

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature of the problem

Throughout recorded history, domestic violence has occurred in societies in which women are considered to be subordinate to men. What were the concepts that contributed to the subordination of women? Which beliefs shaped the subordination of women to men?

Nadelhaft (1993) point out that there are four fundamental concepts or systems of authority, that shaped the subordination of women by men: (1) hierarchy - a system of authority in which a relatively few individuals or groups are at the top and rule others by controlling basic resources such as food, property, shelter, health resources, education, money, and jobs. Since these people at the top of the hierarchy control these needed resources, they also control people who need access to them; (2) patriarchy - a system of authority that inserts gender into the hierarchy by insisting that only higher class males are born to be able to control basic resources. This system does not allow women to gain access to control of any basic resources or to have any rights or privileges, including custody of their own children; (3) misogyny – a belief that gender attributes necessitate the subordination of women based on their negative character traits such as being untrustworthy, illogical, wicked, irresponsible, gullible, or childlike and; (4) polarity – a belief that men and women are opposites of one another. In this view, if men are strong and just, then women must be weak and evil.

People get into this powerful, controlling group in a hierarchical society because they are usually born into the ruling social class (Stern, 1999). Thus, very few people are able to ascend from lower or middle classes into this higher social class group on their own merits. Nevertheless, the question is: where women and men ever considered being equals? Nadelhaft

(1993) have noted there have been periods of time when women have not been considered subordinate to men. When and what were the characteristics of societies in which women were considered equal partners with men? In the earliest human hunter-gatherer cultures, women were considered to be equal partners with men (Nadelhaft, 1993). People lived in small bands of interdependent people and the authority was not considered to be gender specific, instead, authority in the clan was shared according to one's skill and age (Stern, 1999; Nadelhaft, 1993). There was a division of labor according to gender with women tending to domestic duties such as caring for and nurturing children, making clothing and household articles and growing and harvesting crops, then, men were the warriors and hunters who would protect the people in the tribe and hunt for animal sources of food (Nadelhaft, 1993). In these primitive cultures, the earth was seen as a source of abundant resources and people worshipped nature and fertility goddesses.

On the other hand, Stern (1999) shows that by tradition, law, and religious prescription, men in most societies throughout most of recorded history have been entitled to discipline their wives and to inflict physical punishment. Thus, the fact that some men routinely beat their wives for their apparent "bad" behavior was regarded as a fact of life. The first thoroughgoing protest against this violence was published in England in 1879 by Frances Power Cobbe, who urged legislation to prevent "Wife Torture in England" (Finkelhor & Yllo, 1985). Protest continued in the United States, Susan B. Anthony and other leaders of the nineteenth-century women's movement often spoke out against the brutality of men who coerced their wives through physical and sexual violence (Schutter, Malouff, & Doyle, 1988). After 1964, the year Al-Anon women in Pasadena, California, opened the first shelter for women victims of physical abuse; the term "battered women" gradually began to come into widespread use (Prescott & Letko, 1977). For

the past twenty years battered women (but not batterers) have been a popular research subject for psychologists seeking to explain why some women are battered (Bowker, 1983; Bowker, 1986; Bollie, 1997; Campbell, Raja, & Grining, 1997; Corsi, 1999; Brandwein, 1999; Eldar-Avidan & Haj-Yahia, 2000; Patzel, 2001). Feminist researchers, on the other hand, note that battered women generally try to prevent, defuse, or flee violence, and recent studies have found battered women to be extraordinarily resourceful and flexible in escaping violence (Stark, & Flitcraft, 1996; Campbell, Rose, Kub, & Nedd, 1998).

Recent feminist analysis focuses not on battered women but on men who perpetrate assault and on social institutions that look the other way (Loseke, 1992; Long, 1994; Jasinski & Williams, 1998; Johnson, 1995; Jacobson & Gottman, 1998). One widely publicized and generally misunderstood psychological concept colors public perceptions of battered women: the concept of the battered woman syndrome developed by Leonor Walker. According to Walker (1984) the syndrome include extreme passivity or learned helplessness, a condition that results from repeated battering and impairs the woman's ability to take constructive action on her own behalf. Expert witnesses at the murder trials of battered women who kill their batterers in self-defense use Walker theory to explain to jurors why the woman was unable to leave the man before the fatal confrontation (Jonés, 1995; Geles, 1976). Yet battered woman syndrome is commonly and wrongly thought to be a legal defense that gives any battered woman an excuse to kill, the term also unfortunately suggests that women who defends themselves against their batterer are somehow mentally defective (Taylor, Magnussen, & Amundson, 2001; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). Originally intended to help battered women, the concept is now often used against them and is often rigorously applied by prosecutors to disqualify a woman's claims of self-defense: if a woman was not absolutely passive and helpless, as most battered women are

not, then she may be disqualified as a truthful battered woman and blamed as a brutal killer (Bollie, 1997; Jones, 1995; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996). The standard is used particularly against women of color and poor women who cannot afford expert help (Molina, 1999). In addition, in civil divorce proceedings, some women are deemed unfit mothers and lose custody of their children when the court determines they are impaired by battered woman syndrome (Eldar-Avidan & Haj-Yahia, 2000; Molina, 1999).

During the 1970s women who identified themselves as formerly battered and their feminist allies organized the battered women's movement to stop violence against women by providing emergency shelter, raising awareness, and influencing legislation and public policy (Jones, 1995). This movement marked an extraordinary moment in U.S. history: never before had there been such an organization of crime victims who, when denied redress, established an effective system of protection for themselves and other crime victims (Nadelhaft, 1993). By 1978 the movement had established a National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, in addition to providing shelter and support for battered women and their children, the movement effected legal changes giving battered women the right to obtain orders of protection, maintain residence (while batterers are evicted), and receive child custody and support (Schechter, 1982).

According to Schechter (1982) this movements faced enormous resistance from the criminal justice system, the movement brought lawsuits and influenced police, prosecutors, and judges to enforce laws against domestic assault just as they would in no domestic cases. The movement also emphasized public education and in-service training for people who come in contact with battered women, including criminal justice, social work, and medical personnel (Schechter, 1982). Working at local, state, and national levels, the movement caught public attention and made private violence against women in the home a public social issue of great importance

(Schechter, 1982; Jones, 1995). This achievement prompted several foundations and professional organizations, including the American Medical Association and the American Bar Association, to initiate programs to combat violence against women and children in the home (Nadelhaft, 1993). The movement's achievements are also reflected in the Violence Against Women Act passed by Congress in 1994, legislation that includes provisions to aid battered women (Jones, 1995).

Despite these remarkable accomplishments, battering remains the most frequently committed crime in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). Law enforcement is still inadequate and erratic, and shelters and services for battered women are increasingly institutionalized, staffed primarily by professionals in mental health and social work rather than by formerly battered women and feminists (Walker, 1992; Robert, 1996; Robert, 1995; Morrison, 1997; Meier, 1997). These conditions reflect the persistence of age old attitudes that wife beating is an individual psychological and marital problem, that it cannot be stopped, that it is normal behavior bound to happen when women "ask for it," and that victimized women have only themselves to blame. The nature and the history of the violence against women problem explains why women's decision to stay or to leave has been a difficult process during the past to the current time.

Magnitude of the problem

Violence against women is a problem that has permeated human history with humiliating scars devaluating women in many cultures. In reality, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse has occurred for centuries (Diaz, 1998; Stern, 1999; Jacobson & Gottman, 1998; Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Unfortunately, this kind of abuse has been accepted as a common practice in most of the world societies. Dobash and Dobash (1979) argued that the problem of battered women is a

consequence of the patriarchal structure in a society, and assert that Western societies have traditionally accepted the domination and control of women by men as normal behavior.

The societal cost of domestic violence is staggering. Studies from Roberts (1995) reflected that the expenses generated by battering remain uncalculated, primarily due to a lack of complete data, which stems from the reluctance of the victims and the legal, medical, and law enforcement systems to intervene in the domestic domain. As a result, society as a whole shoulders the enormous costs that flow from the “private problem” between the abused and the abuser (Roberts, 1995; Diaz, 1998).

The battered woman constitutes an important issue of violence that also demonstrates the necessity of intervention with public policies in those areas that traditionally have comprised of the private space. Domestic violence, more often than not, is rooted in patriarchal notions of ownership over women’s body sexuality; labour reproductive rights, mobility and levels of autonomy (Stern, 1999; Brygger et. al, 1995). The phenomenon of wife battering is shrouded in myths and stereotypes that need to expose. This problem does not respect race, religion, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation. However certain common characteristics are found among battered women that reflect low self-esteem; fear to die into the hands of their victimizer, the need to preserve the family nucleus, financial and emotional dependency (Corsi, 1999; SSNL, 2002). Many abused wives are from homes where their mothers were also beaten (Garbarino & Eckenrode, 1999; SSNL, 2002).

Prevalence: statistical findings concern

Kilgore (1991) reported that in the United States a woman will be mistreated every 15 seconds. Every month more than 50,000 North American women will be battered; this represents the 50% of the women that will undergo domestic violence. The domestic violence statistics

from Canada are not much different since one of two women will suffer some physical or sexual abuse before turning age of 16, and three out of ten suffer or have suffered domestic violence in the hands of their partner before or after married (Long, 1994). Every year the United States invests \$5 trillions to fight all related domestic violence crime, and another \$100 million in medical expenses is spent toward battered women (Federal Bureau of Investigation-Uniform Crime Report, 2002).

Thus, violence against women often becomes more severe and frequent as time passes.

There were 46,711 domestic violence victims reported to the Michigan UCR Program in 2000. In New Jersey, statistics shows there were 82,373 domestic violence offences reported by the police in 2001. In Puerto Rico a 60% of the populations of married women are victims of domestic violence every year (National Crime Survey Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991; Policía de Puerto Rico, 2000).

The effort of the government in developing strategies through legislation to diminish the problem of violence against women had failed. The prevalence of domestic violence constantly increases every day in the U.S. (FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2002). The FBI statistics of Uniform Crime Report (2002) showed that violence against women is the most common type of assault in US. There is an estimated of four million American women abused by their husbands or intimate partners every year, as domestic violence becomes the primary cause of injury to women in the United States. In fact, the studies of Jacobson and Gottman (1998) reported that violence against women becomes more severe and frequent as time passes.

An estimated 60 to 75 percent of women in substance abuse treatment programs have experienced partner violence during their lifetimes (El-Bassel, 2000). Of all pregnant women, 3.9 percent to 8.3 percent experience violence (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). This data

suggests that violence may be a more common problem for pregnant women than pre-eclampsia, and gestational diabetes, conditions for which pregnant women are routinely screened (Goodwin, et al., 2000). In 1998, 7.7 per 1,000 women and 1.5 per 1,000 men were victims of intimate partner violence. During the same year, 1,830 murders were attributed to intimate partners (Rennison, May 2000).

Furthermore, statistics from the UCR (2002) stated that there were 82,373 domestic violence offences reported by the police in 2001, a 6% increase compared to the 77,680 reported in 2000. The assaults accounted for 47% (39,092) and harassment accounted for 38% (31,096) of the reported offences in 2001. It is important to emphasize that wives were the victims in 28% (22,957) and ex-wives were victims in 4% (3,154) of the reported domestic violence offences in 2001. Overall, females were victims in 78% (63,939) of all domestic violence offences.

On the other hand, Curtis (2003) asserted that in spite of the fact that not enough research has been conducted addressing the relationship between pregnancy and domestic violence, the leading cause of death for pregnant women is homicide resulting from women abuse. Curtis and Brookhoff, O'Brien, and Cook, (1997) showed that emergency room victims of domestic violence are mostly females and are thirteen times more likely to suffer injury to their breasts, chests, or abdomens than accident victims.

In Mexico, according to "Secretaría de Salud de Nuevo León" (SSNL) (2002), despite the fact that not all abused Mexican women report their situation to the authorities, statistics from INEGI, (2000) in Monterrey, Mexico reported 6,954 cases of battered women from January to September of 1997. There is no doubt that in order for this problem to be confronted in an effective way, it requires the will to unite efforts and intentions between the public sector, the

private sector, the police, the courts, the professionals of social aid and the community in general (Long, 1994; Roberts, 1995; Buzawa & Buzawa, 1996).

Battered women as a concept

Larraín (1999) reported that during the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing violence against women was defined as any act of violence based on gender, which often results in physical, sexual or psychological harm, including threats, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, in either private or public life. It regularly occurs between people who share or have shared kinship or blood ties, or have a formal marital or consensual relationship. It takes place most often in the home.

Stating the question

Despite three decades of social action (Roche & Sadoski, 1996), legal reforms (Browne, 1993; Roberts, 1996; Brandwein, 1999), psychological research (Prescott & Letko, 1977), and other activities directed at addressing the prevalence in the problem of abused women (Straus & Gelles, 1988, 1990; Brandwein, 1999), a frequently asked question regarding battered women among both professionals and the lay public continuous to be: why do women stay? In addition, Jacobson and Gottman (1998) discussed the issue of how do women survive their abusers during and after the leaving process. Nevertheless, there is no one simple explanation about why battered women remain or abandon abusive partners. However, there are multiple factors that contribute to stay-leave decision making process in an abusive situation.

There are many studies about the emotional consequences and the interventions in different areas, health, education and safety, in the victims of violence against women (Campbell, Raja, Kub, and Nedd, 1998; Curtis, 1999; Corsi, 1999; Larraín, 1999; Stern, 1999; Teubal, 2001; Bowker, 1986). Throughout history, there is an evidence of predominance of institutions within

the patriarchal cultures that has developed in the men the tendency to follow a violent behavior against women (Stern, 1999; Teubal, 2001; Larraín, 1999; SSNL, 2002). Thus, the analysis of battered women's decision to stay or to leave is necessary for determining multiple factors that contribute to the victimization of women in countries with strong patriarchal cultural patterns. In addition, many factors appears to perform a role in obstructing or delaying battered women to leave from abusive relationships, including factors related to the environment, economics, socialization, and the psychological effects of abuse (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997).

The literature identified types of abuse, emotional wellbeing, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity and social supports were the most common factors implicit in the stay/leave battered women's decision. The religiosity and the patriarchal cultural values are factors that have an impact on the women's decision to stay or to leave their abusers because religious institutions in general encourage the resignation to an abusive relationship and try to enforce the patriarchal model within the family system (Corsi, 1999). The types of abuse, the emotional well-being, the social support, and the limited resources for economic independence are also real risk factors linked with a probability of returning to the same abusive relationship (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993; Jacobson and Gottman, 1998; Jaffe et. al, 1996; Rusbult & Martz, 1995).

Although a reputable body of research showed multiple factors involved in the stay/leave women's decision, there is the need to research which of those factors are the most significant predictors in the abused women's decision to stay and which are the strongest predictors in the women's decision to leave their abusers. It will provide researchers, social work professionals, legislators and policy makers, a better understanding to the stay/leave women's decision and the opportunity to effectively reduce the problem of battered women. Consequently, the stating

question is: what factors have the major impact on the women's decision to stay or leave their abusive partners?

