, Babcock et al. (2016) found men were equally victimized, showing more symmetrical IPV. Admittedly, some of the statistics were not clear as to whether IPV included heterosexual or same-sex violence.

Physical Abuse

Emotional, psychological, and other forms of IPV certainly occur in some domestic relationships. Another form of IPV in intimate relationships is physical abuse. Studies from researchers in which physical violence was acknowledged as female perpetrated with male victims allowed for more understanding of the occurrence of men as victims of physical abuse.

Physical abuse in some cases involved using weapons and body to body contact to harm male victims. Participants in Bates (2016) qualitative study acknowledged that male victims had objects nearest to their female partner thrown at them, they were kicked in the testicles, and hit in the head with a boot. Other victims in Bates (2016) study were branded with an iron and attacked with a hammer. According to Fehringer and Hindin (2014), the females hit the males. One such victim had his head hit on the wall with nails sticking out, while others were hit with bags of ice, broomsticks, and other objects that could be found (Fehringer & Hindin, 2014). Some victims were burned with boiling water, kicked, and slapped (Fehringer & Hindin, 2014). Similarly, male victims of IPV in Keeling, Mottershead, and Taylor (2017) were repeatedly punched by the women with whom they were intimate. When male participants were interviewed by Morgan and Wells (2016), some experienced being hit, kicked, spit on, and punched while others were scratched deeply in the face to the point of needing plastic surgery, bit in various places, and kicked in the stomach and ribs. The interviewees in Morgan and Wells study also endured abuse while children were present. One man was abused by his female partner with objects to the point of having his bone exposed in his shin (Hall, 2016).

Though it was a small number of male participants in Fahny et al. (2017), men admitted to being attacked by women with objects before they physically retaliated. For example, one participant acknowledged that his partner threw dishes at him and followed him in the garage, even when he attempted to walk away (Whiting et al., 2014). Eventually, he retaliated by breaking things himself. Considering retaliation as a factor for men who attempted to leave the abusive situation, Ellonen et al. (2015) had gathered results that victimization played a role in provocation. Their results demonstrated that it took a decent amount of time before a man retaliated against an intimate partner even when they were provoked (Ellonen et al., 2015). They suggested chivalry played a major role in refraining (Ellonen et al., 2015). Results from DiLillo et al.'s (2015) study demonstrated that men retaliated due to having pre-conflict with their own negative emotions and that in general provocation was a factor for retaliation amongst men and women.

Women appeared to be justified in abusing their partners while men were still seen as aggressive, despite the abuse they received. Participants in Bohner et al. (2014) acknowledged that females assaulted their male partners due to jealousy, and a need to regain control. When Kelly and Westmarland (2016) interviewed men directly, they acknowledged abusing women to the point of physical violence such as breaking ribs, kicking them, shoving them, and slapping them. However, the participants used words like just and only when they described the incident. The researchers emphasized how the men used words such as *just* or *only*, to discredit accountability (Kelly & Westmarland, 2016). Interviews in which the men stated the women in their lives abused them first,

were not acknowledged (Kelly & Westmarland, 2016). Conversely when justification was presented, the primary basis was how men inflicted trauma and pain.

Fearon et al. (2014) stated women were more likely to attack their abusers to reduce the chances of being murdered by them. Similar results in a study conducted by Straus (2014) emerged. They found 40% of women initiated the assaults prior to the intervention, and 66% assaulted prior to that. The interpretation was that women abused and assaulted their partners due to previous victimization (Straus, 2014). When it was explained why men perpetrated IPV, there was no mention of previous abuse by a woman. Rather, Barker et al. (2015) stated men were essentially prone to violent tendencies because they witnessed violence or engaged in violence in other situations. One exception was that some men perpetrated violence because they were depressed (Barker et al., 2015).

In summary, statistics indicated the prevalence of female IPV was higher for women than men in heterosexual relationships. This was referred to as gender asymmetry. Prevalence of adult heterosexual male perpetration and female victimization in IPV consistently demonstrated gendered stereotyping norms. With the acknowledgement of women as victims, the male partner was often seen as the primary aggressor regardless of being victimized. The stereotype that IPV was a crime that women were more often victims of, was shared in a societal manner as well as from the standpoint of law enforcement officers. When adult heterosexual males who were victims of IPV encountered law enforcement officers, their experiences were negative. Negative experiences included being doubted, dismissed, or ignored altogether. Additionally, as

part of gender stereotyping, men were also not likely to report abuse to law enforcement officers' due to being viewed as dominant, macho, and patriarchal. These factors resulted in lowering the prevalence of male IPV. In cases where males were acknowledged at higher rates of IPV than women, in heterosexual relationships, the topic of gender asymmetry became more recognizable.

Severity of Physical Abuse

In Hong Kong, emergency department admission records from 54 males and 318 female patients, were selected for a study conducted by Choi et al. (2015). In general, more victims admitted into the hospital were males (Choi et al., 2015). Of those records, 37.5% of the males were attacked with a knife versus 11.7% of females (Choi et al., 2015).

Recall that Costa et al. (2015) found men were abused at higher rates than women though women's injuries were more severe. According to Gricourt et al. (2014) the outcome was similar. While these studies concluded more men were abused with less severity another study found severity to be as high for men. Specifically, Caridade et al. (2014) found that 12.2 % of male victims compared to 6.5% of female victims endured more severe abuse. When aggravated assault was accounted for in terms of seriousness and severity, according to gender, male victims were found to have sustained more minor and serious injuries (Addington & Perumean-Chaney, 2014). Continuing with the severity men endured in IPV, data collected in a forensic unit in France also had similar results. In short, women were victimized more frequently by men though men were victimized more severely by women. They concluded many of the injuries occurred in the

upper body extremities such as heart, chest, and abdominal areas. In contrast, Cox et al. (2015) demonstrated women were injured at higher rates than men. They also noted that the lower rate meant men suffered from less injuries than do women and that men were mostly the perpetrators (Cox et al., 2015). An important factor in this study was that the patients were criminal justice based and their interpretation was that there were likely more female victims. The same potential victimization was not honored toward men (Cox et al., 2015). One organization showed in their statistics that even though more women appeared to be victims of IPV men had higher injury rates (Mankind Initiative, 2019).

Males who were physically abused by their female counterparts received injuries typically seen on the head, face, neck, and upper limbs. Men who had sustained these types of injuries were abused via weapons such as knives when a woman's physical strength would not suffice (Choi et al., 2015). In the statistics of men who were of physically abused by an intimate partner, 29% of them endured severe bruising or bleeding while others suffered broken bones, including teeth (Mankind Initiative, 2019). In this same scenario, women suffered the same types of injuries though at 23% as opposed to 29% of men (Mankind Initiative, 2019). A man in the United Kingdom was victimized by his former partner through controlling behavior, which then escalated to severe physical abuse (Iqbal, 2014). Eventually she strangled him, hit him with a hammer, cut him with a penknife, and stabbed him with a beer bottle (Iqbal, 2014). Additionally, he received a broken eye socket and deep scratches that required stitches, and a metal plate in his head (Iqbal, 2014). His response when asked why he did not hit

her back was simply that he did not hit women, and in his very own way, loved her (Iqbal, 2014).

Situational Factors in Males Exposed to Physical IPV

Dufort et al. (2015) shared insight from their studies and found that when males were exposed to IPV, depression, number of medications being used, hazardous drinking, and psychological and social problems were present. According to Walker (2017), men were victimized by women as much as women were victimized by men when alcohol was part of the equation. However, there was less emphasis on the men who were victimized by intoxicated or high women. Bachus et al. (2014) addressed the context in which alcohol consumption played a bidirectional use in violence, though again, they emphasized female IPV when men consumed alcohol. In Businelle et al. (2014) there was a more direct link to women perpetrating violence towards their partners while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Fehringer and Hindin (2014) confirmed one female participant became angry when her male partner purchased and consumed alcohol when they had financial difficulties.

Researchers found that people who were victims of IPV were in relationships in which living apart was a factor as opposed to living together and being married (Kivela et al., 2018). In addition to marital status and living arrangements, income and parenting played a role in IPV disputes (Kivela et al., 2018). Income was a potential factor in Barbosa et al. (2016). The participants were in the low-income bracket, had only eight years of education, and were victimized by their female partners. There was a possibility that the men were victimized due to them not bringing enough income into the home.

Balabukha et al. (2016) confirmed there was a link between financial struggles and male IPV. Finances also proved to be a reason that men were victimized (Turner, 2019).

Hall's (2016) online forums revealed men were victimized by women to gain control of them. One male victim of a female perpetrator stated his partner threw some of his favorite belongings at him and soon after began turning off the water and lights (Graham-Kevan et al., 2017). It was noted that in the 1880's to the early 1900's that even if a man was victimized, he would rarely be viewed as one, while the women were given very light sentences (Turner, 2019). Though Hamberger and Larsen (2015) stated there was not enough information on control and gender in their study that control was a factor in men and women in IPV situations.

Stigma Associated with Males Reporting IPV

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI, n.d.) defined stigma as having shame or feelings of judgement related to mental health and mental health services. Appleton and Perryman (2016) stated that when men and women alike reported physical abuse from a partner, they experienced feelings of shame and embarrassment. Unfortunately, the degree to which adult heterosexual men experienced stigma may be hugely underestimated. For this reason, lower numbers of men were likely to report the abuse to agencies, including police (Appleton & Perryman, 2016).

Challenges of Masculinity

The male participants in McCarrick et al. (2016) acknowledged that one reason heterosexual men did not disclose IPV from women hinged on masculinity. Masculinity included their own perceptions in addition to societal perceptions of masculinity. To this

point, participants in Hammock et al. (2016) made comments such as the men should just *man up* and *take it like a man*. Callands et al. (2018) referred to thoughts and statements like this as cultural scripting.

Men were thought to have to uphold an image of control and strength consistent with male perpetration while women were supposed to be the victims in IPV (Wallace, 2014). These images were largely based on societal expectations which prevented men from coming forward and seeking help when they were victimized by women (Appleton & Perryman, 2016). Arnocky and Vallaincourt (2014) distributed a questionnaire designed as a hypothetical victimization of IPV, to participants, to assess levels of stigma they may have felt. They found results similar to Wallace (2014) in that men were less likely to see themselves as victims of abuse and less likely to report the abuse. They also yielded similar results to Appleton and Perryman (2016) where gender played a role in reporting less, and stigma as a potential problem. Participants in Morgan and Wells (2016) study confirmed this way of thinking due to their subjective experiences. They also acknowledged that in general, being a man prevented them from receiving the same help women received due to societal expectations (Morgan & Wells, 2016).

Narratives from women who followed a feminist belief system acknowledged that men in general were seen as controlling, could get anything they wanted whenever they wanted, had negative experiences with other men in their life, and some overall just hated men (misandry) (Bankoff et al., 2017). Men and women participated in a study by Murray et al. (2018) to gather information on how survivors of IPV experienced stigma. In their study stigma included guilt, shame, isolation and blame. Some participants

confirmed they felt these things when they were faced with discrimination, stereotypes, and social norms (Murray et al., 2018).

