

Why do women stay in abusive relationships research proposal

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Introduction

No matter how hard we try to believe that we are living in a developed country and we are literate and modern people, studies show that we still are not free from the shackles of domestic violence. According to a survey conducted by US National Institute of Mental Health, 42.8% of women were victims of domestic violence yet they still were in that abusive relationship (Nauert, 2010). Abusive relationships take the form of physical, emotional, psychological and verbal abuse which might leave the victim dwell in the darkness of reality. With bruised marks and a scared image, the victim tends to lead a life of misery. This is mainly due to the responsibility of a child and the fear of the future. Not only has this, the reluctance to face the society and the hesitance in leaving a loved one, further made it difficult for women to get out of an abusive relationship. To add in to this fear, these women are unaware about the support and help that is available for them. With lack of knowledge and mounting fear, these females continue to accept their situation living a life with a hope that things will get better. However, instead of improvement, violence continues to increase leaving behind females in an alarming state. Hence, while looking at the harm caused by abusive relationships, there is a dire need to identify and consequently address the reasons which force women to stay in abusive relationships. In this way, not only the victim but generations and eventually the whole society can be saved from this menace.

Problem Statement According to the US National Institute of Mental Health, 42.8% of the domestically abused females opt to stay in their relationships which continue to seriously harm their overall well being. However, despite

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the huge list of reasons stated by studies and communicated by women who stay in abusive relationships, the root of all these factors is based upon the aspect of lack of awareness. Regardless of the low self-esteem, security, child custody, commitment, society and attachment towards a controlling man, women are actually unaware of their rights, and it is the instilled fear to take an action which makes them stay in an abusive relationship. For this reason, there is a dire need to educate them about their rights and acquaint them with all the possible actions which they can take to end abuse thereby leading a good life which they deserve. Rationale:

Females suffering in abusive relationships tend to develop a number of serious problems which pose great threat to their health and psycho-social adjustment. Research has put forward a number of dire consequences of abusive relationships such as psychological and sexual harm along with the chances of developing terminal illnesses. This shows that how harmful it is to stay in abusive relationships. It destroys personalities and moreover, it ruins generations. Females staying in such relationships tend to undermine their rights thereby giving men a chance to be more controlling and to continue the same practices. There might be several reasons for which women tend to stay in abusive relationships which are generally associated with the underlying fear of the future, of image and humiliation. For this reason, it is important to address and resolve this fear so that women can get out of these abusive relationships and live a life of dignity and peace which they actually deserve. In this manner, it is not only the female but the whole society which would eventually get rid of the cruelty depicted by males who take advantage of the vulnerable forces of the society. While several studies

have outlined specific reasons for continuing an abusive relationship, this study incorporates the realm of fear and tends to address it so that females are educated and are made aware to take a stand and end violence.

Research Objectives:

The purpose of this study is to address the fears faced by females who stay in abusive relationships. These fears revolve around the reasons pertaining to the future of the child, to financial security, societal humiliation and the attachment with the partner. All these reasons are further strengthened because of a low self esteem. Therefore, this study would draw light upon different strategies and way of thinking when it comes to beating these fears while deciding to leave an abusive man. Making females aware about their rights will give them courage to stand up. Also, there is a dire need to educate them regarding the support system and all the options they have when. In this manner, this research will help females to analyze the reality of their sufferings and therefore make a consequent adamant decision to get out of the relationship. The purpose of this study is therefore to acquaint them to manage their life appropriately by coherently understanding the damage these abusive relationships cause to themselves and the future generations. In this manner, this study will help females to fearlessly handle all forms of abuse and realize their value and dignity in a society.

Hypothesis:

HA1: The fear of future security of the child and of the female is positively associated with her decision to stay in an abusive relationship

HA2: The fear of facing societal humiliation and discrimination and

attachment to the partner is positively associated with a female's decision to stay in an abusive relationship

HA3: Greater number of uneducated women stays in abusive relationships as compared to those who have at least basic education

HA4: Women with low self esteem tend to stay longer in abusive relationships

Literature Review:

According to the US National Institute of Mental Health, 42.8% of women were victims of domestic violence yet they were still in that abusive relationship (Nauert, 2010). Abuse takes the form of physical, emotional, verbal and mental violence which may adversely affect the development, esteem and overall adjustment of women. However, females tend to stay in abusive relationships because of a number of reasons. Women often do not consider ending an abusive relationship because of factors such as love for their partner, societal humiliation, financial security, child custody, and self esteem which often stop them from taking these decisions. Moreover, dysfunctional family history also prepares a woman of what to expect from her partner. She is led to believe that men have the 'right' to abuse women and treat them in whatever way they desire (Examiner, 2013). A substantial amount of females stay in abusive relationships due to the lack of assertiveness which might make them pathological at times. Walker (1992) claims that women who might have been physically, psychologically or sexually abused by their partners tend to exhibit the Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS) which makes them experience great moments of

depression, resulting in their lack of interest in life. This state in turn prolongs many women to not getting out of their abusive relationships. Carole Jahme, an evolutionary agony aunt presented a fully evaluated article on, " why do so many women put up with domestic violence?" (Jahme, 2010). She argues that many women who live in abusive relationships do so not because of their own will but just learnt how to, from there environments while they are growing up. This, she claims, arise from the inability of the children's mother to provide maternal authority which arises from their low self-esteem. According to the survey she carried, nearly one fourth of all heterosexual female suffer from either physical or sexual abuse. This damage protrudes outwards from the victim scaring the people close to her including her children. She continues to state that the victims sometimes sympathizes with their spouses who leads them to forgiving and forgetting the wrongs they have been done due to either pity or the love they have for them. In addition, she explains women to be on the sharp end by being blamed by their spouse and frequently blaming themselves. This eventually brings guilt and shame, possibly, they might get frustrated by finance hardships or inability to manage their situation leading them to anxiety and finally feeling helpless which permanently forces them to stay with their perpetrators. She staunchly supports her findings from " Parenting in battered women: the effects of domestic violence on women and their children," an article by Graham, SA (2001). Carole attaches a list of the references from which the readers can refer to in case of need to confirm or urge to read more on the subject matter.

In contrast Dara Adeeyo (2013) is of the opinion that ladies, who date

abusive men, are happier and grateful when their relationship end. Apart from the abuse, many women enjoy the fact that they have a head in their family who boldly gives and stands by their ideas no matter how harsh they are. The author further argues that ladies feel sad if detached from someone that pretty much brain-washed them, humiliated or even shoved them. This happens despite of them knowing their stay will do them no good but rather cause more long-term harm to them. The author uses a relatively clear, to the point and understandable language in sitting the findings.

However, studies also suggest that even though if females leave, they often tend to return back to their abusive partners. Several times females stay in abusive relationships till the point they achieve financial security and independence; till they begin to earn or till the child gets old. Many times women continue with abusive relationships as they feel that they will eventually find a solution to the reason behind this behavior. This could be in terms of having a baby, undergoing marital counseling, attending a behavior change program or getting a job. In real, on the basis of real life events, research suggests that such cases of violent instead of stopping tend to escalate more. This shows that there is a dire need to assist and support these women to get out of their abusive relationships because of the great harm attached to it.

Definition of Terms

- Domestic violence (noun) - Domestic violence are all those abusive actions and behaviors that one partner practices to have control over the other partner. It may include physical actions like hitting, kicking, etc.; or

psychological actions like giving threats and using inappropriate language.

- Dysfunctional (adjective) - not in a normal manner
- Liberty (noun) - freedom of speech and actions
- Psychological (adjective) - relating to the mind and mental or emotional state
- Channel (verb) - paths or directions

Summary

Even though our literacy rates have increased, our actions don't seem to agree. Domestic violence has been seen in all races and cultures around the world with little or no improvement. The steps taken by the governments and individuals have not been satisfactory. Women in abusive relationships tend to 'want' to stay in that relationship because they fear the future.

There are countless reasons that they make such a decision. However, low self-esteem is not one of them. They do not know the options they have.

They do not know that they have a huge support group waiting to help them out. This research will look into the reasons why women tend to stay in abusive relationships and how can we educate them into making better decisions for them. Methodology

This research will undertake a qualitative approach where the data would be collected through interviews. Since the major purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons of staying a relationship and the fear associated with, the interview would incorporate structured as well as unstructured questionnaires which would assess the factors of financial security, child custody/care, societal fear, and other reasons for staying in an abusive

relationship. The interview would also address the aspect of help and support taken by the participants along with getting an insight regarding their awareness on this subject matter. A self esteem scale would be used to measure the level of self esteem of the participants.

Participants

This study will include married women who are still in an abusive relationship and those who ended such married abusive relationships. The marriage period of all these participants would be at least 2 years. Also, marriage counselors along with workers in this field would be targeted in this study. Since this study undertakes a qualitative approach, 25 females who are still in an abusive relationship and 25 females who got out of these relationships will be interviewed. Similarly approximately 5 advocates/marriage counselors/ policy makers would be interviewed so that the issue can be studied in depth. These participants would be selected using purposive sampling technique on the basis of their specific required characteristics.