Study Rationale

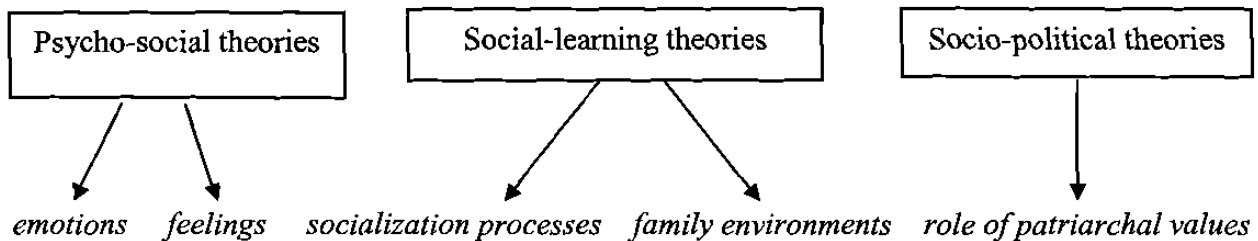
Obviously, the subject of violence against women and the decision to stay or to leave the abusive relationship is an important issue in eradicating the problem. A body of research has been done about predictors included in the multiple factors that impact the women's stay/leave decision. Nevertheless, there are no studies that include in a comparative approach, the differences of the best predictors between the women's decision to stay and the factors in women's decision to leave their abusive partners. Despite many studies in countries such as United States and Canada that showed a good theoretical and empirical panoramic view of the problem of battered women and the subsequent factors in the women's decision to stay or leave the abusive relationship (Long, 1994 & Roberts, 1995), Mexico's empirical findings about such an issue concerning the Mexican women are relatively insufficient. Unfortunately, the strong patriarchal values of Mexico's society have precluded policy makers and legislators to produce a policy or a law that directly protects women against domestic violence (SSNL, 2002). The existing law is for the attendance, attention and prevention of the interfamilial violence with an special focus on children's protection (DIF, 2001). Thus, this study proposes to examine, identify, and compare which factors are the best predictors in: a Mexican woman's decision to stay in an abusive situation, the best predictors in the Mexican women's decision to leave their abusive situation, and to increase the Mexican battered women studies in the stay/leave decision area.

CHAPTER II

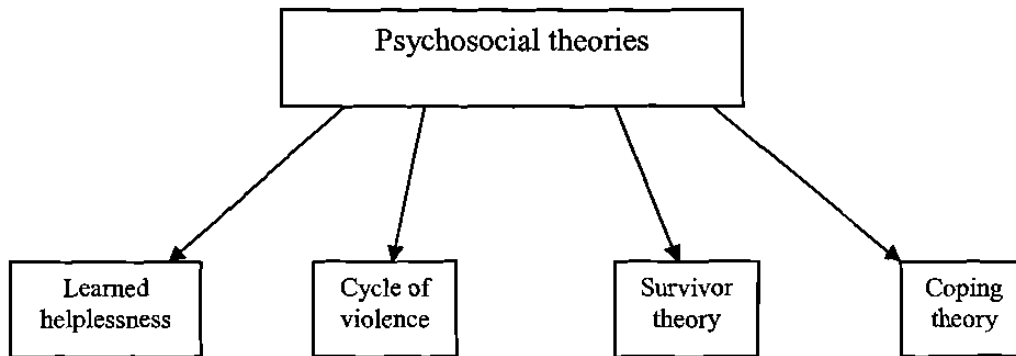
THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

Major theories

The main theoretical factors related to abused women's decision approach can be grouped into three categories: psycho-social theories, social learning theories and socio-political theories.



Psychosocial theories focus on the emotions and feelings acquired during child rearing, which make women and men behave in a particular manner (Roy, 1977; Prescott & Letko, 1977; Walker, 1979). The social learning theories view violence as a direct consequence of the socialization processes and the family environments from which the women and men learn to be helpless and aggressive respectively (Straus, 1977). The socio-political theories highlight the role of patriarchal values in the manifestations of violence, which forces women into subordinate positions (Stern, 1999; Stets & Straus, 1989). Therefore, to understand theoretical issues in the women's decision to stay or leave an abusive situation, it is necessary to discuss the most relevant theories included in the reference categories listed above. For the purpose of this study however, only the most relevant theories listed in the categories of psychosocial and socio-political theories will be used.

Psychosocial theories

The concept of battered woman syndrome has evolved from its inception in the late 1970s (Walker, 1994). Initially, it was conceptualized as “learned helplessness,” a condition used to explain a victims’ inability to protect herself against the batterer’s violence that developed following repeated decisions to leave their abusers, but failed efforts (Walker, 1978). Another early formulation of battered woman syndrome referred to the cycle of violence, a theory that describes the dynamics of the batterer’s behavior (Walker, 1994). Moreover, battered woman syndrome has been recently defined by Walker (1992) as a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a psychological condition that results from exposure to severe trauma. Among other things, PTSD explains that a battered victim often make a decision to leave the abuser because of flashbacks and other intrusive experiences resulting from prior victimization, and to new situations viewed as dangerous. Thus, Walker (1992: 28) believes that there is always at least some permanent damage from living with domestic violence over time, damage that she labeled as “a loss of resilience to stress”.

This major category of theories involves: Self-esteem theory, Learned Helplessness theory, Survivor theory, and Coping theory.

Cycle of Violence Theory

The cycle of violence theory has become one of the most contemplated theories on battered women, which greatly explains how abused women perceive themselves as helpless (Walker, 1994). Furthermore, this theory can be used to explain how battered victims decided to stay, and how drawn back into the relationship when the abuser is contrite and attentive following the violence. According to Walker (1944), this theory comprises three distinct phases in the cycle of violence: the tension building stage, the acute battering incident and kindness and contrite loving behaviour. In the first stage, when minor battering incidents occur, the woman adapts, rationalizes and externalizes the problem. Tension mounts in the second phase leading to the acute battering incident leading to severe repercussions on the woman physically, emotionally and psychologically. In phase three, both the partners experience uncontrolled love and affection, and the husband promises never to repeat the abusive incidents. This theory explained by Walker is self-perpetuating in the lives of almost all battered women. The first and the second phase of the cycle comprises most of the issues in the decision making process to leave the abusive situation, and the third phase of the cycle comprises some of the issues in the process of remaining with an abusive partner (Walker, 1994).

Self-esteem theory

Allport & Murray (1996), in its theory regarding the concept of the own self, which is defined in terms of its functions or accomplishments and it is described in seven different functions. Allport asserted that the functions of the human nature are not innate but rather nurtured. Within these seven functions described by Allport & Murray (1996) are three most

important functions, which give origin to self-esteem. The self-esteem, according to Allport and Murray (1996), is the image that the human being has of itself in relation to the knowledge of the expectation of the others and its comparison with its own conduct.

Allport's theory of personality, which is based on self-esteem, helps to understand the necessity to associate the emotional impact that exerts the domestic violence in the self-esteem of the woman (Allport & Murray, 1996). On the other hand, Gasperín (1999) affirmed that the way we communicate with others is a reflection of our self-esteem. This author emphasized the importance of self-esteem in relation to the influence it exercises on human relations, special in groups of greater interpersonal relation such as the family.

Domestic abuse often includes social and physical isolation, intimidation and harassment (sexual or emotional), false accusations or condemnations, ignore or ridicule the necessities, bad names, critics and constants insults that attempt against the self-esteem of the woman (Corsi, 1999). The consequences on the self-esteem of the woman are so serious that is why Corsi (1999) explained that a woman who is under an abusive emotional climate undergoes a progressive psychological debilitation, suffer low self-esteem and depression, and these factors inhibit the decision to leave the abusive relationship.

Learned Helplessness Theory

The learned helplessness theory, originally developed by Seligman (1975), explained the phenomenon of leaving/stay from the perspective that it focuses on the factors that reinforce battered women's victimization (Walker, 1978). According to Walker (1979), battered women operate from a premise of helplessness, which further serves to aid passivity and a fatal acceptance of the abusive situation. This theory describes what happens when a person loses self-esteem and the ability to predict what actions will produce a particular outcome, as the

battered woman tries to protect herself and her family as best as she can (Seligman, 1975). As the battering and isolation produces a low self-esteem, a shift in the survivor's comprehension of the situation occurs and abused women increasingly perceive the possibility of leaving the abusive situation as impossible (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997). While the victim may continue to work at her paid job, eat, clean house, take care of the children, laugh with coworkers and appear self-confident and independent, surviving the battering relationship becomes the focus of her life. In the low self-esteem survivor's eyes, the batterer becomes more and more powerful (Long, 1994). Consequently, she begins to see police and other agencies as less and less able to help, and feels trapped, alone, and is likely to develop a variety of coping mechanisms that may include withdrawal, asking permission to do even trivial things, manipulation, substance abuse, and asking that criminal charges be dropped (Walker, 1979).

The problem with the use of the theory of learned helplessness in criminal charges is the fact that the victim has become so passive that often does not follow through with any legal action. In effect, victims often do shift their survival mechanisms from very assertive and community based options to simply trying to keep the abuse and its impact silenced (Walker, 1994). This may not be a sign of passivity, as the theory of learned helplessness suggests, but rather a sign of a coping strategy through her recognition that a more quiet response to his violence will provide the best safety for her and her children (Gondolf & Browne, 1998).

In addition, this theory predicts the propensity of abused women staying in the abusive relationship by explaining that abused women have become so passive that they often does not follow through with legal action and frequently do shift their survival mechanisms from very assertive and community based options to simply trying to keep the abuse and its impact silenced.

(Walker, 1994). Therefore, this theory is offered as an answer to the question of why women stay in abusive relationship despite repeated abuse (Walker, 1992).

Survivor Theory

As opposed to the theories of cycle of violence and learned helplessness, Gondolf and Browne (1998) proposed the survivor theory in 1988, which views women not merely as passive victims but proactive help-seekers and survivors. This theory juxtaposes the assumptions of learned helplessness by crediting women with the capacity to innovate newer strategies of coping and acknowledges the efforts of the survivors in seeking help from formal and informal sources, and eventually leaving the abusive situation (Gondolf & Browne, 1998). Thus, Gondolf and Browne stressed the need for accessible and effective community resources for the woman to escape from the battered situation.

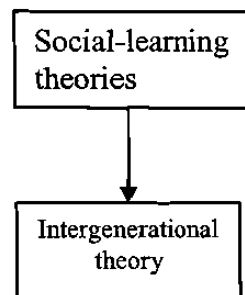
At any rate, the main contribution this theory offers to the explanation of the stay/leave phenomenon is by recognizing the multiple help-seeking behaviours of women in the face of increased violence and to become safe and clear through the stay/leave decision. Besides, it empowers the female survivor's instinct, which focuses on nurturing rather than destroying the willingness to adapt, and stimulating self-growth.

Coping Theory

According to Folkman and Lazarus (1985), coping theory is viewed as the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral efforts that assist abused women in managing stressful situations in the decision to stay or to leave their abusers. This theory contributes to a better understanding of the dilemma of the leaving/staying decision of abused women by proposing that women learn to use problem coping strategies focused to directly modify the source of their stress by using a positive approach to the problem and its resolution, which often leads to the option of leaving the

abusive partner (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Furthermore, Folkman & Lazarus insisted that abused women learn to use emotion-focused strategies in the decision to stay or to leave, and to regulate the emotional distress caused by the stressor. Thus, emotion focused coping strategy includes distancing, escape-avoidance, self-controlling, accepting responsibility, and positive reappraisal (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

Social learning theories



The social learning theories view violence as a direct consequence of the socialization processes and the family environments from which the women and men learn to be helpless and aggressive respectively (Straus, 1977).

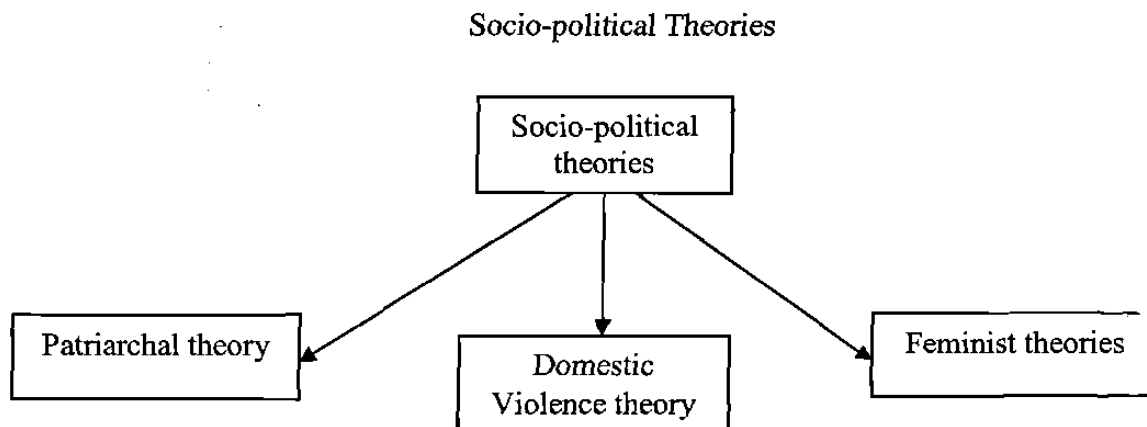
Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social Learning Theory (SLT) was originally introduced in the 1940s to explain the phenomenon of animals and humans imitating behavior, but in the early 1960s, Bandura (1977) began contributing to the development of this theory by showing that children naturally imitate the behavior of other children without needing or receiving a direct reward for the new behavior. SLT explains the abuser and abused behavior when states that individuals learn violent behavior as a result of their culture and environment. The idea that violence begets violence is illustrated

by dysfunctional family histories across generations and how abused women learn to accept violence from partners because of parent history of violence against them. In addition, SLT is explained by Kempe, Silverman, Steele, Droegemueller, and Silver (1995) through the intergenerational theory.

Intergenerational Theory

Intergenerational abuse is often considered as a possible cause of family violence in later-life (Kempe et al., 1995). Along with feminist theory, the intergenerational transmission theory is commonly used to explain the occurrence of wife battering. The general thesis of this theory states, that individuals who observe or experience violence in their home as children become likely to use or “accept” (in the case of the abused women) violence in their own homes (Straus, 1977; Bandura, 1977). In addition, Bandura (1997) explains that women who learn to accept violence will develop a low sense of efficacy that operates cognitively on depression in several ways: it creates negative bias in how personally significant experiences are comprehended, structured, and recalled; it often leads to unfulfilled aspirations due to difference between effectiveness beliefs and superior goals or values; it restrict their ability to manage ruminations and negative thoughts under periodic depressive mood states; and its reduces social efficiency for increasing fulfilling interpersonal relationships that enhance and empower abused women’s stay/leave decision-making.