Palmer and Subramaniam (2018) discussed how these stigmas violated men's rights. One men's right organization, located in India, was referred to as the Men's Rights Association, while another one in India was known as The Save India Family Foundation Palmer and Subramaniam (2018). In the United States, A Voice for Men, was identified as a men's right's group (Palmer & Subramaniam, 2018). All three of these organizations challenged other agencies in which men were condemned in IPV situations automatically because they were men. The message sent was that the stigma against men did not allow for much needed resources and other sources of help because there was not equality in who was viewed as a victim of IPV

Mental Health

Adult heterosexual men who endured physical abuse in IPV situations were not without their mental health consequences. Among the symptoms that adult heterosexual men endured at the hands of the women in their lives, were depression, anxiety, and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (Cafferky et al., 2019; Cervilla et al., 2018; Douglas & Hines, 2015). Some researchers recognized alcohol and marijuana use (Gehring & Vaske, 2015) and suicidal ideations (Cervilla et al., 2018; Wolford-Clevenger et al., 2016) in addition to depression, though they did not include anxiety or PTSD. This section focuses on depression, depression in conjunction with suicidality, and PTSD.

Depression and Suicidality

Depression was the most recognized symptom of adult heterosexual men who endured IPV. According to Renner et al. (2014), men who were victims of physical abuse had a 50% increased chance of experiencing depression in comparison to men who had not been victimized by their partner. In corroboration with law enforcement, some participants in a qualitative study experienced depression from the abuse they received and depression from the police not believing them (McCarrick et al., 2015). Other struggles that men endured by abuse of women, led some men to feeling suicidal (Oh et al., 2019). This posed a concern because while more women had suicidal ideations, more men attempted the act of completing suicide (Dufort et al., 2015).

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

According to one study by Silove et al. (2017) the participants experienced more traumatic events while women reported experiencing higher levels of traumatic events. When Silove et al. discussed the prevalence of whether men or women experienced higher levels of trauma, specific to gender-based violence, both men and women had an equal potential to develop Postraumatic Stress Disorder. In a contradictory finding, Beydoun et al. (2017) showed men had higher levels of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder along with depression and suicidality. In both studies, men were either equal to women to develop PTSD or had a greater chance.

Summary

Existing literature on the prevalence of heterosexual IPV has focused on women as victims. This chapter served as a segue into how law enforcement officers perceived

men and women in IPV situations, more specifically physical abuse. There was an abundance of research on women as victims of IPV and men as perpetrators. While there were statistics on the rate at which male victims reported abuse to law enforcement and their experiences with law enforcement, the more representative population of IPV was women. This fell under the category of gender stereotyping and gender asymmetry. Statistics often represent women as victims of IPV more than men and their severity being worse than men's. When it came to who the aggressor and the victim were in IPV situations from law enforcement officers' perspective thus far, women were viewed as the victim. In turn, this can make the rate of IPV lower for men even if the true statistics higher. Some officers who were involved in studies addressed in the literature also recognized that men were less likely than women to report IPV.

The theoretical frameworks revolved around feminist approaches to help readers understand why men were rarely seen as the victims of IPV. Patriarchy, masculinity, and power and control in males were assumed to be the primary reasons. Over the course of time, women were also found to be aggressors toward their male partners due to power and control. Because the consensus was that it was not feasible for women to attack and abuse men, power and control was snuffed out of the equation and self-defense was recognized as a major theme. Self-defense for female IPV victims was acknowledged because of the difference in physical stature where women were thought to be petite and incapable of physically harming a man. Minimal justification of self-defense was utilized for men. This not only minimized the power that women can and do have, in physical

altercations with men, but it also impacted men's interactions with law enforcement officers because the officers refused to believe them.

In short, the feminist theoretical perspectives have rightfully opened doors for women to be recognized as victims of abuse. However, there was a tendency to do adult heterosexual men a disservice by minimizing the amount of abuse they received at the hands of women. Depression and depression with suicidal tendencies or attempts were an overarching mental health consequence of adult heterosexual male victims of IPV. Although women struggled more with suicidal ideations, men had higher numbers of actual attempts. Men also endured mental health illnesses such as PTSD and anxiety which was at times ignored.

This chapter utilized qualitative and quantitative journal articles along with professional and educational organizations. The next chapter will discuss the methodology that aligns with the content in this chapter to include the content from both qualitative and quantitative articles. However, the current study is qualitative focused moving forward

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed law enforcement officers' perspectives on male IPV victimization. Additionally, the chapter discussed key points in how law enforcement officers' interactions with male victims of IPV contributed to the stigma that was already associated with a man being abused by a woman. It was important to include how men were physically abused in IPV situations to the extent of being hit, kicked, pushed, shoved as well as other forms. Within the realm of male victims of abuse by women, it was noted that men were attacked with objects used as weapons. The masculinity factor was two-fold because on one hand men were expected to be strong and dominant. However, those very features were used against them in situations in which they either defended themselves from women or were viewed as the perpetrator regardless of not engaging in the violence. It was important to address this as part of the victimization process. Last, it was acknowledged that IPV abuse, whether it was a man or a woman, had caused or had the potential to cause mental health symptoms such as depression, suicidality, and PTSD.

Purpose

There was an abundance of research on women as victims of intimate partner abuse from adult heterosexual males who physically, sexually, or emotionally abused women (Armour et al., 2014). However, there was limited research on men who were physically abused by women, through the perspective and experiences of law enforcement officers. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to

explore law enforcement officers' perceptions of adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV by their female spouses or partners.

Research Design and Rationale

This study presented the research questions as a guide. The second step consisted of identifying which design method to use and the rationale for that method. Third, the role of the researcher in a qualitative study and the ethics pertaining to the role of the researcher was addressed.

Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What are perceptions of law enforcement officers on adult heterosexual men as victims of violence?

RQ2: What gendered beliefs do law enforcement officers have about perpetrators of physical abuse in adult heterosexual intimate relationships

RQ3: What experiences have law enforcement officers had with adult heterosexual men in IPV situations?

Research Tradition

Phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences of an individual(s) or events, what certain or specific events might have significance to someone, and why or how a mental picture in someone's mind helps them perceive something (eidetic; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Phenomenology was further explained as focusing on people's experiences and how they described those experiences (Patton, 2015). More specifically, Neubauer et al. (2019) added that transcendental phenomenology would allow the experiences to be

explained by the participants, free from judgement and bias by the researcher. Essentially, the transcendental component was a way for a researcher to acknowledge that regardless of their knowledge, thoughts, opinions, or otherwise, they were not relevant when listening to how a participant described their story (Neubauer et al., 2019).

The in-depth interviewer approach allowed me to gain first-hand information. Padilla-Diaz (2015) clarified that interviews as a form of data collection served to gather detailed information, and if necessary, to further expand on the information to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of the participants. This method of data collection was used to gain insight into the perspectives of law enforcement officers' experiences with male victims of IPV. Further, the transcendental phenomenological method was used to explore their responses in more detail and to grasp a bigger picture of the officers' experiences in relation to gender and IPV.

Rationale

The research design that was used to better understand the lived experiences of how law enforcement officers perceive male victims of IPV was based on the interactions and experiences they had with the victims. By using the additional component of transcendentalism, a conscious effort was made to set aside biases and to be present and aware of how the participants shared their experiences.

Other approaches were not used in this study as the relevance of lived experiences precisely targeted the purpose and intention. Considerations for the study included: systems theory, which would have explicated how a system, such as law enforcement, functions and how that functioning affects interpersonal relationships, and grounded

theory, which would have integrated the gender asymmetry theory within the context of observation in a system (Patton, 2015).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher in this study, I collected personal and professional information from law enforcement officers regarding their interaction with male victims of IPV. In the current study, it was pertinent to convey what the participants experienced in a manner that accurately described their experiences (Austin & Sutton, 2015). There was no power differential that existed, and no work ethics had to be addressed, as it was not a place of employment.

It was important to refrain from integrating biases consciously. Butler (2016) expanded on Husserl's definition of epoche meaning to suspend judgement, and added that our judgement was a product of pseudodoxia or presumed truths. In this study, it was presumed men would be under acknowledged in the abuse they faced due to gendered stigma. I was mindful of these believed truths and reflected on them as it was necessary throughout the remaining steps in this process. In this sense, I paid particular attention to my biases as they stemmed from working in a treatment center wherein male IPV offenders viewed themselves as victims also. In facilitating IPV offender groups, access to the police report was a given. In many cases, the men and women's accounts of mutual violence was written. It was working with this population, that I decided advocating for them was a goal.

Methodology

This section consists of participant selection and participant criteria for the present study. It also contains relevant information on the data collection method I used and the rationale for that method. I discuss data analysis and what the process entailed. Finally, this section includes trustworthiness and all that was applicable to it within the study.

Participant Selection

The participants were law enforcement officers that responded to adult heterosexual male IPV victims. Male and female officers were selected to ensure multiple views on the gender of IPV victims and to have views based on the gender of the officers as well. All police officers were over the age of 21 and met strict requirements in the state of Colorado. The sampling strategy used was stratified. According to Patton (2015), stratified sampling was a combination of two or more types of purposeful sampling. In this study, I combined homogenous sampling as all the participants were police officers and all of the IPV victims were adult heterosexual male. (Patton, 2015). More so, a high-impact case sampling focused on the impact IPV had a societal whole, and how the field of law-enforcement influenced society. Additionally, the high-impact case sampling was lengthy in documentation to capture the significance of their work with IPV (Patton, 2015).

Instrumentation

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument used to collect the essence of the lived experiences per participant (Henriquez, 2014). The information collected

from the participants were conducted face-to-face sessions using Zoom audio. Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that face-to-face interviews should be semi-structured, pre-planned and written down prior to the interview, and allow for growth and dialogue as the interview occurs. Henriquez (2014) stated interviews should last 2 to 3 hours per participant. I conducted semi-structured and pre-planned face-to-face interviews via Zoom that were approximately 45 minutes in length.

Previous researchers indicated anywhere from 5 to 25 participants was suggested in phenomenology sampling sizes. Other sources stated no specific number was recommended or suggested because information was not sufficient unless it was saturated (Barrett et al., 2018; Henriques, 2014; Patton, 2015). Patton also stated in phenomenology, the number of participants range anywhere from 5 to 6 or up to 20 participants. In this study, nine participants were selected as that was all that volunteered.