Research Design

This research would follow a cross-sectional design where married females undergoing abuse from their partners would be interviewed. In addition, advocates, policy makers and marriage counselors would also be interviewed whereas those females who have ended their abusive relationship would also be a part of this study so that a comparison could be drawn between the two groups.

Instruments

Females who are still in the abusive relationship as well as those who ended such relationships would be interviewed so that the different areas of interest could be targeted. For this reason, the interview would focus on both types of these participants and would also include counselors and support providers who work in this field. In this way, these supporters would be asked to quote occasions when females approached them along with exploring their role in saving women from abuse. Rosenberg self esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1965) would be used to measure the self esteem of the participants. Variables

Independent variable: Financial Security, Child custody, attachment to the partner, societal fear and lack of awareness

Moderating variable: Self esteem, education level

Dependent variable: The decision to stay in abusive relationships.

Proposed Analysis:

The study expects to find a positive association between factors such as fear attached to child custody, society and financial security along with the attachment to the partner, and the decision to stay in the abusive relationships. Also, the lack of awareness regarding the available support and help will also be positively associated with the decision to continue an abusive relationship. However, the level of education and self esteem of the females who got out of these relationships would be higher as compared to those who are still in an abusive relationship

Validity of Research Instruments

Validity of research instruments engrosses the level at which research instruments verify the variables used in the research study adequately. If study instruments are valid, then the research results can be generalized for the entire population. Validity entails the meaningfulness of inference based on the study outcomes. The researcher will contract out the services of specialists to ascertain the validity of the questionnaires before they are used in the study. This is done in order to get rid of any biasness in the research outcomes. The endorsement of these experts will be used to build up the research instruments so that they exceed the tests of validity.

Reliability of the research instruments

Reliability refers to the in-house dependability of a research instrument (Dawson, 2002). Questionnaires will be used in the study given that they have the capacity to yield dependable results for the study. The researcher will carry out a pilot study to discover the reliability of the research instruments (interview and the self esteem scale). A pilot study will lay down the stage of the compilation of the data that will be examined to come up with the research findings and recommendations for the study. Data will be analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The investigator will ascertain the reliability of the research instruments through the split half method (Salkind, 2009). If the value falls in the middle of the established ranges that is (0.6 -0.9), the questionnaires will be regarded as reliable (Khan, 2011). The value of alpha would be set to .05 which would be used to test the hypothesis. Also the reliability of the data collection tool

would be assessed using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS. T-test, regression and correlations would be used to compare the results between the two sets of sample.

Implications and Limitations

Implications and limitations are being made regarding the proposed sample and how it represents the proposed population. Using the sample population, the study will reveal the specific reasons why women stay in abusive relationships and these observations and implications will be extended to the larger population (Nauert, 2010). The specific limitations at this stage will be finding a sample population that will be willing to participate in the study.

The specific implications being made are that the sample population must be carefully selected, so as to sufficiently represent the specific characteristics of the targeted population (NCADV, 2010). It is only through careful selection that a sample population will be deemed to be valid. The target population represents the dependent variable, while the abusive relationship represents the independent variable (Lova, 2013). Implications are being made in having respondents truthfully answer a survey, questionnaires, or interview questions. To ensure that respondents truthfully answer the questions during the data collection phase, this sample population will have to be carefully selected. The most appropriate sampling technique will be used to ensure that the respondents are not merely sampled but rather are those who are willing to be truthful in their responses.

The main limitations of the study include dishonesty on the part of the respondents and the lack of a specific definition of the independent variable;

abusive relationships (Grundy, 2013). The definition of abuse might entail physical, psychological, verbal and so forth (Parker, 2010). Another key limitation is the limited sample size. This is due to the fact that since this study revolves around a sensitive personal issue, lesser number of females would be willing to participate in it.

Time Schedule

This research proposal process will take a maximum period of two months for its completion. The two months will be subdivided into smaller time periods that will cater for the major processes involved. Some of the processes may overlap each other. However, this will not cause a problem unless one process is a prerequisite of another.

The first week will be spent acquiring resources such as a computer and the secondary surveys. This will be followed by preparations of the interview and questionnaires and photocopying them to the required number of copies. This will take at least another week. Three weeks will be set aside for the dispersion of the data collection tools and their collection. Tabulating of the collected data into numerical data that can be analyzed will take approximately one week. Another week will be devoted to the compilation and drafting of the final research proposal paper. The final week will be spent finalizing on the paper through proofreading the final draft, typing it, printing and binding the research paper.

Resources Needed

Interview: A semi structured interview will be created with close ended as well as open ended questions which will vary for the females in abusive

relationships and for the marriage counselors/ advocates/ policy makers.