The theoretical issues in the abused women's decisions to stay or leave abusers involve sociopolitical theories category that are explained by theories such as: feminist theory, domestic violence theory, and patriarchal theory. These theories state patriarchal cultural values and violence against women as a consequence of the social and political system (Stern, 1999; Counts, 1999).

Patriarchal Theory

The consequences of the victimization of women through domestic abuse and the women decisions to remain with abusers have resulted in a major social problem with social, cultural and economic implications (Yllo, 1990). These consequences can be explained through a patriarchal theory. However, Stern (1999), Corsi (1999), and Taylor, Magnussen and Amudson (2001) clarified that the patriarchal theory within a historical context deals with the nexus, which has existed and still exists between political power, patriarchal heritage and inequity between genders. Beginning with this historical heritage, and considering the reality of the patriarchal culture of countries such as Mexico, one will be able to comprehend the relationship between patriarchal and domestic violence towards the female from her spouse or partner (Stern, 1999; Dawn, 1998). Patriarchal theory suggests that the motive of men's abusive behavior is based on the desire for power and submission of their partner (Corsi, 1999; Stern, 1999).

Another form of abuse that reflects the patriarchal values is the economic abuse through economic deprivation. The economic deprivation typically accompanies domestic violence and represents another form of control, which abusers often exert over their partners (Brandwein, 1999; UCR, 2002). Economic Abuse means having no access to the family's money. It implies that the abusive partner maintains control of the family finances, deciding without regard for the other person how the money is to be spent or saved, thereby reducing the woman to complete

dependence for money to meet her personal needs (Radford & Stanko, 1996). Even though a woman may live in a comfortable house, wear good clothing or have children who are well-equipped with toys and luxuries, she may have no control over what monies come into the family or over any decisions about what will be bought (Lipchik & Kubicki, 1996). Economic abuse can include withholding or restricting money needed for necessities like food or clothing, preventing her from getting or keeping a job, taking her money, denying her independent access to money or excluding her from financial decision-making (Dutton, 1998; Heise, 1998).

Thus, economic abuse explain how the abuser control the victim's financial resources without consent, withholding the resources necessary for basic physical necessities such as food, clothing, children's diapers, adequate housing, personal care and medication making very difficult the leaving decision (Radford & Stanko, 1996; Lipchik & Kubicki, 1996; Brandwein, 1999; Sonkin & Jay, 1996).

Finally, according to Hester and Radford (1996) and Stern (1999), this theory also sees men's violence as a result of patriarchal norms of western society, and explains why abused women remain with abusers as a result of shared beliefs about the men's superiority over women and their innate right to dominate as well as powerlessness.

Feminist Theories

Feminist theories postulate that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially (Allen, 1999; Smith, 2000). These theories explain the domestic abuse and the dynamics of the decision-making process of abused women in regards to stay or leave from the perspective of patriarchal values in society: a society of men ruled by and for men (McCall & Shield, 1986; Allen, 1999). This explanation comes to light when women earn less in the labor force, have fewer rights, and are in many ways second class citizens, undervalued in their

contributions at home, at work, in the arts, literature and science (Stern, 1999; McCall & Shield, 1986; Allen, 1999). In essence, these theories predict that abused women are more likely to stay in the abusive relationship because not only to have they been conditioned to conform to their situation of abuse by the patriarchal values and beliefs of the society where they have been raised, but also because they lack resources that could empower them to leave their abusive partners (Stein, 1999; McCall & Shield, 1986; Garland-Thomson, 2002).

According to Silverstein and Goodrich (2003), feminist theories received the most attention in explaining the battered women decision, and are one of the most widely used perspectives in treating abused women, and explores the social structure of society to explain violence against women and the enlightenment of the decision to stay or to leave engaged in the abusive situation (Straus, 1977; McCall & Shield, 1986; Bell, 2003; Allen, 1999).

Domestic Violence Theory

Corsi (1999), and Song (1993), see domestic violence as a coercive conduct through the use of intimidating, threatening, harmful, or harassing behavior. This theoretical conception validates that domestic violence includes multiple forms of abuse such as physical, sexual, emotional and psychological. Thus, domestic violence, more often than not, is rooted in patriarchal notions of ownership over women's body, sexuality, labour reproductive rights, mobility and levels of autonomy (Stern, 1999; Corsi, 1999).

On the other hand, Johnson (1995:284) explains the theory of domestic violence in terms of "common couple violence" and "patriarchal terrorism." Johnson states that the two differ in regards to the nature, severity, and chronicity of the abuse, as well as the gender of the perpetrator and of the victim. Johnson emphasizes that common couple violence tends to be used by both men and women. It occurs with relatively low frequency in a relationship, tends not to be

physically injurious, and does not show a pattern of escalation. In contrast, patriarchal terrorism theory explains the decision making process to stay where the abuse is perpetrated by men toward women, and shows a pattern of escalation in frequency and severity over time, includes not only physical violence, but also “economic subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics,” (p.284).

Conceptualization of Battered women’s stay/leave decision

Although a small body of research is beginning to describe the battered women’s stay/leave decision-making in United States and Canada (Long, 1994 & Roberts, 1995), little is known about the stay/leave decision-making dynamic of the Mexican battered¹ women from abusive relationships. Much of the empirical evidence on battered women’s level of self-esteem, degree of depression, income, family members, religiosity, social support, type of abused, patriarchal values, and economic dependency focuses on static variables measures at a single point in time to describe the characteristics of stay/leave decision-making process. Yet, little research places those variables together to find the strongest predictors in the abused women’s decision to stay or to leave their abusive relationships. In addition, no studies have been found in Mexico about this topic.

A focus in abused women’s stay/leave decision is emerging in United States. Jacobson and Gottman, (1998) have summarized their conceptualization of the decision-making of battered who end their violent relationships. They propose that underlying such factors as economic dependency and decreased self-esteem, battered women often stay with their batterers.

The complexities of the reasons involved in the decision to stay or leave for women in violent relationships lead many authors to research several issues regarding battered women. A growing body of quantitative and qualitative research reflects that the decisions faced by severely abused

¹ Abuse women will be synonyms of battered women in this study.

women are difficult and frequently impacted by complex factors (Anderson, 2000; Jacobson, Gottman, Berns, & Wu Shortt, 1996; Rusbult & Martz, 1995; Wuest & Merritt-Gray, 1999; Eldar-Avidan & Haj-Yahia, 2000). However, the most fundamental and difficult choice a woman faces during the abusive experience is certainly the decision to stay with or to leave the relationship (Barnette & LaViolette, 1993). Most often, the decision to stay or to leave is not made at a single point in time with finality, but unfolds over time, and is often characterized by ambivalence as a result of a variety of practical barriers including (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997) socio-cultural roles (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998), coping skills (Finn, 1985), availability and access of support systems (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997), emotional factors (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985), and the psychological consequences of battering (low self-esteem and depression) (Walker, 1984). These factors often interact in a multiplicity of combinations and may be differentially relevant to each woman's decision and the ability to develop and maintain safety (Stark & Flitcraft, 1996).

In spite of the fact that a great body of reputable research has clarified the understanding of why severely battered women stay (see table 1; appendix D), or experience reluctance of internal and external barriers of leaving the abusive relationship (Grigsby & Hartman, 1997; Walker, 1984), increasing evidence is beginning to show a different picture of battered women. Although many women indeed leave abusive situations, only a few really terminate the relationship (Jacobson & Gottman, 1998). In fact, Jacobson and Gottman (1998) found that for abusive victims to leave "permanently, often involves a heroic battle," which implicates overcoming major concrete obstacles and engaging in a process of psychological transformation (p. 287).

Quantitative research about women's stay/leave decision

Most quantitative studies attempt to isolate the factors that impact the abused women's decision to stay or to leave from an apparent entrapment in abusive relationships. Nevertheless, this body of research is important for the current review to give some light on possible factors influencing the wellbeing of women that choose to leave. The studies presented in table 1 (see appendix D) directly involve the empirical testing of factors hypothesized to predict relationship status. For the purpose of this study the most common predictors from these studies have been categorized as: (1) Type of the abuse, (2) psychosocial factors, (3) external resources, and (4) coping strategies.

The type of the abuse

The type of the abuse, usually assessed in terms of frequency and severity, was among the most common predictors to be investigated (Johnson, 1995). Some studies however, suggested that the abuse becomes a regular part of the woman's life (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993; Horton & Johnson, 1993; Anderson, 2002). Emotional and economic abuse was sometimes as good as or more accurate than physical abuse in predicting the women's decision to leave (Herbert, Silver & Ellard, 1991; Hilbert, Kolia, & VanLeeuwen, 1997; Jacobson, Gottman, Gotner, Berns, & Wu Shortt, 1996). In addition, study conducted by Sanders (2002) to examine the role that financial issues and economic circumstances play in the lives of women who experience abuse by an intimate partner, with 20 women receiving domestic violence services, she found that sexual abuse was the least likely to occur on an ongoing basis. Nevertheless, economic and emotional abuse is thus far more likely to persist than physical and sexual abuse. Over half of the women

surveyed (58%) had experienced economic abuse at some point in their lives. The most common type of economic abuse (35%) was money being taken from the woman without her consent.

On the other hand, Anderson's (2002) conducted a study of 4,000 households in United States, which shows that a very small sample of women (875) left their partners successfully. Anderson's study can explain that why only few women decided not to leave as a result of the fear of not being able to cope with life outside of the abusive relationship.

During a study in which women and men were randomly selected from a 1992 National Alcohol and Family Violence Survey data base, Aldarondo and Kaufman (1997) evaluated the usefulness of social risk markers for wife battering termination resulting in a better understanding regarding the women's decision to stay, cessation, and persistence of abuse over time. This comparison was made between men who had ceased or interrupted the abuse for at least 1 year and men with both a past and current history of wife battering. They found that wife abuse cessation would be associated with higher levels of maturation (e.g. length in years of the relationship: $P < .001$) and lower levels of situational risk markers (e.g. income $P < .001$). Additionally, a chronic and severe history of violence is negatively associated with cessation of battering ($p < .01$).

Furthermore, a woman's previous experiences with different types of abuse as a child or as an adult could play a key role in her staying with an abusive relationship. Rusbult and Martz (1995) found a significant relationship in the link between child history of abuse and a greater likelihood of returning to the abusive situations.

Psychosocial factors

A variety of psychological and psychosocial factors were assessed for their predictive ability regarding to stay or to leave in abused women's decisions. The most frequently assessed

predictor variables in this category, however, were emotional wellbeing in the relationship and objective indicators of potential commitment. Several studies hypothesized that women with a greater sense of commitment would be more likely to remain with the abusers compared with women with less commitment (Rusbult & Martz, 1995; Truman-Schram, Can, Calhoun, & Vanwallendael, 2000; Martin, Berenson, Griffing, Sage, Mandry, & Bingham, 2000). For example, the more she has invested in terms of time, effort, resources, legal ties, or love for her partner, the more compelled she should feel to justify these investments through further efforts to save the relationship (Truman-Schram et al., 2000). Furthermore, Herbert et al., (1991) conducted a study with 130 abused women to distinguish between women who stayed with abusive partners (34%) and those who left (66%). They found that in addition to family income, the variables that distinguished the two groups most strongly reflected women's perceptions of their relationship and how their relationships compare to others. They also found that women that stayed with their abusers improved their low self-esteem and viewed their relationship more positively, saw little change in the frequency or severity of the abuse or amount of love expressed toward them, and appraised their relationship as not being as bad as it could be more often than those who chose to leave their abusive partners.

Studies in coping strategies

Women's repeated attempts to cope with the abuse are an integral part of the overall experience of violence. Studies that directly or indirectly included women's prior efforts to cope with the violence as a predictor of the stay/leave decision serve as precursors to studies of leaving as a process (Robert, 1996). In effect, a growing body of research has addressed the issues in coping styles and strategies of battered women. For example, the studies of Finn (1985) suggested that abused women often use emotion-focused strategies to deal with their violent

situations. Finn reported that women tend to utilize passive coping strategies, which are likely to be least effective in changing their situations, yet most likely to lead to additional stress due to continuous relationship problems. On the other hand, studies from Herbert et al. (1991), Okun (1986) found that the greater the number of previous separations from an abuser, the more apt a woman is to leave. In addition, findings from Meier (1997) indicated that women who had previously employed numerous other coping strategies besides leaving were significantly more likely to separate from the abuser. Mills (1985) also examined stages battered women go through in leaving abusive marriages. She conducted 2-hour interviews with 10 women who sought help at a shelter after leaving their husbands. She found that these women experienced five stages: entering the relationship, managing the violence, experiencing a low self-esteem, re-evaluating the relationship, and increasing their self-esteem. Subsequently, Mills concluded that the process of re-evaluating the relationship for battered wives was the result of a slow process whereby women shifted from being compliant and feeling numb to being reflective actors who eventually decided to leave their husbands.

Rosen and Stith (1997) conducted a study with 22 women aged 16 to 32 years with relationships varying from 10 months to 9 years. All but two of the women had ended their relationships prior to participating in the study. The study confirmed that leaving a violent relationship is a process. Rosen and Stith concluded that over time women developed a readiness to leave their relationships and were able to loosen emotional bonds tying them to their abusive partners. Consistent with coping theory, research has shown that people who display an optimistic bias in their risk assessments are less likely to utilize risk-prevention strategies with care and consistency over time (Finn, 1985; Okun, 1986; Mills, 1985).

In addition, survival theory, consistent with coping theory, conveys the fact that many battered women develop strategies to stop the violence in their marriages, or even attempt to leave their abusive husbands clearly defying any sense of helplessness (Gondolf & Fisher, 1998). For example, Bowker (1983) interviewed 146 formerly battered women from southeastern Wisconsin, each of whom successfully ended the violence from their husbands and continued to live with them for at least a year after the last violent incident. Bowker (1986) expanded his sample to 1,000 battered women nationwide and found that battered women reported seven major personal strategies to end the abuse within their relationships. Each of the following personal strategies was tried at least once by a majority of the women in Bowker's research sample. Out of the 1,000 battered women, 716 tried to talk the men out of battering them; 752 tried to get their husbands to promise that they would never batter them again; 868 tried to avoid their husbands physically or avoid certain topics of conversation; 651 hid or ran away during an abusive incident; 855 covered their faces and vital organs with their hands or used other passive defenses; 758 threatened to call the police or file for divorce unless their husbands put an end to their battering; and 665 counterattacked their husbands physically. Out of all these tactics, avoidance was most commonly used, while counterattacks were least commonly used to stop the violence. Bowker's work demonstrated that many battered women work very hard to free themselves from their violent situations. Nevertheless, many women remain committed to their abusers for very long periods of time (maybe even for life).