Data Analysis Plan

This study was designed to capture the essence of the lived experiences of police officers' interactions with male victims of IPV, and how they viewed those victims. Peterson (2019) described several different ways to capture this information and to analyze it. She stated such ways included capturing all relevant themes that pertain to the research questions and using quotes as is relevant to the study (Peterson, 2019). As part of the study, I recorded then wrote their responses to capture all the information relayed. More specifically, I listened for the themes needed to precisely and accurately reflect the research questions. Normann (2017) stated that going into the interview, analyzing the data, interpreting it, and noting it should be done with a naivety so as not to presume my

knowledge has meaning. She also acknowledged that phenomenological research was comprised of many aspects of relating the information and being mindful of what emerged (Normann, 2017).

Trustworthiness

Credibility is a process in which the data and analysis are interpreted, and to ensure that all relevant and pertinent information is included (Bengtsson, 2016). Credibility was also referred to as internal validity and could be checked through triangulation, prolonged contact, member checks, saturation, reflexivity, and peer review. I called the participants back for clarification of their previous responses.

Transferability focuses on whether the results of the research can be applied across multiple settings (Mandal, 2018). In my study, transferability was limited due to male IPV victims and police officers as participants.

Dependability is a method in which the researcher allows someone outside of the research process to audit, analyze, and critique the information being gathered. This process allows for more efficient and quality work to be produced (Mandal, 2018). In my study, the dependability process consisted of my chair, my second committee member, and other staff with vital positions at Walden University.

Confirmability was addressed in the study by linking the responses of the participants directly to the research questions and the theories used as a means of explaining the study. The research questions and theories were based on gendered beliefs, perspectives, and experiences of law enforcement officers who interacted with male victims of IPV. Additionally, confirmability was implemented by means of refraining at

every level of consciousness from inserting biases. Because I have such a passion for the subject matter, I ensured, to the best of my ability, that the results from the participants beliefs were free from biases.

I analyzed the statements from the interviews with the participants then identified themes and subthemes. The themes and the subthemes were consistent with the research questions. Each research question had multiple themes.

Ethical Procedures

I gained approval from the institution review board (IRB). The first step included the completion of Form A, which was necessary to ensure that all ethical standards were met. The next step consisted of direct contact with the IRB to ensure nothing else needed to be adjusted, deleted, or added. This occurred after the proposal was submitted, then approved in Taskstream. As part of the application and review process, I discussed the inclusion and exclusion criteria, prepared the informed consent, and the participants acknowledged their consent via email. The clients were not awarded financial gain.

Collected materials such as interviews from the participants, signed or audio recorded informed consent, and confidentiality of relevant material are currently kept in a confidential database. Only my committee members, myself, and relevant and necessary staff on the IRB have access to the materials. Furthermore, there was no conflict of interest to be addressed with current or former supervisors or employees, as data were not collected from known officers prior to the interview. More so, their identification was kept confidential, and no participants withdrew from the study early. Last, no incentives were offered, as the benefits were for research.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the overall purpose of the study and aligned the research questions and theories with the purpose. I also discussed the process that I followed to gain approval from the IRB. Continuing, I discussed the importance of having an informed consent ready for participants, as well as methodology, instrumentation, my role as a researcher, data analysis, and trustworthiness.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of law enforcement officers with adult heterosexual male victims of domestic violence. Chapter 4 describes the three research questions that guided this study and details of the study. In this chapter, data collection and a description of the process will also be discussed. Further, I convey demographic information such as who the participants were, what criteria was involved in selecting them, and what the setting included. More so, this chapter discusses follow-up on trustworthiness of the results, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

RQ1: What perspectives do law enforcement officers have on gender in general in IPV situations?

RQ2: How do law enforcement officers perceive adult heterosexual men who report they are victims of physical abuse from their partners?

RQ3: What experiences have law enforcement officers had with adult heterosexual men in IPV situations when their abuser was their female partner?

Setting

There were no organizational conditions such as personnel changes, budget cuts, or other traumas that influenced participants at the time of the study or the interpretation of results. Police chief administrators or other personnel sent out reminders to staff that

this study was being conducted, as there were not enough participants initially. All participants answered voluntarily regardless of the email reminders to them.

Demographics

The sample consisted of nine law enforcement officers. Officers were a combination of men and women and veteran and new. All nine participants reported having been dispatched and responded to domestic violence calls and interchangeably IPV disputes. More so, all the officers acknowledged responding to adult heterosexual calls where the male was the victim.

Data Collection

For this study, I collected data via semi-structured interviews through Zoom Audio. Additionally, all interviews were transcribed by hand, verbatim. Interviews were scheduled to last 45 minutes. However, some officers completed the interview before the time allotted due to shorter responses. Participants were nine law enforcement officers who met the inclusion criteria of having responded directly to adult heterosexual male victims of domestic violence. Additionally, they were men and women, and some had long standing positions as law enforcement officers while some were newer to the field.

All participants were police officers recruited in four different counties in Colorado. Approval from the police officers were needed first, and letters of approval were sent to me, which in turn were sent to the IRB at Walden University. Once the IRB approved, the police department personnel sent out emails to all the law enforcement officers in their department. From there, police officers were sent emails inquiring if they

were interested in participating in the study; each acknowledged the consent via email. All data collection was ethical as discussed in Chapter 3.

Peoples (2020) discussed bracketing or epoche (to suspend judgements) and along-side bracketing was phenomenological reduction (to intentionally suspend my judgements), noesis (thinking or interpretation), noema (any thoughts), intentionality (sense of consciousness and awareness), and horizon (being present when discussing their experience), as part of the Husserlian framework. Within this framework, bracketing and phenomenological reduction were used when I had to be fully aware that many officers would think of men more as perpetrators and women more as victims. It proved to be somewhat difficult because my experiences and understanding, within the realm of epoche, regarding adult heterosexual male victim IPV was that men were not acknowledged as victims to the extent that literature indicated women were.

Data Analysis

Hoetis (2020) discussed interpretive approaches and descriptive approaches for data analysis. Transcendental phenomenology had multiple philosophers work that was consistent and useful when deciding what analytic framework to use. The following addressed the approach and framework that was utilized when I analyzed the data.

Husserl's Hermeneutic Circle as Interpretive

When I analyzed the transcendental phenomenology data, or lived experiences approach, the hermeneutical circle was consistent with Husserl's analytical framework. Peoples (2020) shared that within the hermeneutical circle, the researcher must analyze the data as a whole, then understand the parts that make the whole. A new understanding

then emerges every time the whole and parts are analyzed (Peoples, 2020). The process continues, as consistent with a circle. However, Peoples described this process more as a spiral because in a circle, the information goes back to itself, whereas in a spiral, new information emerges through the analysis process.

In this manner, I read the transcripts verbatim as a whole, repeatedly. Following a complete reading, I broke down all the responses from the individual participants and began recognizing themes that were emerging. Every time I read and reread the entire transcripts and the individual statements, the clearer the themes started becoming, as consistent with the circle. Additionally, information became clearer and more was being heard every time I listened to the audio recordings, allowing for more accurate themes; this was consistent with the spiral aspect of this circle.

Descriptive Analysis

Aslaigh and Coyne (2021) noted that Gadamer (1975) believed that a systemic approach was also needed as an additional way to analyze the material. Hoetis (2020) showed that, per this acknowledgement, Max Van Manen (1997) integrated Husserl's and Heidegger's approaches in his framework, making both descriptive and interpretive approaches relevant and useful. For my study, in addition to the hermeneutic circle interpretive analytical framework, I implemented Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method as the descriptive framework.

The first step in Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step method was familiarizing myself with the interviews. Familiarization included listening to the audio recorded interviews several times, and then reading and rereading the handwritten transcription from the

audio recordings several more times. I did this process for over a month until I could eventually recall what the officers' responses were without reading them or listening to them verbatim. During this step, I was also beginning to gather information for the second step, which was identifying significant statements.

In the second step of Colaizzi's (1978) analytical method, I identified significant statements relevant to the direct phenomenon of IPV and more specifically, to the research questions. For example, research question one reads as *what perspectives do law enforcement officers have on gender in general in IPV situations?* In this case, one significant statement came from participant five who shared:

> there's a lot less cases that I know of men being victims, but with the uhm, with the population growing as well as women who are also being, you know, as they're also being more women in prison or in jails and also women who have caused some type of crime, it's growing, you know. It's not as much as men, but overall, I think there is less men who are victims in a domestic violence incident.

In research question two that asks *how do law enforcement officers perceive adult heterosexual men who report they are victims of physical abuse from their partner?* a significant statement that arose was:

> It's obviously not true with every case, but I would say a good majority of the time, it seems like the males are almost the battered women and that they've been going through some type of physical situation with their female partner and are just kind of like completely the victim. Really uhm, seems like a lot of these guys try everything that they can to like defend themselves or like step away- be

> reasonable to talk to the girls- but uhm, just how it turns out is that they ended up getting kind of the crap beat out of them for a guy, and are generally so upset and like they don't wanna leave the girl, and then also don't want to be like you know, I'm not trying to cry wolf here or like be a big baby about it- and so I think it's like a huge damper on their masculinity because they feel like they can't control the female.

Research question three asked *what experiences have law enforcement officers had with adult heterosexual men in IPV situations when their abuser was their female partner?* One significant statement from a participant was:

> they downplay it more, I guess trying to act tougher and like they didn't get hurt or anything like that. Uhm, so I think in general, they probably downplay uhm, what happened and how violent it was.

Step 3 was specific to formulating meanings from the law enforcement officers' significant statements. The process of formulating meanings was crucial and time-consuming. Step 3 also had additional elements, which included transitioning and clarification.

Abalos et al. (2016) noted that formulating meanings included a transition from understanding what the participants said to what they meant in each of the significant statements. More so, they indicated that meanings were sometimes hidden and illusive (Abalos et al., 2016) so they must be drawn out. Last, it was clarified that the meanings must maintain relevance. In this case, an example from the participant above who stated men downplay the incidents more, a formulated meaning would be they *minimize*. The

officers acknowledged that, in general, minimizing was something the males did when they were victims, so this formulated meaning then became a theme.

Step 4 was clustering themes. The themes were reflective of the research questions and required repeating Step 1. Additionally, the themes were derived from the formulated meanings and were categorized accordingly. From each research question, multiple themes emerged. For example, regarding Research Question 1, Theme 1 was gender does not play a role, Theme 2 was more victims are women, and Theme 3 was men can be victims too. In Research Question 2, one theme that became noticeable was minimizing, other themes in Research Question 2 included masculinity as a deterrent and fear of being blamed or not believed.

Continuing with Step 5, developing an exhaustive description, I integrated the significant statements, formulated meanings, and themes with the phenomenon of adult heterosexual IPV. In the sixth step of producing the fundamental structure, in this seven-step method, a succinct explanation will be provided in the results section. Last, the seventh step was seeking verification. In this step, I attempted to call back all the participants for follow-up responses and clarification. Of the nine officers, five engaged in the follow-up interviews and provided similar responses; I was able to clarify their understanding of certain questions also.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness entails credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Each brings its own level of importance to the process of establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Korstejens & Moser,

2018). The following sections will verify each of these processes and how they were obtained throughout the data analysis.