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale: This is easily available online

Computers: They will be useful in the typing of the proposal once the data has been verified and compiled. The computers will also be equipped with relevant computer software and programs to be used in statistical tabulation of the data such as regression analysis and correlation analysis. Computer programs to be used in the analysis of the collected data may include Microsoft Office Excel and/or STATA.

Personnel

Other sources of information relevant to this research include information from the male counterparts. Professionals at help centers for women who have been in abusive relationships could also give important information. Information from the male gender will give data that is from a different point of view from the women's view. The professionals and personnel at the centers act as independent bodies and will hence give information from a neutral point of view. Additional information from the male gender and the centre personnel will reduce the level of biases in the information generally collected. Information will also be collected from the general public to get a general view on people's thought in relation to the topic.

Budget

This section shows how financial resources are allocated to the various processes for the smooth running of the research. It also shows the total expenses to be incurred throughout the research process. Finances for the research process will be allocated as explained below.

Five thousand dollars will be set aside for employees. Two thousand dollars

will be set aside for equipment and transport expenses to and from the relevant areas where the interview/questionnaires will be dispersed and collected. Typing and printing of the questionnaires is estimated to be at one dollar per page. One set of data collection tool consists of three pages amounting to three dollars per a questionnaire. A total of 55 sets will be printed and dispersed. The total for this summed up to four hundred and ninety five dollars. One hundred dollars will also set aside for the typing and printing of the research paper. One hundred dollars will be set aside for binding the final research proposal paper. A total of two thousand dollars will be set aside for online services as the research is being conducted. For other unforeseen expenses, one thousand dollars will be set aside to cater for them. Total expenses to be incurred during this research proposal will sum up to a total of nine thousand six hundred and ninety five dollars. These expenses estimates are not constant and are, therefore, subject to change over time.

Needed Assurances

Before embarking on such a study, potential participants should be well informed on the on goings of the study. This is done in a consent form. Any research that involves humans needs a consent form. (Salkind, 2009). The consent form available for the willing participants is as shown below:

PARTICIPANTS' CONSENT FORM

Researcher's name:

Researcher's contact information:

Ref: REQUESTING FOR VOLUNTEER PARTICIPANT IN MY RESEARCH
PROPOSAL STUDY.

This is to invite you to be a participant in my on-going research proposal study. This study is aimed at understanding why women stay in their abusive relationships; it is also intended to find out the reason that made some women leave the relationships. There are several views on the ideas of an abusive relationship and the concept of “ how much is enough” and “ how far is too far”. This study is meant to shed some light on these views. The study will take approximately two months to be completed. The study will be done through a study method. You are, therefore, required to respond to the interview questions that will be conducted once this consent form is signed. Additionally, you will also be asked to respond to a self esteem scale. Your answers will be analyzed and used to form a conclusion later on.

The study is expected to include a total number of 55 participants. Your participation in the study will help us identify the challenges faced by women in their decision making on whether or not to leave an abusive relationship. You are not required to face any risks in relation to this study. Your identity and participation in this study will be of a confidential nature. This is a request for your support. You will not receive any penalties in the event that you do not wish to participate.

For those willing to participate, please sign below;

I have read this consent form, and I have decided to take part in the on-going research proposal study.

Interview: The following is an example of an interview format that would be incorporated in this study. Further probing would be done at the time of the interview which would last for at least 20 minutes.

Age

No. of children

Total Years of Marriage

I am still in an abusive relationship (yes/no)

Q. 1: For how long have you been abused and in what form?

Q. 2: Having a child/ children is one of the major reasons for staying in an abusive relationship? (Agree/Disagree)

Q. 3: To what extent do you love your husband? Is his good qualities and your affection a major reason for staying in such a relationship?

Q. 4: Do you expect your husband to change his behavior in the near future?

How?

Q. 5: Explain the type of relationship your parents had?

Q. 6: Have you ever considered the option of leaving your husband? If yes, then why are you still stuck?

Q. 7: Have you ever tried to approach someone for help?

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)

strongly agree, circle SA. If you agree with the statement, circle A. If you disagree, circle D. If

you strongly disagree, circle SD.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. SA A D SD

2.* At times, I think I am no good at all. SA A D SD

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities. SA A D SD

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people. SA A D SD

5.* I feel I do not have much to be proud of. SA A D SD

6.* I certainly feel useless at times. SA A D SD

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with

others.

SA A D SD

8.* I wish I could have more respect for myself. SA A D SD

9.* All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. SA A D SD

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself. SA A D SD

Scoring: SA= 3, A= 2, D= 1, SD= 0. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored, that is, SA= 0, A= 1,

D= 2, SD= 3. Sum the scores for the 10 items. The higher the score, the higher the self esteem.

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