Unfortunately, coping strategies sometimes fail due to the passive behavior explained by learned helplessness theory, which is the use of fewer and fewer behavioral alternatives to cope as battered women narrow their options, which they perceive to be effective (Walker, 1994). Thus, abused women have developed many styles and strategies for coping with their abusive

situation that helps them to go safely throughout the decision to stay or leave their abusive partners. Finn (1995) presented a variety of passive reaction styles, which diagonally oppose the active responses examined by Gondolf and Brown (1988), and Walker (1994). Nevertheless, these different coping styles have resulted in mixed conceptualizations of battered women's coping skills. On the other hand, studies from Kempe et al., (1995) found that some complications of battered women's coping strategies are the potential overlap of emotion-focused approaches and a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) response to abusive relationships. Nevertheless, not all women develop PTSD or other trauma symptoms. A major explanatory factor for such differences lies in women's access to various coping resources that provide them with the means to exert some control over their lives in general and to respond to particular life stressors when they arise (Mc Leer & Anwar, 1989). Thus, coping resources are included, but are not limited to various external and internal necessities such as material goods and services, income, social support, and self efficacy (Barnett, 2001). The coping resources will be considered in the qualitative research section.

Moreover, the factors in the perception of self-efficacy, and the factors concerning the effects of coping and facilitating or impeding behavioral change and decision are likely to be fundamental in understanding the factors involved in battered women's stay/leave decisions. In facing all of these issues, the fear of leaving often becomes greater than the fear of staying (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993).

Fears

Men are violent to women as a result of shared beliefs about their superiority over women and their innate right to dominate (Stern, 1999). The men's violent behavior produces fears that manipulate the women's decisions to stay or leave them. For example, research from Barnett and

LaViolette (1993); Johnson (1995), and Brandwein (1999), has shown that among the abused victims there are numerous of factors that generate fears that make women to feel afraid of leaving such as: fear of what the abuser will do when he finds her, low self-esteem, feelings of culpability, little or no control of their lives, social isolation, disorders of stress, psychosomatic depression, and a high risk of alcoholism, and as a result of men's abusive behavior.

Nevertheless Barnett and LaViolette, (1993) found, that the greatest abused women's fear is that when they try to leave, they cannot make it on their own. These kinds of fears could make women's decision making process to remain with or to leave the abusers unclear and difficult and involves issues such as: lack of finances and lack of resources.

Qualitative and quantitative research in the decision to leave an abusive relationship

Most qualitative research reviewed (see table 2 in appendix D) regarding the decisions of abused women, often focus on leaving as if it was the only variable worth to be considered. This trend in the field of qualitative research probably occurs as a result of the strong efforts frequently made to oppose popular stereotypes of battered women as helpless or passive. In reality, the research question that requires explanation is that how do battered women ever manage to leave considering all the strikes against them? Therefore, women gradually learn more effective strategies for dealing with the abuse. Studies of Campbell, Rose, Kub, and Nedd (1998) and Patzel (2001) viewed women's leaving decisions as a process describing women passing through a series of stages or phases leading to an eventual separation (s) from the abuser; however, periods of return to earlier phases are considered normal.

Burke, Gielen, Mc Donnell, O'Campo, and Maman (2001) and William (2000) found the factors of a woman's thoughts, emotions, and behavioural readiness to make needed change to her life, such as terminating the relationship. Nevertheless, additional effort and knowledge is

usually required for an abused woman to begin questioning her situation, let alone give up the dream of a happy life with a loving partner. In addition the studies of Eldar-Avidan and Haj-Yahia (2000) and Molina (1999) considered the feelings of attachment, religiosity, and loss as a predictor of stay in the abusive relationship. These authors found that attachment and religiosity feelings might be more appropriately viewed as a normal and expected grieving to having lost a major attachment figure.

Religion rooted in equality and mutuality has been transformed into a man-centered cult with the basic tenet of excluding women that compose half of the human race from full personhood (Levitt 2004; Adams & Fortune, 1995; Bohn, 1989). Rossi (1993) explored about connection between religious teachings and the acceptance of wife abuse. She founded that when women are perceived as less than human, the consequence is violent abuse, such as woman battering; a crime that was not even acknowledged in our legal codes as recently as two decades ago, let alone addressed as a significant social problem or as one that must be addressed from the pulpit. Rossi explains that the misshapen society resulting today from this Christian mindset is adversely affecting the lives of both women and men who refuse to challenge injustice to all women inherent in Christianity. This author supported that injustice stems from the misogynistic assumptions of the Christian teachings derived from Augustine, Aquinas, Gratian, and other founders of Christian precepts grounded in the Aristotelian conviction that females are defective males. Her study made the connection between these Christian teachings and the acceptance of wife abuse as a private matter, and not opens to public debate, and certainly not to acknowledgement from the pulpit.

However, studies from Esikovits, Buchbinder, and Mor (1998) and Okun (1998) found that most of the women reported another shift in their perspectives that sometimes occurred suddenly,

but more often developed gradually as women experienced fleeting insights about themselves and the relationship. The studies of Moss, Pitula, Campbel, and Halstead (1997), Patzel (2001), Burke et al., (2001), and Wuest and Merritt-Gray (1999) also found that in the period of reframing, acknowledgement, shrinking, or counter acting the abused women began to redefine the relationship as abusive and label themselves as victims. Esikovits et al. (1998), and Kirkwood (1993) studies explained some catalysts that helps to bring about this shift in thinking such as: an increase in the level and frequency of abuse or fewer periods of love and affection; loss of hope that the relationship will get better; witnessing the effect of the abuse on the children; or external influences such as social support through friends, family, and helping professionals/institutions who offer support and alternative perspectives. Goetting (1999) also noted how the woman's agenda to maintain her relationship was slowly replaced with an agenda to leave. At this stage, Goetting reported that women began to engage in activities they believe would help them leave, such as finding a safe place to reflect upon the available alternatives and resources, finding a social support, making safety plans, and making small decisions that help increase self-efficacy and self-worth.

Coping resources in the process of leaving

Coping resources are believed to be especially relevant for battered women and other women who separate from their partners. Two of the main coping resources are material goods and services and social support. Thus, material necessities and social support are crucial for a woman to establish a life independent from her former partner (Hilbert, Kolia, and VanLeeuwen, 1997). Sullivan, and Bybee (1999) study revealed that food, clothing, childcare, housing, and a personal source of income are essentials in maintaining a woman's independence. Thus, women

who ended their relationships need help with tapping into resources such as finances, housing, education, legal assistance, transportation, and health services (Nosek, 1996).

Housing

Molina (1999) and Kirkwood's (1993) studies showed that the needs of housing and economic resources are the most pressing concerns among battered women who have recently left. Many battered women (57%) in the Kirkwood qualitative study remarked that their energy during their shelter stay, or shortly after, was almost totally absorbed in practical concerns such as securing permanent housing or a fixed address for themselves and their children.

Nevertheless, the main problem most battered women face is the obstacle locating adequate and affordable housing (Loseke, 1992). In a recent study regarding provision of services to battered women in three Southern states with 44 social agencies in United States, Donnelly (1999) reported that 73% of the respondent agencies reported formidable economic barriers to providing housing services to battered women. Temporary shelters offer another form of refuge for victims in flight from domestic violence (Dutton-Douglas & Dionne, 1991). However, abuse victims are lucky if they can find a vacancy in battered women's shelters, because shelters routinely turn women and children away due to limited capacity (Donnelly, 1999). Furthermore, shelters usually only allow domestic violence victims to stay for a limited period of time, which is four to eight weeks maximum (Dutton-Douglas & Dionne, 1991). Unfortunately, when victims have exhausted their time at a shelter, they, and frequently their children, are literally out on the street. The remaining alternatives available to most victims are tragic: return to their abusive surroundings, locate another temporary shelter, or live poverty-stricken on the street because permanent housing is difficult to locate and prohibitively expensive (Dutton-Douglas & Dionne,

1991; Teubal, 2001; Morrison, 1997). Therefore, housing problems enhance the difficulty for abused women to leave their abusive partners.

Limited resources for economic independence

The limited resources for economic independence are also a real risk factor linked with a decision to stay or a probability of returning to the same abusive relationship (Barnett & LaViolette, 1993; Jacobson & Gottman, 1998). Understanding these reasons can help the practitioner to provide better care and support the woman without judgment. In effect, the studies of Brandwein (1999), Bollie (1997), and Raphael (1999) explained that battered women are frequently trapped in their abusive relationships because they have no money and no source of income.

The reasons why women do not choose to leave a violent relationship are complex and may depend upon a variety of factors such as established economic considerations. Most battered women are economically dependent on their abuser and frequently have no funds of their own (Raphael, 1999). In addition, a study by Raphael (1999) reports that escaping an abusive partner often requires flight, which may also involve leaving an established lifestyle including a job. Unfortunately, even if a woman does escape the immediately abusive situation and simultaneously maintains her job, it is not uncommon for the abuser to sabotage the victim's employment with his disruptive behavior (Raphael, 1999). Thus, workplace harassment usually reflects the abuser's efforts to return the victim to the abusive environment.

Frisch and McKenzie (1991) and Rusbult and Martz (1995) reported that women who were more economically advantaged in terms of employment status and personal income were less psychologically committed and significantly more likely to leave than other women. Thus, it may be less disturbing to a woman to believe that she is staying for the positive aspects of the

relationship (e.g. voluntarily) rather than for negatives reasons, such as economic entrapment. However, income variables were not only among the most consistent but also possibly the most powerful predictor of the stay/leave decision overall. Studies that employed multivariate techniques, and included a broad range of variables most frequently reported income to be the strongest predictor of leaving (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Overall, findings for financial indicators appear as quite strong predictors in the stay/leave abused women's decisions.

Social support

Furthermore, social support plays another important role in the abused women's decisions to leave an abusive relationship. Hobfold and Vaux (1993) defined social support as "the available social relationships that objectively may call upon for help in times of need" (p.687). Normally, social support helps abused women in the stay/leave decision because it enables them to reappraise the factors that are causing stress, alters their moods, improves feelings of control, raises their self-esteem, and increases their level of productive behaviors (Barnett, 2001). Kemp et al., (1995) and Sullivan and Bybee (1999) reported the significant impact of social support on various measures of the decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship and on psychological well-being. Sullivan and Bybee, in an efficacy of a post shelter advocacy experimental study in United States, which was a follow up interview with 278 battered women at exit shelter, found that social support produced significant improvement in self-esteem, satisfaction in attaining needed resources, fewer incidents of abuse, and higher levels of quality of life. Nevertheless, a study in Mexico by SSNL (2002) found that from 1007 women interviewed in Monterrey, NL; only 25.5% knew about institutions that support battered women in the decision to stay or to leave their abusive partners and 76% of the sample never used those supports.

On the other hand, studies by West and Merritt-Gray (1999), and Molina (1999) established that friends, family support groups, and new romantic partners also provide support in the form of advice and information, practical assistance, companionship, and emotional support in the stay/leave decision process.

Disabled battered women resources

Another important aspect of domestic violence that deserves especial attention is a disabled woman that fall victims of abuse. Unfortunately, domestic violence is rather prevalent among disabled women. Young, Nosek, Howland, Chanpong, and Rintala (1997), reports the findings from a qualitative study, which consisted of the following: qualitative interviews with 31 women with disabilities, and a national survey of 946 women, 504 of whom had physical disabilities and 442 who did not have disabilities. The findings revealed that abuse prevalence was the same (62%) for women with and without disabilities. Young et al., explains that the most common perpetrators of emotional and physical abuse for both groups were husbands or partners.

However these authors state that women with disabilities reported significantly longer durations of physical or sexual abuse compared to women without disabilities (3.9 years versus 2.5 years).

According to Sale (2001), a 1996 British Crime Survey revealed that 12 per cent of disabled women aged 16-29 had experienced domestic violence in 1995. This compares with 8.2 per cent of non-disabled women of the same age. Sale arguing that disabled women often stay with their abusive partners because they are afraid they will not find suitable accommodation or another partner. She also found that the problem of disabled abused women would change if disabled women who had suffered domestic violence were believed, which she thinks is rarely the case. The question asked by Profitt (2001:1), is: "Where does a disabled woman leaving domestic

violence go? Although many refuges have facilities for disabled people, there is a need for both a greater awareness of the problem and more resources.”

Unfortunately, the current literature shows a lack of studies that examine the existence, feasibility, or effectiveness of abuse interventions for women with disabilities (Nosek; Howland, & Young, 1998; Sale, 2001) In the disability rights movement and the battered women’s movement, it is generally acknowledged that programs to assist abused women are often architecturally inaccessible, it lacks interpretation services for deaf women, and often do not accommodate women who need assistance with daily self-care or medications (Nosek et al., 1998). Therefore, Crisis interventions typically include escaping temporarily to a woman’s shelter, having an escape plan ready in the event of imminent violence if the woman chooses to remain with the perpetrator, and escaping permanently from the abuser (Andrews & Veronen, 1993). These options may be problematic for the woman with a disability if the shelter is inaccessible or unable to meet her needs for personal assistance with activities of daily living such as: if the shelter staff are unable to communicate with a deaf or speech-impaired woman, if disable women depends primarily on the abuser for assistance with personal needs and has no family or friends to stay with, or if she is physically incapable of executing the tasks necessary to implement an escape plan such as packing necessities, hiding money, and driving or arranging transportation to a shelter or friend’s home (Andrews & Veronen, 1993).

Professional help resources

There are three kinds of abused women that can potentially benefit from professional intervention: women who feel emotionally entrapped in an abusive situation; women who have other emotional distress related to their victimization; or women who have terminated an abusive relationship and need assistance to recover from its effects (Greenspan, 1983). Horton and

Johnson (1993) found that woman who is involved in abusive relationships, as well as those who left the abusive relationship, frequently sought help from professional counselors. Horton and Johnson as well explain that the stress and coping framework for individual intervention with abused women who are still at risk or who have permanently left the abusive relationship has serious and complex problems. Therefore, licensed professionals who have formal mental health training, and who are knowledgeable about domestic violence should guide intervention (Greenspan, 1983). However, it is worth to note that there are not enough professional services available as required to supply the needs of abused women, and lead them through the decision making process of staying or leaving the abusive relationship (Horton & Johnson, 1993; Greenspan, 1983).

Legal system failure

The legal system's failure to help the victim is one of the significant issues that contribute to the battered women's to obstruct the abusive relationship leaving process abusive (Mc Farlane, 1991). On one hand, there is a long story of no responsiveness to battered women by the legal system because abused women are considered a family problem but not a police problem, on the other, classical police response to abused women involves not real police involvement and bias against making arrests (Busawa & Busawa, 1996). Smith (2000) and Mc Farlane (1991) found that a negative response by the police or the judiciary system may significantly and negatively impact battered women, as a result, create a great influence in the women decision to remain with their abusers.