Credibility

Bengttson (2016) noted that credibility was a way to ensure that all data analysis is interpreted in a manner that shows relevant and pertinent information. In this study, I accomplished this by using member checks as part of the initial plan, then also including saturation, which were aspects of credibility. Korstjens and Moser (2018), acknowledged that member checks involved reaching back out to the participants and sharing results, categories, interpretations, and conclusions. I also reached back out for follow-up interview information and clarification which allowed for the same number of participants but more interviews; seven out of the nine participants were available. In total, this led to 16 interviews.

Transferability

Korstjens and Moser (2018) stated that transferability included a thick description of behaviors, experiences, and context, but also extending a meaningful understanding to outsiders. In this study, a thick description of all the responses were provided in tables and discussions.

The officers' responses could be used for future researchers in identifying adult heterosexual male victimization based on law enforcement officers lived experiences. Further, these responses can help law enforcement officers identify how they work with victims based on male as a gender. Last, the results can be displayed across the board for

focus on law enforcement officers and male victims of domestic violence in general, bringing more awareness to adult heterosexual male domestic violence victimization.

Dependability

An adjustment was made for dependability from Chapter 3 to Chapter 4. In Chapter 3, the process of dependability entailed auditing and analysis from someone other than the researcher. In this case, the other entity was identified as Walden University staff. While this was still the case to ensure the dissertation was checked thoroughly, another definition of dependability emerged in the procedure. Specifically, Kortsjens and Moser (2018) stated dependability included consistency of the acceptable standards for the design. The Walden University staff checked this dissertation for consistency throughout the study.

Confirmability

A key concept in confirmability is neutrality (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). In keeping with Chapter 3's identification of confirmability as well, biases cannot be integrated into the study (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). In this study, all biases were kept out of the analysis of the responses, though I was mindful of them when they crossed my mind.

Additionally, Korstjens and Moser (2018) expressed the importance of an audit trail for all information collected during this study. To elaborate, all interviews were conducted via Zoom and saved on a USB port. Additionally, all the responses were handwritten and included in the audit trail process, as was all other communication that was relevant and necessary to the information collected.

Results

This section was organized by three research questions. In research question one, officers shared their perspectives of gender in general in relation to IPV. In research question two, their perspectives were solely on adult heterosexual male victims, and in research question three, the results focused on the law enforcement officers experiences. Each research question and interview question response allowed for identification of emergent themes. The interview questions in relation to the research questions served as guidelines for placing the statements in the categories, and were not identified as specific responses in the results. The interview questions and research questions are seen in Table 1.

It is not surprising or uncommon that gender plays a pivotal role in what we know about IPV today. However, some officers who were aware that despite gender being unavoidable, it did not always influence who they viewed as a victim of IPV. For a small number, gender was not at all a factor though other things like size and susceptibility to violence were. When it was determined that gender did matter, many law enforcement officers perceived women to be victims far more often than men.

Table 1

Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research questions	Interview questions
RQ 1: What Perspectives do law enforcement officers have on gender in general in IPV situations:	In what way does gender, as an IPV victim, influence how you view who is determined to be a victim of IPV? What if any, are some preconceived notions of who is believed to be a victim of IPV?
RQ 2: How do law enforcement officers perceive adult heterosexual men who report they are victims of physical abuse from their partners?	Have you knowingly ignored men as victims of IPV due to societal influences or personal beliefs? Are there instances in which you believe men did not acknowledge being a victim of IPV by their wives or significant others due to fear of not being believed? Are there instances in which you believe societal stigma may deter an adult heterosexual male from acknowledging he was a victim of IPV by a woman?
RQ 3: What experiences have law enforcement officers had with adult heterosexual men in IPV situations when their abuser was their female partner?	To what extent have you experienced men being physically abused by their female partners while on IPV calls? What has been your experience with adult men in heterosexual relationships, as the victims of IPV?

RQ1: What Perspectives do Law Enforcement Officers Have on Gender in General in IPV Situations?

Research question one had two interview questions attached and they were as follows: 1*) in what way does gender, as an IPV victim, influence how you view who is determined to be the victim* and 2) *what, if any, are some preconceived notions of who is believed to be a victim of IPV?* Three themes emerged from this research question and the

two combined interview questions. Theme 1 included women are mostly victims and theme two was men are victims too. Each theme is described in more detail. It is important to note that some officers responses can, and may, be placed into other themes if they overlap.

Theme 1: Per Experience, Beliefs, and Preconceived Notions, Women are Mostly Victims, but Men Can Be Too

All the participants under this theme conversed that gender did not influence who they determined to be a victim. While participant one noted that gender did not influence who he determined to be a victim, he acknowledged per preconceived notions, that women were more often victims. For example, he stated:

> the preconceived notion is usually a male perpetrator and a female victim, and I think that has some validity to it, because it's more often that way; but it is not uncommon at all for us to arrest the female.

Further, he stated:

> I think some women think that they can probably get away with it because they don't think that we will think it was the woman who was, uh being the aggressor and the abuser. I've been to many where it has become obvious that the female is the aggressor, and has been for a while, and think that we aren't going to arrest them- so they get a little more brazen, and just don't think they'll get in trouble for it.

Another participant reported:

> I don't think so, it's mainly based on key points, crime goes both ways and it's our job to, uhm, be as, as you can say, blind to it as much as you can without bringing gender into it because we know both sides of the story, and some people, especially men, don't treat it as it is. They have experienced women who become upset saying they're the ones who are being victimized, yet the male is the one who is, you know, has bruises, or there's family members who are saying she is the suspect or the predominant offender. I think as a society, most people assume that the male is the suspect and the female is the victim, but we as law enforcement have to realize that that's not always the case. A large percentage of the DV incidents that we have might be that, but we still have to go in there and try to figure things out.

Participant three noted that gender does influence who he believes to be a victim. He also shared that he believes that the preconceived notions hold truth to women being victims more often, and that:

> If you look at, you know the injuries caused, even if there's a mutual fight like I said, you have to have the predominant aggressor. The injuries are usually going to be worse on the female, even if it's a mutual fight.

According to participant three, he was grounded firmly in acknowledging that females are mostly victims as consistent with preconceived notions and that gender does influence how he perceives who the victim is in an IPV situation. He shared that this belief largely stems from what he has seen in terms of injuries being worse on a woman, even if there is a mutually combative situation. Participant seven shared that though he

does not let gender influence who is viewed to be the victim, he believes that the female is usually the victim in a domestic violence situation because:

> males are a lot more physical in nature, and so they, when something violent domestically happens, it's usually more of a physical thing that causes an injury to a party.

Participant eight noted that gender is relevant and does influence who is a victim of IPV because "there is a size discrepancy, men naturally have more testosterone, they are physically taller and stronger." He added that he is aware that he is eventually taking someone's "freedom away" so does try to investigate "as best as I can." Last, participant nine shared that gender does not play a huge role for him but it is "more common for females to be victims though there are definitely male victims." Continuing, participant nine shared that she does not let gender influence who she views as a victim because she has seen both men and woman as victims. However, she also noted, "it is more common for females to be abused in my experience."

Theme 2: Men are Victims too

Participants who fell under this theme acknowledged that gender determined who they perceived to be a victim of IPV although it was not their top priority in establishing the victimization, and preconceived notions were not projected. When asked if gender influenced who they determined to be a victim, one officer stated:

> It (gender) doesn't really. We handle domestic violence calls the same every time we show up whether it's a male and a female or two males or two females, doesn't matter. We separate the two parties and interview them uhm, determine

> that they are, or have been in an intimate relationship and then determine if we have probable cause for any crime from between one and the other, and uhm once we get both stories. The two officers will talk together for a second, determine if they have that PC, uhm, and if it's against the, if the female definitely committed a crime against the male, and they've been in an intimate relationship then they get arrested for domestic violence.

Participant three shared that when he first started in the field of law enforcement, he believed that gender may have influenced him, and he may have looked at a victim like an offender. Overtime, his viewpoint has changed based on how many female offender arrests he has made. Participant four had similar beliefs to participant three and noted that stereotypes and preconceived notions impact who is viewed as a victim. Additionally, he shared that he has probably viewed gender as relevant in the past when first starting, but overtime has come to realize that when you "dig into it, it really isn't the male that's at fault." This participant further acknowledged they are assessing a scene for who can hurt them, and they are often "more concerned with a 6'3 250-pound male hurting us as opposed to a 5'2-100 pound female." However, he also recognized that "it takes time to determine who the real aggressor is, and that it's not always the female victim on scene as opposed to potentially having the male be the victim."

Participant four also noted that media plays a role in this belief that women are the victims and acknowledged that it may be difficult to see that they are not always the victim. In further response he shared:

I think it's very difficult for people sometimes to accept that sometimes females can be aggressors, that females can be the abuser in a relationship and the lack of males coming forward. Anybody, any gender can be manipulative. Any gender can be abusive, any gender can be- a- to the point of trying to manipulate the situation to their advantage by abusing or mentally abusing the other person and making them like they're not worthy of the relationship. And, I think it's very hard to dig through those weeds to determine exactly how often it happens. I would say the scale of that probably favors to the females more in these relationships, that they are the victims if that makes sense.

Participant four's continued perspective was that:

I think if we could legitimately look into it nowadays, there are probably just as many victims as an equal card across both genders, male and female." He elaborated and stated he believed this because of "what has come in development of education, or in what has come into acceptance that males are victims. They're not all, but there seems to be a little bit of a wave of how to teach kids to manipulate, lie, teach females how to use ideas and ways to play victims. I've seen some of it sometimes off to the sideline and I've heard you know, conversations, private conversation, so I think sometimes it is females are taught you know, if you get into a situation of some kind that you don't like, you can just say, hey, I'm the female and this person is mean or rude or my boyfriend is being mean, and needs to leave, but it's really she's upset and jealous about something and is not reacting like adults should. So, it becomes extremely difficult to dig

> through some of that stuff until you can kind of get through, like we call the mud in the water to get what's really truly happening on scene and that can take some time.

As participant six shared his perspectives, he noted that probable cause is the deciding factor, and not gender. He stated:

> gender doesn't really play an issue as much as what the evidence is that we can see, so that we can establish a crime occurred. And you know, and like with the probable cause, it's like that this person, regardless of male or female, to this crime, to this person, to where you know we can establish that that's what happened, then we legally have to arrest somebody. So, it's not so much the gender as much as what has happened and what we can prove to a jury, versus, I hate that, I hate the expression of he said she said, but of just a verbal argument; you know, we have to have something besides he did this- well- how did he do that? Or how did she do that.

More so, this participant noted that:

> so going off like if the male is the victim, it's generally going to be pretty intense if he's the one that calls, or something has gone on for so long; because generally, the male won't call, whereas through experience, the female will generally call as almost a way of like, if you do that, I'm calling the police and saying this. Unfortunately, that happens quite a bit so it's not as much as preconceived notions as much as if a male is a legitimate victim if there's evidence that's usually fairly bad or a continual thing.

Participant nine shared that male victims of IPV tend to have less of an “oh poor me response” and they typically “don’t want to be a jerk." She also shared “if they have children, they tend to not want to do anything about their abuse until later, and they are also less likely to change the pattern of abuse they endure." She further perceived male victims of IPV to stay loyal despite cheating or being abused.

Table 2

RQ ` Responses and Theme

Research question 1	Partial responses	Theme
What perspectives do law enforcement officers have on gender in general in IPV situations?	…the male is the aggressor	The participants unanimously acknowledged that preconceived notions consist of the female as the victim and the male as the perpetrator. The participants also acknowledged that it tends to be that way more often. Their knowledge of preconceived notions therefore lineup with their gender perspectives in general when it comes to victims of IPV.
	…males are always the aggressors	
	…usually, the male is the offender	
	…usually, female victims with male perpetrators	

RQ2: How do Law Enforcement Officers Perceive Adult Heterosexual Men Who Report They are Victims of Violence from Their Partners?

Multiple themes surfaced from this research question. The interview questions linked to this research question were 1) *have you knowingly ignored men as victims of*

IPV due to societal influences or personal beliefs, 2) *are there instances in which you believe men did not acknowledge being a victim of IPV by their wives or significant others due to fear of not being believed,* and 3) *are there instances in which you believe societal stigma may deter an adult heterosexual male from acknowledging he was a victim of IPV by a woman.* It should be noted that all responses from the law enforcement officers' regarding question one were a resounding no, meaning none of them ignored male victims due to societal influences or personal beliefs. Therefore, no further response or themes will be addressed regarding this question.

The biggest response that was consistent with all officers was minimization, and it was placed as theme 1. In addition to the theme of minimization, subthemes arose to include minimizing incidents to avoid arrest for self or significant other, and minimizing due to masculinity and/or societal standards. Other themes included 1) they are more open about victimization, 2) report more in current times, 3) report less or do not report, 4) less likely to seek help, the males are the aggressors even if they are the victims, and they avoid escalation.

Theme 1: Officers Perspectives Were that Male Victims Minimize in General

All officers perspectives were that male victims minimized the IPV incidents to one extent or another. The reasons they perceived victims to minimize was different, although each of their reasons could be wrapped up in three major categories. The first category was that they minimized in general, then they minimized for fear of them, or their partner being arrested, or they minimized because societal and masculine expectations dictated their choice. In some cases, law enforcement officers perceived that

the male victims minimized for both reasons. One example of minimization was when participant five shared:

> They definitely downplay it. They, you know, they try to say no, she hit me, but it was on accident because she tripped and almost fell, and she had to do hold on to something or make an excuse as to why they were somehow hit or assaulted. We tend to see that more after we realize the men are the victims, and we are arresting the female. So, then the men try to say, well, you know that didn't happen. I was just making it up, but they have obvious injuries or marks on them.

Participant seven also shared his perspective in that adult heterosexual male victims minimized according to his experience. He stated male victims minimized because they "want the issue to stop and that's about it." He also noted that with one other male victim he could recall, he had minimized despite bleeding from his neck.

Subtheme 1: Minimized to Avoid Arrest or Fear of Arrest

In this subtheme, the officers believed that the adult heterosexual male victims minimized their incidents to avoid themselves, or their partners, from being arrested. Participant one noted that he believes they are more afraid of getting arrested. Specifically, he stated:

> I think men, so uh, a lot of domestic violence situations, there was probably a little bit of aggression or violence by both parties, like it takes two to fight, so I think the men probably are more afraid of getting arrested, and that we will think it's them when we get there. We just have to determine who the predominant aggressor is, and who basically committed the bigger crime. So, I don't know if

> they think they won't be believed, but I think they just hesitate, probably, uh, thinking that they might be the one that got arrested cause say she came at, say it's a female- comes at a male, uh, is slapping him or something like that and, he grabs her arms or something in order to get her to stop, and she's got like bruising all over her arms. Because he's much stronger, or whatever it is, and he doesn't have an injury, even though he was just trying to stop it, and was not trying to be an aggressor, she has injuries, and so there's a chance that he thinks that we will arrest him. So, I would imagine there's some reluctance just based off of those societal norms that they think that we will arrest the guy when we come to a domestic violence call.

This participant also noted:

> I think they make the call in the heat of the moment, and because she won't calm down or something, and then they try and downplay it so that no one goes to jail and that nothing physical happened.

In continuing with this participant's responses, he stated "they were downplaying it because I think they know our domestic violence laws, and don't want her to go to jail either." Participant two shared that one category of male victims is the "deceitful type" in which they say, "it didn't happen or that you know they got their injury from something different than what they obviously did, because they don't want to get their significant other arrested.

Participant three shared that there are instances in which males are true victims and that typically entails when someone else saw and called in the incident. In those

instances, he stated if the male is the true victim, they usually say, “no, that’s not true, we’re just messing around. Whatever they have to do, to excuse it.” However, he also noted that:

> The majority of those, I think is like I said, because they’re these mutual domestic violence relationships, so they don’t to go to jail next time they smack her, so this time they’re like see- this is how you handle it, nothing happened, it’s fine.

Participant nine recognized that males generally downplay due to fear of arrest for their partner and due to societal standards. In this case, she was asked if it was common when males are the victims, to notice emotional signs and she replied:

> Yes, I’d say males have definitely been emotional, and I think usually when I’m there at first, they can be like, oh you know, it was no big deal from the start- like nearly crying, and like you know this is what the hell she’s like- I don’t understand why she’s acting like this, and they’ll break down in tears and be like this not what I wanted. I don’t want her to get in trouble, and that’s usually the consensus.

Participant nine further shared male victims will change their stories to protect their girlfriend from getting arrested. To clarify she stated:

> It’s dependent on the circumstance, but sometimes they’ll like change the story to try and protect the girl, like I said- if they don’t want her to get in trouble or something like that, but just after a lot of talking I’m usually able to deduce that. But once they realize in Colorado we have mandatory arrest laws, if there’s probable cause in domestic violence of any kind, so once they kind of realize

> that's the path that's going, especially if they're adamant they do not want to get the female in trouble, then they'll kind of shut down and be like ok like yeah, I'm done talking, or nope, none of that happened, but we've already established what had happened essentially.

Participant three explained that there are various categories that males fall into when they are a victim. Under one category, he noted:

> they're afraid of getting their partner in trouble because they know that it is a mandatory arrest, and there is going to be a protection order in place regardless, if you get found guilty.

Subtheme 2: Minimize Due to Societal or Masculinity Standards

In this subtheme, participants perceived male victims to minimize due to societal expectations or masculinity factors. For example, participant five stated "we go to a call and he, the male, just in a calm voice says yeah, she hit me, but that's it- or some type of crime was committed against him, and they don't take it as serious as it's supposed to be." When he was asked if men downplay because the woman is smaller, he stated:

> I haven't noticed it, but I think it would be something that will play into society rules. You know, the male is bigger, and just doesn't want to seem like he's, you know, I guess less of a man that he's portrayed to be.

Along the same vein, participant seven stated, "the males tend not to want to admit it, even though it's clear they are victims." For clarification, he shared "I think just kind of to society in general of how if it's domestic violence, the male always goes to jail,

so what's the point in saying anything. That line I get a lot." More so, participant nine noted "I think it's a masculinity thing, they want to be tough." Additionally, she stated:

> They don't wanna leave the girl, and then also don't want to be like you know, I'm not trying to cry wolf here, or like be a big baby about it, and so I think it's like a huge damper on their masculinity because they feel like they can't control the female, and now she's abusing him.

One officer shared that at times, the male victim won't come outright and acknowledge societal stigma as an issue, but they will imply it. He shared that they will often say their pain level is at a "four or five" on a scale of one to 10, then will state "but since I'm a guy and she's a woman, you could probably put that as like a one or two. So, they try and kind of downplay it." He also stated that they believe they shouldn't be feeling pain from getting:

> struck by a woman, so definitely a recurring theme there. They'll downplay the situation, and how serious it is and how much it did hurt, or how many times it had occurred.

When participant six shared his perspective, he acknowledged that male victims typically don't want to admit what happened even if it's "pretty clear that they are a victim." He stated he often hears victims say, "why don't you take me to jail anyways, it's always the male at fault." This officer also shared:

> generally, the males will kind of, through my experiences, will downplay it to where like, oh, you know, we had disagreements, it's nothing serious. Almost like they're embarrassed that they don't want to admit what happened. So, half the

> time we have to be kind of like reassuring that, you know you're not the only one this happens to, and we just need you to be honest with us- it's clear something happened.

In another instance, an officer reported that an adult heterosexual male was hit, but not injured, so he minimized it. Also, participant five shared that when the victim informed him that he was hit, the officer had to tell him that it was a crime. In the process of the victim trying to downplay what was happening to him, the officer found that the children were involved. The officer also stated that when it comes to children witnessing IPV, he noted "it happens all the time," which affects the children, and their dad. Participant seven stated "they're minimizing normally," so they're not trying to not get anyone in trouble at that point."

In the following statement, a victim was impacted by mental health and masculinity. The officer relayed:

> His girlfriend had some mental health issues, and she kind of had a manic episode where she woke him up, told him to get out of her apartment. She proceeded to physically, like pick him up, and then throw him out. He was also, you know, he didn't want anything to happen to his girlfriend cause she did have kind of a mental health aspect. He was pretty reluctant on giving any information at all about the crime itself, and I think she ended up being charged with kidnapping. You know, physically and forcibly removing someone from one place to another without you know their consent, so that was a pretty serious charge.

Theme 2: Reporting More or Reporting About the Same as in Years Past

This theme originally had a category of *more open as a victim*. However, after reading the interviews more often, I found that placing it under the category of *reporting more* would make sense. For the following response, it seemed to be a positive thing. Regarding reporting, participant one stated:

> Probably historically men were less likely to come forward and want to be a victim or anything, but in the modern age, uh, current times, I think men are more willing to be a victim. I don't mean willing to be a victim. I mean willing to speak up about it, uhm, and report it and not afraid of appearing that way so they do report it probably more often than they used to; which is probably why there's more male victims now, than there were, I don't know 10, 20, 30 years ago.

Subtheme 1: Reporting Less or About the Same as in the Years Past

In stark contrast to participant one, participant nine stated she believed adult male heterosexual victims of IPV reported less, because they do not want to admit they are a victim, and more than likely it goes back to the masculinity factor. Participant three stated, "I believe that there's probably the statistics are higher, uh, when it comes to male victims, they just don't call it in as much." When participant four was asked if he believed societal stigma was a determining factor in acknowledging that a male was a victim, he stated:

> Yes, I do agree with that. Uhm, again, I fall back on social media, movies, cases that are always reviewed on drama TV. If you watch those series, we tend to flock towards the- I think just because of the fact males haven't reported as much as

> females, that we have an abundance of cases to pick from, where the males have been violent. And I'm not discrediting females being treated poorly or violent, in these cases I do believe though they cross both spectrums, uh, because of that, it's very hard to determine accurate numbers.