Another issue in that obstruct the leaving process is that the abused woman has to turn elsewhere to crisis centres, churches, or shelters, but in many communities there are not such access to organizations available (Websdale, 1998; Andrews & Veronen, 1993; Profitt, 2001).

Donnelly (1999) found that the access to institutional resources is a central issue in battered women lives. Subsequently, the abused women often depend on their friends or relatives for help. Furthermore, many social agencies are inadequate to effectively respond to the needs of the victim, and as a result, they become frustrated of being unable to solve the problem, and the blame is often place squarely on the victim (Raphael, 1999; Loseke, 1992; Andrews & Veronen, 1993). Consequently, women become trapped in the abusive situation, and virtually powerless to leave and survive.

Leaving unsafely

Those who work with victims of domestic violence often put their emphasis on pushing the victim to leave the abusive relationship. However, this approach at times places the victim at a greater risk of danger. According to Wilson and Daly (1993), an appropriate response is to help the victim to determine what her risks are and to empower the victim to minimize those risks. Nevertheless, in some cases staying in the relationship may be the safest response. Statistics indicate that women are at a greater risk of becoming victims of domestic homicide when they attempt to leave the relationship. In fact, Wilson and Daly reports that women who leave their batterers are at a 75 % greater risk of being killed by their batterer than those who stay. Furthermore, most abused women leave more than once before they finally conclude the relationship. Most of the research (Raphael & Haennicke, 1999; Wilson & Daly, 1993; Barnett & LaViolette, 1993) in the current literature explains that victims of domestic violence act just like everyone else: they waiver, they return, and they give it another chance. Should be taking into consideration the gap in the literature that rather than saying abused women do not leave, it will be more accurate to research more about their pattern as coming and going from the relationship during the decision process. Collective action could be a ground to start.

Collective action issue in the survival

Gondorf & Browne (1998) argues (supported by the survival theory) that it is important to begin intervention by reinterpreting behaviors often treated as symptoms (e.g., decision to stay) and to identify personal resources that deal with abuse and trauma, rather than focusing on what is painful, hopeless, which inadvertently reinforce a preoccupation with negative outcomes.

Profitt (2001) explored the processes through which survivors of abuse by male partners become involved in collective action for social change. Using story telling as a research method, Profitt interviewed 11 women about the processes, factors, insights, and events that prompted them to act collectively to address violence against women. She found that women's movement from individual survival to collective action entails significant changes in consciousness and subjectivity. Profitt argues that to raise the awareness of abused women to the dangers of their abusive situation as well as to the options and resources available to them is best to encourage their participation in collective group action. According to Profitt, women interlace their story around a central thread of meaning rooted in the specifics of their personal history. Woman's story is often shaped by a tapestry of discursive and material conditions, events, moments, and significant others. The involvement of abused women in collective action could make women in the decision making process to remain with or to leave their abusers clear and safe.

Survival and successfully ended

Supported by survival theory and in the opposite of learned helplessness theory, the fact that many battered women develop strategies to stop the violence in their marriages, or even attempt to leave their abusive husbands, clearly defying any sense of helplessness. For example, Bowker (1983) interviewed 146 formerly battered women from southeastern Wisconsin, each of whom successfully ended the violence from their husbands and continued to live with them for at least a

year after the last violent incident. In 1986, Bowker (1986), expanded his sample to 1,000 battered women nationwide and found that battered women report seven major personal strategies to end the abuse within their relationships. Each of the following personal strategies was tried at least once by a majority of the women in Bowker's research sample. Out of the 1,000 battered women 716 tried to talk the men out of battering them; 752 tried to get their husbands to promise that they would never batter them again; 868 tried to avoid their husbands physically or avoid certain topics of conversation; 651 hid or ran away during an abusive incident; 855 covered their faces and vital organs with their hands or used other passive defenses; 758 threatened to call the police or file for divorce unless their husbands put an end to their battering; and 665 counterattacked their husbands physically. Of the seven tactics, avoidance was most commonly used, while counterattacks were least commonly used to stop the violence.

Finally, Bowker's work has demonstrated that many battered women work very hard to free themselves from their violent situations, despite many of them remain committed to their abusers for very long periods of time (maybe even for life).

Battered women advocacy policy

Battered women policy advocates can build comprehensive systemic solutions to abused women where they must develop a working knowledge of the range of battered women's needs. Consistent with Davis (2000) this knowledge must include a basic understanding of both batterer-generated risks and life-generated risks, in battered women's stay/leave decisions regarding their abusive relationships. Each of these areas has important policy implications in the abused women decision to stay-leave their violent situation. Davis explains the those implications as follow: (1) Mistreated women need solutions that respond to the range of

batterer-generated risks they face, and not just the risk of physical violence (e.g. risks to their children and the risk that they will not be able to feed, clothes, house, or access medical care for themselves or their children); (2) Battered women need solutions that will improve their safety, whether they make a decision to keep on or leave the abusive relationship.

A battered woman will deal with one set of batterer-generated risks if she remains with the relationship and a different set if she leaves it. Part of a battered woman's risk that constantly evaluate is a reflection of the consequence of staying or leaving the abusive relationship. However a question frequently asked about battered women according to Jacobson & Gottman (1998:136) is: "Why do they stay?" Nevertheless, this question does not reflect the real issues and considerations a battered woman must face. The questions a battered woman may ask herself are more inclusive, such as: "Should I keep on and risk the violence?" "If I leave will the violent behavior be worse?" "Should I leave and place myself and my children in scarcity?" "Should I leave and risk losing my children in a custody battle?" "Should I stay and risk the violent behavior?" and; (3) Abused women also need solutions that act in response to the life generated risks they confront (e.g. laid off from a job; health concerns, poverty, and bias or discrimination). Life-generated risks are an important factor in battered women's stay/leave decisions because sometimes a batterer will use life-generated risks to further control their victim. Therefore, to fully understand battered women's needs, social workers, policy makers must consider life-generated risks as an important component in the policy formulation process.

Finally, due to Mexico lack of violence against women policies, laws, acts or amendments there are scarce research in women's stay/leave decision-making. Therefore, this study is designed to identify the strongest predictors in the Mexican women's stay/leave decision with the intention to further policy-making. As well to assist researchers, social work professionals,

and policymakers in the creation, development, and evaluation of programs and policies to support those abused women on their decision to leave or to remain with their abusive partners.

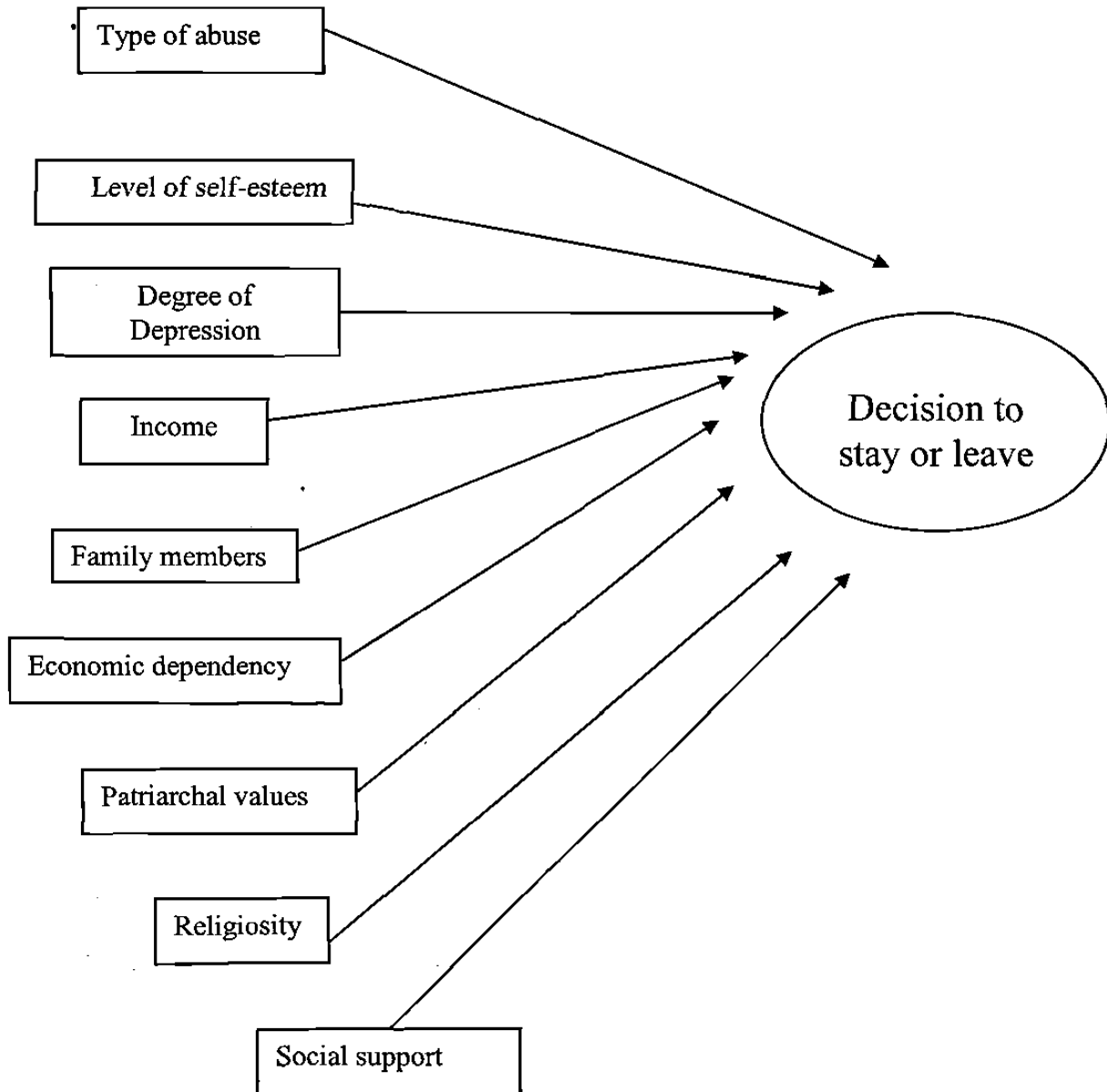
Research Question

What factors predict women's decisions to stay or leave abusive relationships among a sample of women in México?

Variables in the decision to stay or to leave an abusive relationship

Nine independent variables will be investigated in women's decisions to stay or leave their abusive partners. Figure 1 shows how the following independent variables: type of abuse, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, income, family members, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support flows with the dependent variable decision to stay or leave.

Figure 1. Variables in the decision to stay or leave an abusive relationship



CHAPTER III

Method

Subjects

The sample was selected from women who applied and were in the intake process to receive services from the “Centro de Atención Familiar” (CAFAM) program in Guadalupe, Nuevo León, México. CAFAM is a program under the administration of “Dirección de Protección al Menor y a la Familia” (DIF) in Nuevo León, México. CAFAM is a state agency in México for battered women that provide a number of services including individual and group counseling, legal support, support groups, and social support. An average of 5-9 abused women applied for services each day. Thus, an adequate sample was taken from the percentage of battered women in this population.

Women were selected for participation before they received any services from the agency to minimize the effects of the program on their answers. Only women from heterosexual relationship were selected. The researcher and her staff went to the agency regularly and recruited women to participate in the study. Once the subjects agreed to participate, the data will be collected from them until the number of sample was reached.

Setting of the study

The setting of the study is in the state of Nuevo Leon located in Mexico’s northern region. It is surrounded, in the northwest, by the states of Coahuila and Zaragoza and to the northeast and southwest by the United States of America. Approximately 17.5% of Nuevo Leon’s total population of 3,834,141 inhabitants resides in the city of Guadalupe. For the purposes of this study, the city of Guadalupe was chosen as the geographic context, given the fact that the agency CAFAM is located within this area (INEGI, 2001).

According to INEGI (2001), Guadalupe is in the western part of the state of Nuevo Leon, adjacent to Monterrey (20 minutes), the state capital. The city benefits from its location within the Monterrey metropolitan area, which is a hub for governmental and business activity in Mexico. With an estimate population of 670,100, Guadalupe is the second largest city in the state and regional economic center. Although the city's tax base is largely residential, there are some important manufacturing and commercial centers that include companies in the automobile, information technology and textile manufacturing sectors. Contrary that occurs in less developed cities in Monterrey metropolitan area, such as Escobedo and Santa Catarina, Guadalupe is almost built out, a factor that has contributed to its relatively low population growth rate of 2.2%, compared to the 3.4% and 7.0% growth rates seen in Escobedo and Santa Catarina respectively. Guadalupe's consolidated economic base, on the other hand, has attracted additional development to the area, particularly in services sector. The predominant religion in Guadalupe is catholic. Therefore, 87.8% of the women population is Catholics.

Sampling method and sample size

The research used non-random sampling to obtain the expected sample of 135 abused women from the city of Guadalupe, Nuevo León, Mexico. The size of the sample was used to have enough power to detect clinically meaningful results at $P < .05$ level of statistical significance. One method to assure statistical relevance was to select the number of participants based on the number of independent variables. The suggestion was to use 15 subjects for each independent variable (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1996). Thus for this study, the eligibility criteria were as follows: a sample of 135 Mexican women in a heterosexual relationship who had already been classified by CAFAM as battered women. The sample was separated in two groups: Group One (1) was composed of 67 women who remained in an abusive relationship and group two (2) was

composed of 68 women who are separated from the abusive partners. The recruitment took place during the intake program's interview process.

During the intake process, the program received women referred by the judicial system, from other programs or women that came voluntarily. Women eligible for services were referred to programs that address their specific needs. Thus, this study proposed to recruit 135 participants in the period following the classification of the above-described women and before they received program services. Once individuals were classified as battered women, the agency referred them to the researcher. Subsequently, the researcher recruited them for the study. Once they agree to participate, they will be asked to sign a consent form written in Spanish. Following the signing of the consent form, the data was collected.

Process of interview and criteria of inclusion and exclusion

Process of Intake of the agency CAFAM

Through the process of intake the agency received, identified and classified the abused women to canalize them to the services they need. An intake form was filled and the following data was collected by the agency: 1) general information, where the users disclose their marital status (time), present situation (time), present and previous address; 2) antecedents of health and nutritional habits; 3) complementary data, where the user offers information on the address of her significant other; 4) familiar composition, where the client informs on the people who live under the same roof, close family members, which do not live with her, reason for the visit, type of abuse; 5) risk level, where the agency according to the data obtained by the informant identifies if the woman is abused, the degree of risk (from high to low as 1-4). After the interview, the agency connected the client to the services needed.

After completion of the former agency intake steps the agency personnel referred the prospective participants in the study to the researcher. The subjects were interviewed (surveyed) by the researcher immediately after the initial intake process by the agency; the interview was conducted at this point to avoid that the subjects had received therapeutical or guidance services from the agency to avoid subject bias.