Theme 3: Less Likely to Seek Help

In this theme, law enforcement officers' perceptions were that adult heterosexual male victims were less likely to seek help. One reason he offered for this was the size difference of a male and a female. Additionally, he offered the perspective of likelihood of fears being present in either sex. Participant one's response was in comparison to female victims. He stated:

> I've gotten very accustomed to every guy on all these calls that are victims, just saying no, I don't need to talk, I'm fine, and so that's like the thing I expected- whereas the majority of time female victims want to talk to victim advocates and are way more shooken up. By this, I think that's probably because the males never really saw themselves in like grave danger- like their life was at risk or anything, uh, just based off of size difference and stuff like that as opposed to the women, who are terrified of when the male gets out of jail, and stuff like that. I've never had men had those concerns, so I guess I naturally expect that to be their response- that they don't need those resources.

Participant one also shared that he has never really had a victim seek out counseling options or have a desire to meet with a victim advocate. He stated, "they more

want to report a specific instance." He also shared that he perceived them to want to only report a specific instance because they are "angry or upset and just want to move on."

As participant five was being offered resources due to his victimization, he declined. The officer reported "most men tend to turn the resources away saying they don't need it, they're gonna drop the charges, and nothing happened, and usually that's what happens." Participant five also shared his perspectives on adult heterosexual men and seeking help. He stated that male victims did not want to call because "they can handle it" and did not want police to intervene with their issues. Referring to masculinity and societal stigma as a factor, participant nine shared they are common reasons why she believes men likely do not want to call the police or be truthful about what happened. Participant three shared, "I feel like they're more reluctant on actually calling us and having us respond"

Theme 4: Avoiding Escalation

In this theme, officers perspectives were that male victims often attempted to avoid escalation in IPV situations. Therefore, when they call in to have an officer respond to their residence, their goal was to get in and get out and ultimately prevent any further abuse or victimization. Additionally, when victims were perceived to avoid escalation, they would report only the specific incident.

Per participant two's categories, he identified one category to be where the male victim's intent is to truly avoid escalation, so they will call law enforcement officers to intervene. Participant four shared, "I think the majority of the time when people call the police, they're not wanting anybody arrested, they're just wanting it to stop."

While Participant nine acknowledged that in her perspective women are more often victims of IPV by men, than men by women, there is also her perspective that when males victims are victims by females, they truly try to avoid the incident:

> Ok so it's obviously not true with every case, but I would say a good majority of the time it seems like the males are almost the battered women and that they've been going through some type of physical situation with their female partner and are just kind of like just completely the victim. Really uhm, seems like a lot of these guys try everything that they can to like to defend themselves, or like step away, be reasonable to talk to the girls, but uhm, just how it turns out is that they ended up getting kind of the crap beat out of them for a guy.

Theme 5: Fear of not Being Believed

In this theme, officers perceived male victims were afraid of not being believed. Consistency in this theme meant that when officers arrived at a scene, the male victims' first response was to be on guard, so officers talked through the process with them, carefully building rapport and understanding. Officers also believed that talking to them sometimes surprised them. For example, officer four stated:

> I've had a few cases where they're on scene and they're basically giving up. They're ready to be handcuffed, and sometimes an inexperienced officer would probably just do it right off the bat. It's when we have to show them, no, let's find out what's going on, because the male is indicating, well you got called and we're having an argument, and I'm the male, I'm going to be arrested. Then when we dig into it, we find out, yeah, you guys had an argument and adults are allowed to

have arguments, but then we find out that she's the one that took a cell phone, or she's the one who threw the plate at him, or she's the one that smacked him.

In relation to fear of not being believed, participant eight shared they will often hear "you don't believe me cause I'm the guy, what, a guy can't be a victim of domestic violence" though his perspective is uncertainty.

Table 3

Research Question, Themes, and Number of Participants (officer responses overlap in multiple themes)

Research question	Main perspectives/Themes	Number of participants in category	Subthemes	Number of participants acknowledged for subthemes
How do law enforcement officers perceive adult heterosexual male victims who report they are victims of physical abuse from their partner	Male victims minimize in general	9	Minimized in general	1
			Minimize due to society or masculinity	5
			Minimized for fear or to avoid arrest	3
	Reporting more or about same as women	1	Reporting Less	3
	Less likely to seek help	4		
	Avoid Escalation	4		
	Fear about not being believed	4		

RQ 3: What Experiences Have Law Enforcement Officers Had with Adult Heterosexual Men in IPV Situations When Their Abuser was Their Female Partner?

This research question focused on the types of abuse they responded to when attending a call to an IPV incident with an adult heterosexual male victim. Under this theme, officers shared the types of injuries they have experienced male victims to receive, and what they believe to be the causes when investigating the incidents. These injuries ranged from physical abuse to homicide. Officers also shared their experiences with property damage. Additionally, the officers discussed their lived experiences with the causes that led to the injuries, such as mental health and use of drugs and alcohol.

Theme 1: Physical Injuries Sustained

All officers acknowledged that when they responded to a call, the victims had been physically injured to some degree. The officers in this theme shared their experiences with physical injuries that adult heterosexual males sustained from use of objects as weapons and bodily use as a weapon. All participants noted that they had seen a range of injuries, so all their responses are under one theme, with the exception of homicides which are under a subtheme.

Participant one shared that he has been to many calls wherein he has seen a plethora of injuries on male victims. In this case, it seemed as though the officer experienced women using their bodies as weapons. This is evidenced by the officer's admission of seeing a lot of punching, slapping, and scratching:

> I've been to several where the female threw stuff at them, and I've been to several where the female punched, slapped, or scratched them, so they have visible injuries from that. I don't know which one has happened more often. I've seen both plenty of times. All sorts of injuries, bruising, like redness on their face if they've been slapped or punched. Scratching, lots of scratching. Uhm, I've seen, what else have I seen- uh, I've seen teeth marks from a male victim that was bit by his girlfriend.

In addition to the experiences participant one acknowledged above, he also shared that the city that he works for has a "handful of those. Uh, a couple dozen are probably the female is more of the aggressor." Participant three acknowledged that while he has seen male victims assaulted with beer bottles, knives, and frying pans, he had typically experienced closed fists, kicking, or scratching. He shared two incidents in which drugs or alcohol were a factor. During one call he responded to, the male victim attempted to lock himself in a room, which provoked her, so she attempted to break the door in. The officer then stated that the male victim was threatened with a knife by the female aggressor and later hit with a frying pan in the face, as he was walking out of the room. The officer stated this occurred because he was a drug user, and she was tired of supporting him.

A second incident that participant three experienced involved alcohol. He stated, "most of the time it does" and she was "drinking often." More so, this incident involved the use of a truck in addition to alcohol. He reported they had been arguing about one liking more than the other until she punched him "40 to 50 times." He also stated that an

eyewitness observed the incident and confirmed that 40 or 50 times was quite accurate. More so, she punched and kicked him in the head.

In another incident, the police officer was called to what was likely a "large family event" in which alcohol was involved. He stated that it escalated after another male was arrested for domestic violence, then trickled down to a comment the male victim made, which triggered his female partner. The officer stated:

> He made a comment pretty much justifying this guy's actions and the female didn't appreciate that. So, she proceeded to assault him with a beer bottle, and then with her fingernails pretty much scratched his entire face, and then chest, to where he was bleeding. And then his family kind of stepped in and they end up assaulting her and then kind of assaulted them back where she started throwing beer bottles around. She started throwing these glass beer bottles at people that were holding like their two-year-old son.

Participant four shared that he believes females use weapons against males more often to "make the playing field equal." He stated that an exception to this might be if they are closer in size. In one incident, the officer stated he had a case where a baseball bat or a pipe had been used to "inflict pain on a male" and had finally called 911 after the assault had been carried out. However, he had to get away from her before he was able to make the call.

Participant five noted that in his experience, "a severity would mainly be hands used as weapons. No slaps that I can recall." Participant seven stated he had only been to one where they had claimed "some sort of physical abuse" which had resulted in being

scratched repeatedly on the neck and the back of the arm. Participant eight shared experiences that involved property damage, biting, slapping, scratching and children being present as this was occurring. Two incidents occurred with vehicles from two different officer experiences. In one case:

> Essentially this guy had come home, and his girlfriend was assuming that he was cheating on her, and he was not. He was like, I just want to get out of this situation cause she had been pushing him inside, trying to block the door preventing him from leaving, and then tried to take his phone and hang up on 911, which is a crime in and of itself. When we got there, he was sitting in his truck. The female was like inside, and he was basically like she followed me out here after I had tried just to leave to defuse the situation, because she was like physically assaulting him. And he came outside, and she was, even though he was trying to like close the door to his truck, she was like trying to open it. He had a big, lifted truck and he had running boards on it that folded out with the doors open; so she was able to climb up on there and then was basically like holding on to him as he was like basically trying to get away, but not wanting to drive away so he didn't hurt her.

Participant nine explained that she has experienced calls where males are mainly pushed, shoved, or kicked or endured third-degree assaults where they may get cut. She also relayed:

> I think it's more like disbelief that not only would like a smaller person, or female do that. But it's their partner, and sometimes it's ongoing and they get pushed or

> kicked or hit all the time, so and then they think nothing of it. They're like, well, it's no big deal, like this happens all the time type of thing when like that it's not ok.

Participant nine also acknowledged a call in which a smaller woman was engaged in a violent episode toward her male partner:

> This guy was like 250 pounds- big dude. Really tall, really small girl. She was just really angry and violent and especially when drugs or alcohol is in the mix. I think that just adds a whole other level to it, and especially if the male isn't one to drink or do drugs and it's mainly just the female who's intoxicated. I think that also plays a really big role, yet there have been times where it's been a scrawnier guy and a bigger girl who's been abusing him.

Participant six shared an experience where he attended a call in which the victim's wife stabbed him with a steak knife in the stomach at a New Year's Eve party.

Theme 2: Homicides and attempted homicides

Some officers shared their experiences that consisted of homicides or attempted homicides. Though officers have said throughout this study that it is more often women than men who are abused, it is important to recall their perspectives that men minimize and underreport IPV. The responses that follow based on their experiences show us that even if it does occur less, it occurs and to the degree of murder. Participant four stated:

> We had a female on one of our cases a long time ago. I was first starting out as an officer. She used a knife that belonged to him because he was a chef and so she used that knife, stabbed him multiple times. They were having an argument.

> Neighbors indicated that they had arguments, a lot, uhm, but she used the knife and stabbed him, and once she realized what she had done, she went for a walk for 35-40 minutes before calling 911. If she had called us right at that moment, there could be a chance we could have saved him.

Participant two shared a situation he experienced in which a call he responded to entailed the wife murdering the husband in front of the children. He shared she, "shot him twice in the back of the head, and despite the children testifying, the jury could not convict her."

Participant two also conversed that weapons that have been used included bowls or plates, remote controls and "you know like I said, a few homicides by gun and shootings by gun and whatever is convenient I guess and running down in cars too." Continuing, participant six recalled an attempted murder in which the woman was "heavily intoxicated and trying to shoot her husband in the back of the head." He also stated that the only reason the victim was made aware of this was because "he heard two clicking sounds and turned around to find a gun pointed at him."

The officer stated that she could not get the safety off the gun because she was too intoxicated. He also shared that this was a result of them being in the process of breaking up. In total, four homicides were discussed.

Theme 3: Common Factors Leading to Male IPV

Officers described common experiences leading up to the incidents to be drug or alcohol use and cheating and jealousy. While not all officers discussed this as their belief of what leads to adult heterosexual male victimization, the officers that did, had similar

experiences with the victims. Additionally, they acknowledged that the use of drugs and alcohol made the situations worse.

Subtheme 1: Use of Drugs and Alcohol Increasing Violence

At one point, participant two discussed defensive injuries on a male victim who was trying to protect himself. He shared that those types of incidents are easier to see. This participant also shared that levels of intoxication matter because it can be indicative of him having to be more defensive. To elaborate, he stated:

> Usually, the defense ones are more easily arrestable for the female suspect because there's usually evidence of that. Another thing that's more evident when it's defensive is, you know the intoxication level. So, the victim is not intoxicated, that's why they're being defensive only and not aggressive. And then the suspect, the female would be intoxicated, uh, very upset. You know the difference in their behaviors plus defensive injuries are easier to see, uh, that they're defensive, usually, as opposed to offensive injuries.

Participant three previously acknowledged that "most times it does involve alcohol" and in another incident he discussed the male being a "drug user" as something that escalated in a physical altercation. In a third statement by participant two, he relayed that "now again, I had the alcohol component 'cause everyone had been drinking and it was one of those things where they had been drinking and their relationship was not great." Last, participant six recognized that a couple was in the process of breaking up "so alcohol always just enhances emotions." Overall, the use of drugs or alcohol was mentioned five times.

Subtheme 2: Cheating, Assumptions of Cheating and Jealous

In this category, it was a recurring theme five times. Participant two offered that assaulting a victim will start out with “let me see your cell phone now” then will ensue with a more severe result. Typically, in these cases, he shared that he will see “scratch and nail marks” on a victim. In a separate mention of this participant, he further acknowledged that this is a “common jealousy thing” leading to them grabbing each other’s phones and violently inquiring “who are you talking to.” Participant four stated, “…but it’s really, she’s upset and jealous about something” when they call in saying their boyfriend is being “mean or rude” and they find out “she’s the one who took the cell phone.”

Regarding cheating, participant five relayed that it’s usually been where the males having committed “infidelity” leading the female to assault or harass the male, which leads to the arrest. Participant seven conversed that the altercations are usually about “thoughts of cheating” and money. He elaborated and stated the “male is usually accused of cheating." Participant nine shared in one incident that she had “felt bad” for a victim who just came home and was accused of cheating, even though he was not.

Table 4

Research Question Three, Main Themes and Frequency of Themes Mentioned

Research question	Main themes	Frequency of themes mentioned
What experiences have law enforcement officers had with adult heterosexual men in IPV situations when their abuser was their female partner	Physical injuries sustained	>10
	Homicides and attempted homicides	4
	Drugs and Alcohol related	5
	Assumptions of cheating, cheating, or jealousy	4

Summary

In this chapter we discussed the results of the interviews from the law enforcement officers; law enforcement officers and participants were used interchangeably. Further, we followed up with confirmability, dependability, trustworthiness and ethical procedures. Continuing, themes were identified from the responses and categorized according to the research questions; tables were created as a visual to summarize the findings per research question. Last, a chapter summary was provided. The closing chapter will include an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, and future recommendations.

Additionally, the Hermeneutical Circle was utilized, along with the concept of Peoples (2020) spiral. Ultimately, the purpose of the study, and the responses of the

participants as a whole, was realized. Then, each individual response to the interview questions were broken down and continuously analyzed. Each time the responses were read, more information and understanding emerged, which allowed for the initial process of identifying potential themes. The research questions guided each set of themes that were used in the study.

In Colaizzi's method, we listened repeatedly to the interviews and became familiar with them. From there, we identified significant statements and formulated meanings. As the meanings became clearer, themes began to emerge more precisely. Incorporating both methods allowed for efficiency and greater understanding.

One theme that emerged from breaking down the law enforcement officers' responses, was that male victimization of IPV occurred, although there were more female victims. Another theme that was consistent with all officers, was that the male victims minimized their experiences of IPV. Some participants recognized that male victims of IPV minimized due to societal expectations that were two-fold: 1) men were supposed to be masculine, and reporting IPV defied masculinity and 2) men just do not get abused, or they should not get hurt, if their abuser is a woman. Officers also acknowledged that minimizing was likely consistent with underreporting of IPV. Drug and alcohol use and cheating and assumptions of cheating were also acknowledged as themes, along with severity of physical abuse ranging from simple assaults to homicide.

As part of this process, the remaining steps of Colaizzi's method were implemented which included developing exhaustive descriptions, producing the fundamental structure to put the results in conclusions, and to seek verification.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, Recommendations, Implications, and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to focus on law enforcement officers' lived experiences with adult heterosexual men as victims of IPV. This was largely in part because so much research focused on women as the victims of IPV. And, while there is a necessity to continue research on female IPV, the dearth of literature on male victims of IPV impacts our ability to understand that, indeed, they are victims. One way this could be done was to learn from the law enforcement officers' lived experiences with male victims as they respond to IPV calls. The transcendental phenomenology was chosen as it allowed us to understand law enforcement officers' true lived experiences with this population.

The interview responses from the law enforcement officers remained consistent with this existing literature insofar as women were primarily victims or victims at higher rates than adult heterosexual males. However, the responses from their perspectives regarding male victims underreporting, due to fear of being arrested and societal expectations of masculinity continuing to impact why women were mainly seen as victims, could be acknowledged as well. Their experiences also reveal that men were abused by women from physical injuries such as scratching, biting, and kicking, to using weapons such as cars, knives, and guns and the use of guns and knives leading to homicides.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings in this section included the major themes under each research question. The themes identified were gender beliefs in general, perspectives on adult heterosexual males specifically, minimizing due to fear of arrest and masculinity, reporting the incidents, being less likely to seek help, avoiding escalation, and fear of not being believed. Further, themes of physical injuries sustained, homicides and attempted homicides, and factors such as drugs and alcohol and jealousy and cheating, to be the segue into the abuse the male victims received at the hands of female abusers. It is important to note that reporting as a subtheme was consistent with minimization and fear of arrest and less likely to seek help.

Gender Beliefs

Overall, the law enforcement officers agreed that most victims of IPV were women who were abused by men. This was consistent with Sylaska and Walker's (2014) account of their being more female victims than male victims. Other studies such as The Commission of Family Violence (Yates, 2020) and Mottram and Salter (2015) concluded that the studies perceived females as victims more often due to self-defense, and either way, men were perpetrators. In the current study, many law enforcement officers had similar beliefs such as "that has some validity to it" by Participant 1, "it's usually the male suspect" and "it's usually the male who gets arrested, even in mutual combat situations because we do need to pick a predominant aggressor" by Participant 2, and "a large percentage of the DV incident that we have might be that, but we still need to go in there and figure it out." Indeed, all the officers believed that women were victims of IPV

more than men. This was relevant according to research from Dawson and Hotton (2014), who stated men were more likely to be arrested, and Gracia et al. (2014), who reported a majority of officers believed that women were victims as a matter of traditional beliefs.

This did not mean that male victims were discounted completely. McLaren (2019) eloquently noted that the criminal justice system differentiated men's abuse from women's abuse. That being said, one officer acknowledged that 90 to 95% of men were physically abused by women in some form. Despite this, Russell and Sturgeon (2018) recognized that men were treated less fairly. Some officers acknowledged on several accounts that traditionally females were victims, but their experiences allowed them to see that males were also victims. An example of this was with participant three who shared "being involved in having like these, you know 15 to 20 arrests on female suspects or female offenders."

Despite this acknowledgement, one justification for lack of acceptance in more extensive circumstances could be summarized by Morgan and Davis-Delano (2016), who noted that women took on passive roles and men took on active roles, thereby discounting how much more male victimization occured, based on traditional gender beliefs. Expounding on this, another officer reported, "I think there's an underlying concept that females are the ones that are always being abused" and "it's very hard to get the stereotype of showing up on a scene, and believing um, the female is not in danger." Hine et al. (2018) reported that though women were more likely than men to become physically aggressive with police officers, there remained a discrimination against men as perpetrators.

Minimization Due to Societal and Masculine Expectations and Fear of Arrest

Along the lines of minimizing in general, one officer shared, "they're minimizing normally, so they're trying not get anybody in trouble." Another officer's experience was reported, and he stated, "I guess in a sense like try and brush it under the rug and they don't find it as serious as it should be." Like with all officers reporting the belief that women were victims of IPV more than men, similarly, they all shared beliefs that male victims minimized when they were arrested. Agreeably, an officer noted, "males tend to not want to admit it, even though it's clear that they are victims." Along the same vein, minimization was consistent with another officer's perspective in which he shared, "generally, the males will kind of through my experience, will downplay it to where like, oh, you know, we had disagreements, it's nothing serious."

More specific reasons for law enforcement officers' experiences on males of IPV minimizing were due to societal and masculinity expectations, and for fear of arrest. Regarding societal expectations, participant six shared, "males tend to not want to admit it even though it's clear they are victims," and he elaborated male victims tell him: "I think it's just kind of to society in general of how if it's domestic violence, the male always goes to jail so what's the point in saying anything." Societal standards appeared to have held a significant place in why male victims did not report, according to law enforcement officers. Continuing, other officers' experiences included male victims telling the officers they did not get hurt because she was a girl and he's "a guy" despite the actual evidence and that they were supposed to be masculine in general.

Per law enforcement officers' experiences regarding minimization due to fear of arrest, a constant theme was that they did not want their significant others to be arrested. They showed more concern for their female partners then they did for the abuse they endured. Part of this aspect was also that they did not want to get arrested but that additionally, there was a common belief that some would not be believed regardless. One officer had noted that, earlier in his career, he had probably looked at a victim like an offender and that it took first-hand experience to see they were just as likely to be victims. Though the literature did not have a lot of focus on minimization, what it did have was emphasis on stigma associated with reporting IPV as a male.