Overall criteria of inclusion and exclusion in the selection of the sample

Criteria of inclusion of this study

Mexican women of 18-48 years of age in a heterosexual relationship that had undergone an abusive situation during the last five months or more.

Criteria of exclusion of the study

Mexican women who were receiving the services of the agency, of homosexual or bisexual marital behavior, any other nationality that is not Mexican and younger than 18 years of age and older than 48 years of age; abandonment of home on the part of the companion or husband.

The criteria of selection (inclusion and exclusion) of the study had already been accepted by the agency. The agency was asked by the researcher to refer the Mexican women of 18-48 years of age that were abused during a period of time of five months or more, that had been or were engaged in a heterosexual relationship, and that had not taken any intervention from the agency. Subsequently, the interviewer made a brief approach to the subjects to explain the investigation project, the importance of their participation in this project – such as that the research's results could help in the ameniorate the problem of violence against the women. Once the consent form had been signed, the subject had undergo a second classification step as described in the following section.

Criteria to determine if the person remains in the relationship

There exists an official agency's intake form (see Appendix VI), which contains a question verifying the person's marital status (unmarried, married), current address, and if the current address is the same in which the couple lives. These official data was compared with the answers given by the participant in the study to a set of three questions (screening sheet), which was included in a small form determining if the person was remained in the relationship or not. This form identified if the subject was living with the husband or companion involved in the abusive situation (the answer will be "si" or "no"); and it also identified the length of time the abused person had not lived with the abuser (the answer to this question is the number of days or months or any combination); another question will probe who decided to finish the relationship (the answer to this question was open; the person wrote down who decided to finish the relation). In summary, the criteria of determining if the woman was or was not in the relationship were set up in the following manner:

Woman's decision criteria

The woman's decision criteria was: 1) if the woman decided to divorce; 2) if the woman decided to leave the home (in the case of unmarried couples); 3) if the woman asked to the legal authorities to removed the partner or husband from the house; 4) if the woman was under authority protection because of the domestic abuse; 5) if the woman was currently in a shelter. The Criterion of not living with the abuser in the same household included that the woman no longer lived with her companion in the same house at least during the last month. These were the main criteria used to determine whether a woman was or was not in the relationship. The rationale was that if the women's decision was based just on herself and also that she no longer lived in the same house with the abuser, there was a difference in the woman's strenghts to make

such decision (in contrast with a woman who remained in the relationship or who has not decided herself to leave the abusive partner).

In addition, there were variations in the condition the women were living such as marital status (unmarried couples, the time elapsed since they left the abuser and so on), the place in which the women were currently living, etc. The following two situations exemplified several cases in which variations occurred: 1) woman who continued in the abusive relationship, but the woman had decided not to cohabit with the man since a month ago, this woman was considered “out of the relationship”; 2) woman divorced, but still cohabits with her abusive companion was considered “in the relationship”.

In conclusion, the fact that the woman did or did not live in the same home with the abusive companion as well as the nature of the decision (her own decision) was the main criteria of allocation to one of the groups: “in the relationship” or “out of the relationship”). An elapsed time of one month had been set as the criterion to determine whether the woman had left/ or remained in the relationship (this criterion is subjected to change, of course). After applying the overall subjects screening criteria of inclusion and exclusion in the study (through the agency) and also after having applied the criteria of “still in the relationship” or “no longer in the relationship”, the researcher guided the participant to the interviewing team to start the interview (the questionnaire included the question prepared by the investigator and the inventories of Beck and Coopersmith). When the collection of the data finalized the participants was thanked for their help. The collection of data continued until the number of subjects reached 135.

Materials and Procedures

Instruments

The following instruments were used in this study:

1. The Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) Coopersmith measurement consists of 58 items, eight of which comprise a lie scale. The remaining items are scored on a dichotomous scale (“like me” or “not like me”) to provide a global measure of self-esteem. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. The “Instituto Mexicano de Psiquiatría” in Mexico validated this instrument, and it was found to be a valid and reliable instrument for Mexican women and men. During the validation process the IMP used a sample of 411 Mexican adults including 200 men and 211 women. They chose 25 items that were scored on a dichotomous scale (yes or no). The results showed a validity using T-test with a $P < .05$ and reliability using Cronbach alpha = .81.
2. Beck’s Depression Inventory (BDI) is an instrument of 21 items. It measures sadness, hopelessness, past failure, anhedonia, guilt, punishment, self-dislike, self-blame, suicidal thoughts, crying, agitation, loss of interest in activities, indecisiveness, worthlessness, loss of energy, insomnia, irritability, decreased appetite, diminished concentration, fatigue, and lack of interest in sex . The BDI reflects the degree to which the respondent expresses certain depressive symptoms. Subjects completed the twenty-one-question survey. The answers were scored on 0 to 3 scales: none = 0, mild = 1, moderate = 2, and severe = 3. The interpretations of the scores are at interval levels. A score < 15 shows mild depression, a score of 15-30 shows moderate depression, a score > 30 shows severe depression.

3. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to measure the seven variables not tested directly by the BDI and CSI instruments. In addition to demographic information, the instrument contained items adapted from the following well-known instruments:

- A. Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) – The CTS is a 7-point, 78 item self report questionnaire assessed individual responses to situations with the partner involving conflict.
- B. Seligman's Attribution Style Questionnaire (SASQ), a questionnaire which consisted of 12 hypothetical situations, six describing good outcome and six describing bad outcomes. For each situation, the subject was asked to name one major cause of the outcome described. The subjects rated each cause on a 7 point scale for degree of internality, stability, and globality in terms of how important the situation was if it happens to them.
- C. The Interpersonal Support Evaluation list (ISEL)- This is a 40 items questionnaire developed by Cohen et al. (1985) which measured four areas of perceive availability of social support.

Study design

The study used an exploratory cross-sectional design to investigate predictors and relationships among factors in the women's decisions to stay in or leave an abusive relationship. Data on all variables was collected from the abused women at one point of time. The cross-sectional design meant that subjects had been studied across a range of differences at a particular point of time. There were many advantages to this type of design when compared statistics such as: allowed the researcher to draw stronger inferences regarding the impact of the factors

activity; it was fast and could study a large number of patients at little cost or effort; finally, the researcher did not have to worry about patients dropping out during the course of the study.

Although there were many advantages to this type of design, there were also several disadvantages such as: *it can only measured differences between groups, not change; bias by chance differences between samples; contamination by the transitional time between the women's decisions to leave occur; and others explained in the limitation section.* In order to minimize the effects of these disadvantages, this study proposed to survey a population of 135 subjects as well as use standardized measures and the data collection toward very specific elements (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001). *To implement this design, the research staff gathered the data at the same point in time for the comparison groups and used the same measurement approaches and variable definitions.* Thus, it was concluded that cross-sectional design was considered a good design for this type of research study (Rubin & Babbie, 2002).

Data Collection

The Method for data collection in the study included the BDI, CSI, and a researcher-developed structured questionnaire. Each participant was asked to complete an interview booklet written in Spanish that contained questions to elicit demographic information and the instruments to measure concepts chosen from the literature believed to influence women's decisions to stay or leave their abusive relationships. Written consent was obtained before the questionnaire was administered. The research staff administrated the questionnaires and read the questions in the interview to each participant. Participants answered the questions in a form provided. It took 35-40 minutes for women to complete the interview. The research staff filled in the form with a participant response. Code numbers were assigned to Participants to protect their identities.

This code will be used in the data collection

Training had been provided to the staff in charge of applying the questionnaires. The areas of training included that the data gathering personnel read to every interviewee: 1) a brief introductory paragraph in which the overall intention of the research was described and the sponsor universities was listed; 2) interviewer's consent to participate in the study; 3) disclaimer and interviewee's rights protection following the guidelines stated later in this document; 4) minimal interview environment to guarantee information validity.

Additionally, the staff was clear about the nature of the information required and encoded a request for this information, the participant decoded this request in the way the researcher intended it was decoded, the participant encoded an answer that contains the information the researcher requested, and the researcher decoded the answer as the respondent intended it was decoded.

Protection of human subject procedure

All potential subjects had been informed that the information they provide during the study will be kept confidential and that they could withdraw from the interview at anytime. Potential subjects were assured that their decisions to participate or not participate in the research will not affect their care in the CAFAM program in any way. Potential subjects was encouraged to ask questions and given time to consider their decisions. Before an eligible abused woman began the study, her informed consent was obtained. The Informed Consent Statement and other instruments were read aloud by the researcher. After subjects signed the consent form, they received a copy of the form.

Code numbers safeguards had been used for confidentiality and anonymity. After the interviews, the women's names were recorded in a master list and code numbers was assigned to

The level of self-esteem was defined as the image that the victim has of herself in relation to the knowledge of the expectation of the others and its comparison with its own conduct (Allport & Murray, 1996). This variable was measured through 25 items scored on a dichotomous scale (yes or no) from standardized Coopersmith's Self-esteem construct to Mexican adults completed by the sample subjects.

Degree of depression

The degree of depression was characterized by a degree of feelings of sadness, loneliness, and hopelessness that do not pass within a matter of days or weeks. The degree of depression also involves the body, mood, and thoughts. This variable was measured through Beck's Depression Inventory of 21 items completed by the subjects and was scored on 0-3 scale.

Income

The variable income was defined as the sources and amount of economic support. It included monthly salary, wages, or earnings of the victim from employment, family support, business, pensions or legacy. This variable was measured through demographic direct questions. It had two items scored on 1-5 scale identifying the source of income and frequency of the income.

Family member

Family member was defined as a number of the members of the nuclear family. It included husband/partner, children and any other person (mother, father, sisters, brothers, aunt, etc.) that live in the house. This variable was measured with structured direct questions.

Economic dependence

This variable was defined as an abused woman's reliance on the partner for financial support. This variable was measured through two items scored on 1-5 scale that a subject answered that identified the current income and the income when she was with her partner

Patriarchal values

This variable was defined through the explanation of why abused women remained with abusers as a result of shared beliefs about the men's superiority over women and their innate right to dominate as well as powerlessness (Stern, 1999). This variable was measured with the total score obtain from a sequence of questions that explain the women beliefs about men's power and innate superiority in the nuclear family.

Religiosity

This variable was defined as an abused women religious belief and worship. Four items scored on 1- 5 was measured this variable. Subjects answered questions that identified their religious beliefs and worship. These four questions were adapted from a Bardis's Religion Scale (Bardis, 1961).

Social support

Social support; defined as the available social relationships that objectively may call upon for help in times of victim's need (Hobfold & Vaux, 1993). Four items were adapted from items of the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL) questionnaire measured three areas of perceived availability of social support: family, people and friends on a 5 point scale for degree of social support.

Statistics and analysis

Bivariate analyses

As a first step, preliminary bivariate analyses were conducted, prior to multivariate analysis to identify stronger predictor variables and mean significant differences between groups. Due the fact that some predictor variables such as patriarchal values and religiosity was analyzed for the first time for their effects on stay/leave decision in Mexican abused women, it justified this

preliminary bivariate analysis. Moreover significance tests were used as helpful screening devices for identifying potentially meaningful variables. Furthermore the result of this analysis pointed out some areas for future research regarding the predictors' variables and the women's stay/leave decision making. Thus, *t* test analysis was used to evaluate differences between group 1 and group 2 on each of the independent variables. In addition, simple linear regression was conducted for each variable individually to identify significant predictors.

Multivariate analyses

Subsequently to simple linear regression conducted individually to each independent variable with the criterion and in an attempt to find the best statistical way to analyze the data of this study, given the fact of a nominal dichotomous criterion variable, logistic regression analysis was conducted using enter method. The original model (with the nine variables) and in addition, the same model without the variables income and family members were conducted.

Nevertheless, logistic regression does not offered the adequate answer as a statistical analysis since the data conform perfectly to the discrete dichotomy of the dependent variable where it accumulates the scores within the acquired values of 0 (not in the relationship) or 1 (remains in the relation). Due to the fact that logistic regression does not presented adequate answer to the model, multiple standard regression were conducted in an effort to test the original model that included the criterion variable and the group of the nine variables (type of abuse, income, family members, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity and social support). Stepwise and enter methods were conducted to find the best single group of predictors in the Mexican abused women's stay/leave decision.

Limitations of the study

In examining the process of this study, there are several limitations that were considered. First, the sample of subjects whom left their abusers was contaminated by the transitional time between the women's decisions to leave at the time when the answers for questionnaires were filled. Second, the researcher was unable to control the agency's intake procedures to select the battered women and the facilities allowing the researcher to collect the data. Third, some women required help with the questionnaires either through explanation of the question or a meaning of a word. Bias in the results could occur for these particular subjects possibly because of the staff explanation or subject misinterpretation (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Fourth, disadvantages to this type of design when comparing statistics, could occur, such as bias by chance differences between samples (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). Fifth, some methodological problems in the cross-sectional design such as: it can only measure differences between groups, not change, a problem of omitting an important independent variable, and internal validity, because despite the fact that this study was efficient at identifying association, the design may have trouble deciding cause and effect. Six, since the controls was applied after the data was collected, the investigator must think about what controls she needed before design the survey instruments. Seven, error in gathering data caused by: lack of effort, or interest, on the part of participants; respondents' unwillingness to admit to certain attitudes or behaviors; failure of respondents' memory or comprehension processes in the stressed conditions of the interview; interviewer failures of various kinds (e.g. the tendency to change wording, failures in presentation procedures, and others); respondents misinterpret questions. Nevertheless, despite of the above limitation, overall participants behaved very cooperative during the data gathering. Eight, because of the limitations stated above and because a researcher is dealing with probabilities, not certainties, the researcher was in risk to make errors (Rubin & Babbie, 2001). The investigator could concluded that

differences or relationships statistically significant in the data collected were valid when it really resulted by chance or by sampling errors (Type I error), or on the other hand, the investigator could concluded that there was a valid difference or statistically significant relationships when there really is one (Type II error) (Rubin & Babbie, 2002).

CHAPTER IV

This chapter will be divided in two sections: 1) description of the general survey measured components and scales validation strategy and, 2) results of the current study. The description of the general survey measured components and scales validation strategy includes: participansts in the validation of constructs, procedure, instrumentation, summary of results of validation of the questions and remarks. The results will describe the sample and a descriptive analysis of the abused women included in the study and type of variables: type of abuse, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, income, family members, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GENERAL SURVEY MEASURED COMPONENTS AND SCALES VALIDATION STRATEGY

Variables such as economic dependency, income and family members were measured by direct demographic questions. Self-esteem was measured by The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). The degree of depression was measured by Beck's Depression Inventory (BDI). Type of abuse, patriarchal values, social support, and religiosity were measured by a questionnaire designed by the researcher.

There are no standardized instruments to assess the constructs of religiosity, type of abuse, social support and patriarchal values. Therefore, the researcher developed a 1-5 liker type of

scale to measure the following constructs: religiosity; social support; type of abuse; patriarchal values; income; and family members. The constructs of religiosity, type of abuse and social support were adapted from Bardis's scale (BRS) (Bardis, 1961), Conflicts Tactics Scale (CTS) and Interpersonal Support List (ISEL) (Cohen et al, 1985), respectively. The researcher developed additional items to assess patriarchal values, income and family membership.

To validate the instrument the researcher used face validity, discriminant power of the items and reliability of each construct's group of questions. To assure validity and reliability a pilot test was conducted.

Participants in the validation of the instrument

The tests to determine the discriminatory capacity of the item, the coefficients of correlation and the closing report of Alpha of Cronbach, were carried out on the basis of the data from a sample of 35 women. The sample of the study were taken from the Colony of Bernabe in Monterrey, N.L, Mexico, a neighborhood with similar characteristics as the population of the study. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 45. The marital status of the sample contained the following characteristics: married, unmarried living together single or divorced. The population of the sample was randomly selected using a approach methods of selection utilized in this study were random sampling and snow-balling. Once sample were identified, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and invite them to participate.

Procedure

After accepting the invitation to participate in the study, the questionnaire containing 43 questions was administer orally to each subject. Questions were read exactly as written in the instrument to preserve the clarity and the consistency of the instrument.

Instrumentation

A 1 to 5 scale instrument of 43 items was used to measure the various constructs in this study: religiosity, type of abuse, social support, and patriarchal values. Four questions were developed to measure religiosity and patriarchal values; three questions to measure social support and nineteen questions to measure the types of abuse (5 items for physical abuse, 3 items for sexual abuse, 9 items for psychological abuse and 5 items for economic abuse). The questions to measure the type of abuse were presented in the present or past tense to reflect the current status of the subjects.

Summary of results of validation of the questions

In the process of assuring reliability and validity of constructs and to confirm the internal validity of the study, the instrument was submitted to a pilot test group. The data from the pilot test was subjected to analysis using *t*-test. The *t*-test analysis was used to establish a discriminatory power of items for each construct. This discriminatory power analysis was established by considering the significant difference among the mean of the persons with the highest scores in the items (percentile 75 and above) with those with the lowest score in the items (with a percentile of 25 and below).

The *t* test reported that the differences between the mean of the item within the constructs of religiosity, patriarchal values, social support and each of the types of abuse, in groups 1 and 2, were statistically significantly different with a $p \leq .00$, for an established level of $p \leq .05$. Based on these data it was possible to establish the discriminatory power of the items in each of the constructs and also that the groups of prospective questions also measured the constructs (a first level of validity). After running *t*-test for the elimination of questions, the constructs were set in the following manner: religiosity with four questions; patriarchal values with four questions

validated as far as the discriminative power; social support with three questions; physical abuse with five questions; psychological abuse with nine questions; sexual abuse with four questions; economic abuse with four questions. Since the construct of psychological abuse had more than five questions which was the maximum number of questions allowed by the researcher, it was decided to use the Spearman correlation coefficient of .8 to eliminate items.

In addition, Chronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient was used to establish the reliability for each set of questions as part of each construct: type of abuse, religiosity, social support and patriarchal values. Some items were eliminated to reach a higher reliability coefficient. The following coefficients of reliability for the following constructs were reported: religiosity, alpha = .86 ; social support, alpha = .87; patriarchal values, alpha = .97. In the construct types of abuse the following was reported: physical abuse, alpha = .97; sexual abuse, alpha = .85; psychological abuse, alpha = .93; economic abuse, alpha = .88.

The questions by construct, which remained after the elimination on the basis of the test of Cronbach were: religiosity, three questions; social support, four questions; and patriarchal values, four questions. For the construct type of abuse (having four types of abuse) remained the following number of questions by sub-construct: physical abuse, five questions; sexual abuse, two questions; psychological abuse, four questions and economic abuse two questions.

Conclusions

The *t*-test comparative statistic criterion used to evaluate the item discriminative power between groups 1 and 2 was $P \leq .05$ (which indicates discrimination) and a coefficient of reliability with an alpha of $\geq .80$ for each set of questions per construct. These results confirm the validity and reliability of each construct. Based on these data the questionnaire would include a

total of five constructs with 24 questions plus demographic and economic dependency construct questions. The whole researcher questionnaire is composed of 35 questions in total.

RESULTS FOR CURRENT STUDY

This study was designed to identify variables that affect the decision of Mexican women to remain or leave abusive relationships. Two groups of women were studied: 1) women that have been left the abusive relationships for one or more month or 2) women that remain in abusive relationships with their partners.

This section contains five main sections. First section, focusing on a descriptive analysis of the abused Mexican women will be presented, which highlight selected sample demographics. In addition, characteristics between abused women will be compared and contrasted on the basis of the decision to stay or leave their abusive relationships. The second section focuses on a description of the major study variables: type of abuse, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, income, family members, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support. The third section reports normality test assessment for those nine variables. The fourth section explains the mean differences and observed discrepancies from the bivariate analyses between two groups: group1; women who decided to remain in their abusive relationship and, group0; women who left their abusers will be displayed. Fifth section presents a simple linear regression and multivariate regression analysis results will be presented and significant predictors of abuse women's decision to stay or to leave their abusive relationships will be identified. In the sixth and final section, results of data analyses to address questionresearch testing will be presented.

Sample Description

Response set

A total of 130 heterosexual Mexican battered women between the ages of 18 to 48 classified by the agency (CAFAM) were agreed to participate in the study. All abused women who met the criteria for participation in the study (N=130) completed the entire questionnaire.

Assignment of participants to (stay/leave) relationship status

A designed small form (screening sheet) were used for the assignment of the participants to relationship status (stay/leave). Each participant completed this small form of a set of three questions that identified: 1) if the subject was still living with the husband or companion involved in the abusive situation (the answer was "yes" or "no"); 2) the length of time the abused person had not lived with the abuser (the answer to this question was the number of days or months or any combination); 3) a question that ask about who decided to finish the relationship (the answer to this question was open, the participant wrote down who decided to finish the relation). The official agency's intake form, which contains a question verifying the person's marital status (unmarried, married), current address, and if the current address was the same at which the couple lived was used to compare with the answers given by the participant in the screening sheet.

The following criteria on determining if the woman was or was not in the relationship was set up in the following manner: 1) woman's decision criteria: if the woman had decided herself not to be in the relationship in contrast to an external decision; if the woman decided to divorce; if the woman decided to leave the home (in the case of unmarried couples); if the woman asked legal authorities to remove the partner or husband from the house; if the woman is under protection because of the domestic abuse and, if the woman is currently in a shelter and, 2) Criterion of not living with the abuser in the same household: the woman who no longer lives with her companion in the same house for at least the last month. These were the main criteria

used to determine whether a woman is or is not in the relationship. The rationale is that if the women's decision was based just on herself and also that she no longer lives in the same house with the abuser, there should be a difference in the woman's strengths to make such as decision (in contrast with a woman who still lives in the relationship or who has not decided herself to leave the abusive partner). The following situations exemplify several cases in which variations may occur. For example in specific cases: 1) if the woman continues in the abusive relationship, but the woman has decided not to cohabit with the man since a month ago, the woman will be considered "out of the relationship"; 2) if the woman is divorced, but still cohabits with her abusive companion she will be considered "in the relationship".

In conclusion, the fact that the woman does or does not live in the same home with the abusive companion as well as the nature of the decision (her own decision) was the main criteria of allocation into the stay or left group. An elapsed time of one month had been set as the criterion to identify women that left their abusive partners.

Totals were computed on the criteria followed to identify the two relationship status groups representing women's experience in the stay/leave decision. Group 1 was composed of women's current involvement in an abusive relationship or those women that had left their abusers based on the elapsed time of less than month. Group 0 was composed by women had left their abusive relationships based on the elapse time at least for a month.

Sample Demographic Information

A variety of demographic and descriptive information was collected for all participants, including their age, family group, marital status, and family income. The average age of the participants was 32 years ($M= 32.40$; $SD= 7$) and ranged in age from 18 to 45. Participants reported income ranging from 0 to 3,500 pesos weekly (0 to 14,000 pesos monthly) ($M=1,353.65$

pesos²; SD= 662). The number of family members ranged from 0-14 members with a mean of 6.08 (SD= 2.80). Descriptive statistics reported that approximately more than a half of the abused women had left the abusers (n=66) and the rest (n=64) remained with them. The greatest proportion of the total sample was married (45.5%). Otherwise, women were separated (40%), divorced from the abusive partner (3.8%) or living as a couple (10.8%). At the time of interview, 49.2% were living with their partners: 50.8% of the women were living without their abusive partners.

Table1 Stay/Leave Decision Comparative Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables

Variables	Decision to Stay (n=64)		Decision to Leave (n=66)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Family members	5.98	2.16	5.94	2.35
Income (weekly)	1378.34	564.04	1297.05	541.80
Age	32.47	7.23	32.33	6.82

Comparative statistic in table 1 above presents that the mean and standard deviation of income, family members, and age were similar in both groups: women that decided to remain and women that decided to stay. The mean number for family members of abused women who remained in abusive relationships were (M=5.98) corresponded to 65% while that the mean number of women who left (M=5.94) corresponded to a 66%. Likewise, the mean for income of

² 11 Mexican pesos were the equivalent to \$1.00 in United States monetary system at the time of the study. The mean salary reported of 1,353.65 were equivalent to \$123.05; the salary reported of 3, 500 pesos weekly and 14,000 pesos monthly were equivalent to \$308.18 and \$1,272.72 respectively based on the United States monetary system.

both groups: the group of women who stay ($M=1378.34^3$) and the group of women who left ($M=1297.05^4$) comprise the same percentage (58%). On the other hand, the mean for age reported of women's stay decision (45%; $M= 32.47$) correspond to 11% and the mean age reported of women that left their abusive partners ($M=32.33$) correspond to 56%. Nevertheless, *t*-test showed no mean significant differences (.14) between groups given the $p=.4$ at $p< .05$ significance level. In summary the descriptive statistics of these demographic variables indicated that both groups were demographically homogeneous.

Comparative Descriptive Statistics of the rest of the Predictors between Groups

For the purpose to conduct the best data analysis throughout comparative descriptive statistics that explains the prediction of self-esteem, depression, patriarchal values, social support, type of abuse, religiosity and economic dependency on the criterion variable between groups, the level of measurement for these variables were changed from ordinal data to interval data.

Comparative statistics and observed discrepancies from the descriptive analyses between women who stay and women who left their abusive partners were presented (see tables 2 and 3). Descriptive and quantitative measures were conducted to capture the essence for the basic characteristics of a distribution: central tendency and variability of the rest of the predictors (self-esteem, depression, patriarchal values, social support, type of abuse, religiosity, and economic dependency).

In an attempt to have a broad view of central tendency and variability, a description of the mean and standard deviation for all major variables in the whole sample are presented in table 2. Nevertheless, a comparative view between groups in the same approach will be needed to have a

³ \$125.30 US equivalency

⁴ \$117.91 US equivalency

better understanding of how predictors behaved into both two groups separately within the whole sample. Table3 provides a comparative description of mean and standard deviation between groups 1(women who remain with their abusive partners) and group 2 (women who left their abusive partners).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Major variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Economic dependency	129	3.19	1.65
Religiosity	130	3.07	1.21
Type of abuse	130	3.28	.76
Social support	130	2.75	1.45
Patriarchal values	130	2.62	1.48
Depression	130	1.02	.66
Self-esteem	130	13.02	6.30

Table3 Stay/ Leave Decision: Comparative Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables

Variables	Decision to Leave (n=66)		Decision to Stay (n=64)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-esteem	17.4	4.6	8.5	4.3
Depression	.55	.54	1.5	.36
Patriarchal Values	1.3	.49	4.0	.66
Social Support	3.9	.69	1.5	.72
Type of Abuse	3.8	.37	2.7	.59
Religiosity	2.1	.68	4.1	.60
Economic Dependency	1.97	1.2	4.5	1.0

Self-esteem

Descriptive analysis about the levels of high or low levels of self-esteem⁵ in both groups: women that left their abusive relationships and women that decided to remain with them were analyzed. Table 3 reported that the mean for self-esteem of women who left their abusive partners (17.4) was almost double the mean of women that remained with their abusive partners (8.5). In addition, findings for frequencies of self esteem reported that from a 100% of women who remained in the an abusive relationships; 12.5% reported high levels of self esteem in contrast with 87.5% of women who reported low levels of self-esteem. In addition to that a 100% of abused women that left their abusive partners; 84.8% reported high levels of self-esteem in contrast with 15.2% of abused women that scored with low levels of self-esteem. In summary the greater part of women that remained with their abusive partners showed low levels of self-esteem comparing to the greater part of women that left their abusive partners that showed high levels of self-esteem.

Degree of Depression

A descriptive analysis for degrees of depression⁶ reported very low mean of .55 in abused women that left their partners and a high mean of 1.5 (on a scale of 0-3) in women that remained within their abusive relationships. The mean difference of .93 resulted between groups is statistically significant at $p=.00$. In addition, the findings in frequencies reported that from the 100% of women that left their abusers; 77% had no degree of depression; 6% had low degree of depression, 3% of women had moderate degree of depression, and 15% women had severe degree of depression. From the total amount of women who remained within abusive

⁵ On the scale 0-1; over 13 points were classified as high self-esteem and below 13 points were classified as low self-esteem based on the sample mean.

⁶ Classification based on BDI depression scale were: 3-11 points no depression; 12-19 low; 20-28 moderate; 29 and up severe depression.

relationships 1.6% reported no depression, 3.2% reported low depression, 29.9% reported moderate depression, and 66% reported severe depression. Additional findings of the item that explained the levels in lack of interest in sex report a mean of 2; mean differences of $-.14$, and ($p = .39$), and 77.7% for overall women had a score of 2-3. These findings explained that only the item of the levels in lack of interest in sex did not show statistical significant differences between groups. Thus, 77% of the whole sample had lack of interest in sex.

Patriarchal values

The mean amount for patriarchal values of women that left their abusers was 1.3 (on the scale of 1-5), consisted of the majority of 75% of women that reported a lower level from this group. On the other hand, the women that remained in the abusive relationships reported a mean of 4.1 for patriarchal values that comprise the 65% of the women with highest level of patriarchal values.

Social support

Descriptive data were also gathered from participants on the level of social support. Results from frequency analysis confirmed that the 82% of women that remained within the abusive partners had a lower level of social support of 1.3 or less on the scale of 1-5. On the other hand, women that left reported 55% of high levels of social support with a mean of 3.9 on the scale 1-5. These findings shows that women that left have higher levels of social support (family, friends, others) than women that stay.