While these participants minimized, another consistent category in this theme was underreporting or not reporting at all. Voce and Boxall (2018) emphasized that adult heterosexual males were the least likely population to report abuse. Officers reported these same perspectives. Multiple officers shared that the gap in numbers was probably not as big as suggested, acknowledgement that societal standards likely does play a role in male victims underreporting domestic violence, and that when they arrive to a call, even though the female called, it was clear the male was the victim and did not report. Entilli and Cipolletta (2016) acknowledged these were not uncommon reasons.

Physical Injuries Sustained

Bates (2016) reported that physical abuse involved female abusers finding the objects nearest to themselves when attacking with weapons in addition to kicking them in their testicles, branding them with irons, and hitting them with hammers. Fehringer and Hindin (2014) found that adult heterosexual male victims also had their heads banged

against walls with nails sticking out, hit with ice bags and broomsticks, and hit, kicked, and shoved repeatedly. More so, Morgan and Wells (2016) noted that children would be present when this abuse towards their male partners occurred. Law enforcement officers in this study had similar experiences and perspectives to include officers who arrested female perpetrators for attempting to shoot their male partners, throw objects at them, and use objects to harm them such as running men over with their cars.

Consistent with the findings from other researchers (Bates, 2016; Fahny et al., 2017; Fehringer & Hindin, 2014; Keeling et al., 2017), participants in this study shared their experiences with injuries with male victims of IPV sustained from their female partners. Officers shared that victims were punched "at least 50-60 times," others were scratched, which was a common theme, some were nearly hit with a car or ran over with a car, while others yet had remote controls thrown at them, plates, and "any object they could find." In escalating to more serious matters, attempted murders and murders were committed. An officer shared that, at one call, a male victim had been stabbed with his own chef knife and was murdered as a result, while another woman shot her husband in the back of the head twice in front of their children. One male victim could easily have been murdered had it not been for his wife being unable to take the safety off the gun before shooting, so he heard it before it occured.

While surely the debate of whether male or female victims of IPV could be determined to be more serious, varying results would show that it depends on the study and the participants. For example, in Gricourt et al.'s (2014) study, men were abused at higher rates than women, though with less severity, and in Caridade et al.'s (2014)

research, men endured more severe abuse then women. Choi et al. (2015) acknowledged in their study that in Hong Kong, more men than women were hospitalized, and of those men, 37.5% were stabbed with a knife. Referring back to this study, all officers acknowledged women were victims more often than men, and some officers further noted that severity was worse as well; however, it revealed experiences that were life threatening and that males minimized or underreported that abuse occurred.

Common Factors Leading to Male IPV

Though there were only a few officers who discussed what lead up to the IPV situation they were called to, three of them acknowledged that drugs and alcohol were involved as was cheating, assumptions of cheating when cheating was not present, or jealousy. When discussing drugs and alcohol, two noted that the male was not under the influence of any substance, and one was a male that had been using drugs and "she was tired of it, I guess." One officer shared, "alcohol just always enhances emotions," and another one reported that when a male was defending himself, it was more easily "arrestable" because "the victim is not intoxicated."

Bachus et al. (2014) stated that "alcohol played a bidirectional role in IPV" but also emphasized when males were the intoxicated party. Businelle (2014) and Dufont (2015) also reported that alcohol and drugs were causes of IPV. Businelle readily acknowledged that women were more so that direct link when they consumed alcohol, and Dufont noted that "hazardous drinking" was also a factor when men were exposed in IPV. Indeed, whether it is the male or the female that consumed alcohol, it escalated the situations and resulted in IPV.

In this study, officers also reported that jealousy was a major factor. It was common to hear that disputes over cell phones and who was being texted increased jealousy from the partner. Though it was also noted that men and women were jealous in many IPV situations, there were single incidents in which women assumed their male partner was cheating, and her behavior became erratic and violent as a result. In another situation, a male was cheating per the officers' experience, and this also led to the female acting out physically aggressive. This study did not include how cheating, jealousy, or assumptions of cheating could affect IPV, therefore no further information can be added on this topic.

Limitations of the Study

In this study, a limitation identified was that perspectives and experiences were from law enforcement officers. The responses from the law enforcement officers demonstrated consistency with social norms of who commits IPV in terms of gender. While this was beneficial to female IPV victimization, it limited normalcy in male IPV. Law enforcement officers' views of male IPV was important, though other sources of information, such as from the male victims themselves, could have more bearing and understanding on the IPV they received from their female partners.

Law enforcement officers had different demographics which were unknown outside of gender and police departments. Identification such as culture, race, language, and other demographics were unknown and not part of the interview questions, so it was uncertain how cultural beliefs impacted their experiences and perspectives. The participants responses could not be controlled or directed, so determining which research

questions to put them under was at times difficult. Last, the topic of cheating, assumptions of cheating, and jealousy emerged during this study; however, no literature review was conducted on it. Therefore, the last limitation was that further explanation or information could not be added to the final study from the literature review.

Recommendations

Four recommendations are suggested for future research in the area of addressing adult heterosexual male IPV. The first recommendation is to ask more specific questions pertaining to their perspectives on male victims of IPV (i.e., do you believe adult heterosexual male victims are truly victims when you are called to a scene). The second recommendation is to ask the officer more specific questions regarding their experiences as opposed to a broad overall question of what is your experience with adult heterosexual male victims of IPV. Another recommendation might be to ask more close-ended specific questions in general, to make analyzing per category more succinct. Last, since this study resulted in cheating and jealousy as a result of IPV, it was not discussed in the literature review. Future research should look into the extent to which women's cheating, jealousy, or assumptions of cheating can lead to male IPV.

Implications

Positive Social Change

Because so much focus on societal beliefs is consistent with preconceived notions of a woman consistently being believed to be more of a victim, it may be difficult for law enforcement officers to separate those beliefs and preconceived notions with truly identifying a male victim. If we are able to push through some of those societal barriers

and acknowledge more openly that despite size, masculinity, and strength as reasons why they cannot be victims, or are less likely to be victims, adult heterosexual men be more inclined to seek help. They may also be more willing to identify their female abuser without fear of their own arrest or being viewed as a perpetrator. Last, continued research in this area may push law enforcement officers to educate other people they work with and the male victims to understand they are victims despite their gender.

This study was a qualitative transcendental phenomenological study meaning it focused on the lived experiences of the participants. The overarching perspectives and experiences that law enforcement officers had was that women were more likely to be victims, is consistent with gender asymmetry. In gender asymmetry we see more often not than not, that in adult heterosexual relationships, the female is the victim. The debate on this topic will likely being ongoing. However, as some officers reported, the gap in male victims is probably not as big as people

Conclusions

This qualitative phenomenological study captured the lived experiences of law enforcement officers who responded to IPV calls, and more specifically, male victims of IPV. They were interviewed and thus responded to questions pertaining to the impact of gender on who a victim of IPV is, how they viewed gender in general, what their experiences were with types of injuries sustained by male victims, and their overall experiences in general.

All officers agreed that IPV occured mostly to females placing the results of this study in line with gender asymmetry. However, all the officers agreed that male victims

minimized their experiences primarily as a result of societal expectations that women were victims of IPV and not males, and masculinity and fear of arrest, was a deterrent for reporting. The types of injuries sustained by women were recalled from their experiences and the main reasons these injuries occurred were due to drug and alcohol use and cheating, assumptions of cheating, and jealousy.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Please state your current profession.

a. How long have you been a police officer?

b. Have you responded to intimate partner violence (IPV), AKA IPV (DV) calls?

c. Have you responded specifically to heterosexual IPV calls?

2. What has been your experience with adult men, in heterosexual relationships, as the victim of IPV?

a. In what way does gender, as an IPV victim, influence how you view who is determined to be the victim?

b. What, if any, are some preconceived notions of who is believed to be a victim of IPV?

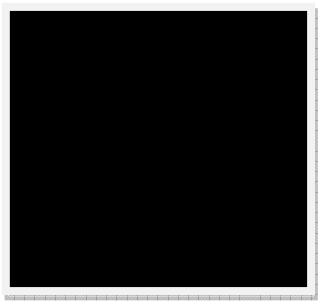
3. Have you knowingly ignored men as victims of IPV due to societal influences or personal beliefs?

4. To what extent have you experienced men being physically abused by their female partners while on IPV calls?

5. Are there instances in which you believe men did not acknowledge being a victim of IPV by their wives or significant others due to fear of not being believed?

6. Are there instances in which you believe societal stigma may deter an adult heterosexual male from acknowledging he was a victim of IPV by a woman?

Appendix B: Police Department Approval Letter



City
of
[redacted]
Police Department
[redacted]

April 5th, 2021

To Selena Sanchez:

I understand that you wish to interview [redacted] patrol officers for your dissertation as a Doctoral student at Walden University. This letter provides you with my written approval to conduct those interviews with any [redacted] patrol officer who voluntarily wishes to speak with you about their direct experience with heterosexual, male, domestic violence victims.

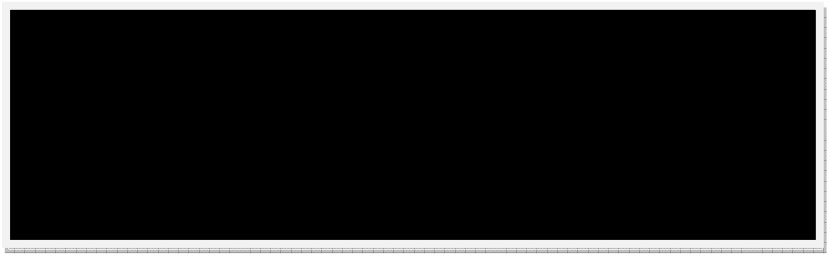
If you have any question moving forward, please do not hesitate to reach out to my Assistant, [redacted]e at [redacted]

Sincerely,

[redacted]

[redacted]

Appendix :C Police Department Approval Letter



To whom it may concern,

On April 5th, 2021 Walden University Doctoral student, Selena Sanchez, contacted the [redacted] requesting permission to interview our police officers concerning her dissertation study.

This letter serves to grant permission for Ms. Sanchez to conduct interviews with [redacted] police officers for her study. Officers are prohibited from providing any information that may be confidential in nature to include suspect or victim names, addresses or other means of contact or identification. Any formal requests for the release of official records must be made to the Police Department's Records section and cannot be released by the officer.

The context of the interview will be limited to the personal experiences of the individual officers. The Officer's statements do not represent the views of the [redacted] Police Department or the City of [redacted]

Appendix D:Police Department Approval Letter

[redacted]

[redacted]

March 23, 2021

Walden University
100 Washington Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55401

To Whom It May Concern:

Doctoral student Selena Sanchez has asked to interview [redacted] Agents reference her dissertation. I have received permission from senior command to allow this and have extended the request to our agents. Some have already expressed the willingness to interview.

We are granting this request and are willing to allow these employees to talk with Ms. Sanchez. We only ask that identity and other sensitive information pertaining to HIPPA or any other laws remain strictly confidential. Ms. Sanchez has already proactively said this would be the case.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thanks,

[redacted]