Type of abuse

Participants also shared information about the type of abuse. The 60% of the women in the decision to stay within abusive relationships reported experiencing a level of 2.7 or less of diverse types of abuse (scale 1-5); nevertheless only 40% of the women that left their abusive

partners reported levels of 3.8 or less of variety of type of abuse. For women who stayed, descriptive results according to type of abuse will be reported as follow: 1) women who left their abusive partners presented a mean of 3.9 for psychological abuse in 54% of the women, a mean of 3.6 for physical abuse in a 53% of women, a mean of 3.6 for sexual abuse in 65% of women, and a mean of 4.25 for economic abuse in 65% of the women; 2) women who remained within their abusive relationships reported a mean of 2.92 for psychological abuse in 75% of the women, a mean of 2.57 for physical abuse in 47% of the women, a mean of 2.40 for sexual abuse in 54% of the women, and a mean of 2.81 for economic abuse in 60% of the women.

Religiosity

The majority of the women that decided to remain with their abusive partners (66%) reported high levels of religiosity (4.1 on a scale 1-5). However, 75% of the 100% of women that left their abusive relationships reported lower levels of religiosity (2.1 on a scale 1-5). Findings reported significant mean differences between groups 0 and 1.

Economic Dependency

Results from frequency analysis confirmed that 97% of the women who decided to stay presented a highest level of economic dependency (4.5 on a scale 1-5) comparing with the women that decided to leave their abusive relationships that reported a percentage of 67% with the lowest levels of economic dependency. The two groups reported significant mean differences between women who decided to stay and women who decided to leave their abusive partners at $p=.00$ in regards to economic dependency. The women who stay are significantly more economically dependent on their partners than women who left.

Test of Normal Distribution on Major Variables

Prior to the analyses, type of abuse, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support were examined for missing values and tested for assumptions. Normality is considered an underlying assumption for multivariate analysis because extreme values and skewed distributions can distort results. Thus, for each of the scales, missing data was handled using the following criteria: 1) if a particular case demonstrated 20% or more of missing values across all scale items, the item was deleted from the analysis. This was a case of item number 17 of the self-esteem construct that has shown missing values larger than 20%; this item was deleted and instead of 25 items only 24 items remained in the construct. On the other hand, no missing values were found in type of abuse, degree of depression, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support except for one missing value (.08% of confidence scale cases) found in economic dependency construct. Scale items were screened individually for missing data, outliers and the presence of sufficient spread.

Although normality is considered an underlying assumption in multiple regression analysis (Pampel, 2000; Hair, Anderson, Tathan, and Black, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), this study followed a variety of analytic procedures to evaluate the normality in spite of the fact that it is problematical to insure normality because of the measurement level of the majority of the variables. Nevertheless, multivariate analysis can be run regardless of a few normality violations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). A histogram of distribution of type of abuse, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support scores was obtained. Normality was visually assessed by looking at a histogram of frequencies of each variable (Kahane, 2001; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The area under the normal curve did not represent the probability of 68.26% of cases within 1 standard deviation of the mean or

95.44% within 2 standard deviations (Kahane, 2001). A histogram of income, family members indicates a leptokurtic tendency, nevertheless, patriarchal values, religiosity, type of abuse, and social support shows a platykurtic shape. The shapes indicated non-normality distribution (Kahane, 2001). To confirm those results of normality, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for significance were run for each construct. Kolmogorov-Smirnov shows no normality with a significance of .000 for each of the 9 variable predictors submitted.

In an attempt to identify any observation (outlier) that are influential (that have an impact in the regression results) and to determine whether they should be excluded from the analysis, residuals were examined in each variable through studentized residual test at $p < .05$ at 95% of confidence, identifying outliers residuals with t values greater than 1.96.

Table 4 Studentized(t) Outliers Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Stay/Leave	.174	.249		.70	.484
	Income	.0001	.000	.014	.43	.668
	Family members	-.0024	.006	-.014	-.42	.677
	Economic dependency	.0250	.016	.082	1.61	.110
	Religiosity	.107	.029	.260	3.76	.000
	Type of abuse	-.0434	.036	-.065	-1.20	.233
	Social support	-.0612	.028	-.176	-2.20	.031
	Patriarchal values	.160	.033	.474	4.80	.000
	Depression	-.111	.054	-.145	-2.05	.043
	Self-esteem	-.0068	.005	-.085	-1.33	.187

The results in table 4 showed that only patriarchal values, depression, social support, and religiosity have been identified as statistically significant residuals. Then, extreme outliers were identified through SD and mean method with a following criterion: any case that is more than 3 SD from the mean will be identified as an extreme outlier (Hair, Anderson, Tathan, and Black, 1999). Based on this criterion, only the extreme outliers were identified in two demographic variables (family members and income) were substituted for the mean subtracted from all the

cases after extreme values identified were deleted. The procedure of substitution was obviated in the rest of the independent variables because they had a large number of extreme outliers (more than 15) and because those observations could be representative of the population and good predictors.

Mahalanobis distance is a third and very common measure for multivariate outliers. Cases with the highest Mahalanobis D-square values were the most likely candidates to be considered as outliers and they should be examined.

Table5 Residuals Statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	-.13	1.23	.49	.47	129
Std. Predicted Value	-1.32	1.57	.000	1.00	129
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.028	.098	.048	.014	129
Adjusted Predicted Value	-.14	1.25	.49	.47	129
Residual	-.83	.49	2.92	.17	129
Std. Residual	-4.62	2.73	.000	.964	129
Stud. Residual	-4.77	2.99	.004	1.02	129
Deleted Residual	-.89	.59	.001	.20	129
Stud. Deleted Residual	-5.28	3.10	.001	1.05	129
Mahal. Distance	2.03	36.70	8.93	6.16	129
Cook's Distance	.000	.196	.013	.033	129
Centered Leverage Value	.016	.287	.070	.048	129

a Dependent Variable: Stay/leave decision

The table 5 below contains a summary of data regarding the residuals (the difference between predicted and actual values). *Std. residual*, for instance, is the standardized residual (raw residual divided by the standard deviation of residuals). Since the minimum standardized residual is -4.619, at least one prediction is more than 1 standard deviation below the mean residual. Studentized residual (-4.766) is very similar to standardized residuals and follow the t distribution. These are used in plots of standardized or studentized predicted values vs. observed values. The deleted residual rows have to do with coefficients when the model is recomputed over and over, dropping one case from the analysis each time. In this case the coefficients are lower in standardized residuals than in the studentized residuals (see table 6). The bottom three

rows are measures of the influence of the minimum, maximum, and mean case on the model. Mahalanobis distance is $(n-1)$ times leverage (the bottom row), which is a measure of case influence. Cases with leverage values less than .070 are not a problem, but cases with leverage values of .5 or higher may be unduly influential in the model and should be examined. Cook's distance measures how much the b coefficients change when a case is dropped. Nevertheless no cases were dropped in this section of analysis.

Variables with multiple extreme values and highly skewed distributions were transformed using logarithms (base10) of the 7 original variables (religiosity, economic dependency, depression, self-esteem, patriarchal values, social support, and type of abuse) and the other two whom extremes values have been substituted for the mean (income and family members), to re-express the data in a more symmetric manner (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Attempts were made to transform the data, but none were effective in transforming the distribution into a normal shape. Further regression analysis conducted on this transformed distribution resulted in findings not significantly different from those conducted on the original data. Thus, the data will be analyzed in the original form.

Bivariate Analysis

The total sample size included in the bivariate analyses was 130 abused women which: 50.8% percent (N=66) pertained to women who left their abusive relationships, while 49.2% (N=64) belonged to the group with abused women that remained in their abusive relationships. Prior to conducting the bivariate analyses, extreme values for income and family member predictors were deleted so that the variable means were more closely related to their median values, and not heavily influenced in either direction by highly atypical values. The variables used in the following analyses were consistently coded in the following manner: 1) for dichotomous

variables, 0 represents a response of no or the absence of the characteristic, while 1 signifies a response of yes or the presence of the characteristic, and 2) for ordinal-level variables, lower values are associated with a lesser amount or degree of the characteristic, whereas higher scores reflect greater levels of the characteristic.

Independent variables at ordinal levels were transformed to interval level. Bivariate analyses were performed separately on the individual of each construct to determine whether significant differences existed between women that have left their abusive relationship and the other group that remained with their abusive partners. Then t-test was used to examine differences between group: women that left their abusive partners (group 0) and women that remained with them (group 1) when the variables were continuous (i.e. type of abuse, income, family members, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity and social support). The following significant comparisons were explored: 1) frequency type of abuse between women within the abusive relationships and women that left the abusive relationships; 2) the income between abused women who left their abusers and abused women that remained in their abusive relationships; 3) the number of members within the nuclear family between abused women who left their abusers and abused women that remain in their abusive relationships; 4) the level of self-esteem between abused women who left their abusers and abused women that remained in their abusive relationships; 5) the degree of depression between women within the abusive relationships and women that left the abusive relationships; 6) the level of economic dependency between women within the abusive relationships and women that left their abusive relationships; 7) the degree of patriarchal values between abused women who left their abusers and abused women that remained in their abusive relationships; 8) the level of religiosity between women within the abusive relationships and women that left their abusive

relationships; 9) social support between women within the abusive relationships and women that left their abusive relationships.

T Test and Lavene's for Equality of Variances report

The Lavene's Test for Equality of Variances report was presented first. It tested if the spread of groups differs. The null hypothesis stated that the two population variances (not the mean) were equal at $p > .05$ to accept equal variance assumed hypothesis and $p < .05$ to reject it. The Lavene's test scores in Table 5 included the results of the independent, bivariate analyses by predictor for the criterion variable, stay/leave decision. Within the first construct, family members, Lavene's test for equality of variances was displayed first. It showed the F statistic of .08 and $p = .77$ with 128 degree of freedom supporting the use of the pooled-variance t test (equal variances assumed). It assumes that the population equal variances of women that left the abusers and abused women that remain with their abusers are required. The t-test for equal means reported a $t = -.65$ with a $p = .51$. Then not significant differences (.51) exist in the number of nuclear family between women that left their abusers and women that remained with them. The second construct, income, showed the F statistic of .29 and $p = .58$ with 128 degree of freedom supporting the use of the pooled-variance t test (equal variances assumed). It also assumes that the population equal variances of women that left the abusers and abused women that remained with their abusers are required. The t-test for equal means reported a $t = -1.42$ with a $p = .15$. Subsequently, no significant differences (.15) exist in the income between women that left their abusers and women that remained with them. Third construct, religiosity shows the F statistic of .65 and $p = .42$ with 128 degree of freedom supporting the use of the pooled-variance t test (equal variances assumed). It assumes that the population equal variances of women that left the abusers and abused women that remained with their abusers are required. The t-test for equal

means reported a $t = -18.24$ with a $p = .00$. Religiosity showed significant differences (.00) exist in the level of religiosity between women that left their abusers and women that remained with them. Social support had F statistic of .13 and $p = .71$ with 128 degree of freedom supporting the use of the pooled-variance t test (equal variances assumed). It assumes that the population equal variances of women that left the abusers and abused women that remain with their abusers are required. The t -test for equal means reported a $t = 20.44$ with a $p = .00$. Social support showed significant differences (.00) exist in the level of religiosity between groups. Self-esteem had F statistic of .07 with p of .77 it shows that population variances are equal at $p > .05$ thus for these independent variables, equal variance assumed t -test for means will be use. The reports showed no statistical differences in self-esteem between women that left their abusers and women that stayed with them. On the other hand, economic dependency had F statistic of 5.9 and $p = .01$ with population equal means. The level of alpha at $p < .05$ reported statistical differences in economic dependency between groups. Type of abuse reported F statistic of 10.4 and significance level of .00 at 128 df. Statistical differences between means exist within group 1 and 2 taking the equal variances assumed scores; patriarchal values ($F = 5.1$; $p = .02$); and finally depression reports F statistic of 94.1 at $p = .04$ at $df = 128$. Equal population variance scores were also used showing statistical differences between group means.

Finally, t -test results for mean differences between groups 0 and 1 were analyzed at 95% confidence interval of the differences and a $p > .05$. The t -test results reported in type of abuse a mean differences of 1.14 between groups with a significance at $p = .00$. It means that abused women who left their abusers had significantly higher types of abuse (physical, sexual, economic and psychological abuse) than abused women who decided to remain with their abusers. The variable income shows no significant mean differences between abused women that left their

partners and abused women that remained with them. Family, members had no significant statistical differences between abused women that left the abusive relationship and abused women that remained with their abusive partners. Self-esteem reported significant statistical differences between groups. That means that abused women that left their abusers had higher level of self-esteem than abused women that remained in their abusive relationship.

On the other hand, abused women that remained with their abusers had higher degree of depression than abused women that left their abusive relationship. Abused women who remain in their abusive relationships had higher economic dependency than woman who left them. Abused women who stayed with their abusive partners reported higher patriarchal values scores than women who left their abusive partners. Reports of mean significant differences in (religiosity explained that abused women who remained with their abusive partners had higher religiosity levels than abused woman who left them. Also, abused woman who left their abusive relationship had higher social support than woman who decided to remain within their abusive relationship.

In summary, abused women who left their abusive relationships had higher abuse (psychological, sexual, economic and physical abuse), social support, self-esteem and lower religiosity, patriarchal values, and depression than abused women who stayed. Thus, abused women that stayed had high patriarchal values, religiosity, depression, and less abuse (psychological, economic, physical, and sexual), social support, and level of self-esteem. Tables 7 & 8 specified those significance comparisons.

Table 6 Levene's test and T test statistics of the nine independent variables

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means		Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df				Lower	Upper
Family members	Equal variances assumed	.080	.778	-.651	128	.516	-.28	.43	-1.13	.57
Income	Equal variances assumed	.297	.587	-1.419	128	.158	-138.16	97.37	-330.83	54.51
Religiosity	Equal variances assumed	.653	.421	-18.246	128	.000	-2.0488	.1123	-2.2709	-1.8266
Economic dependency	Equal variances assumed	5.930	.016	-13.117	127	.000	-2.49	.19	-2.87	-2.11
Type of abuse	Equal variances assumed	10.402	.002	13.284	128	.000	1.1420	.08597	.9719	1.3121
Social support	Equal variances assumed	.136	.713	20.442	128	.000	2.5211	.1233	2.2771	2.7652
Patriarchal Values	Equal variances assumed	5.177	.025	-26.790	128	.000	-2.7224	.1016	-2.9235	-2.5213
Depression	Equal variances assumed	4.196	.043	-11.633	128	.000	-.9368	.08053	-1.0961	-.7774
Self-esteem	Equal variances assumed	.079	.779	11.581	128	.000	8.9863	.7759	7.4509	10.5216

Multivariate analyses

The literature suggests that income, family members, type of abuse, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support are factors that predicts the women's stay/leave decision in an abusive relationship. In an effort to explore these relationships a series of analysis were conducted on subsets of selected variables proposed to predict women's decision for leaving their abusive relationships and their decision to stay.

Initially, simple linear regression was conducted individually to each independent variable with the criterion. The table 7 reported the coefficient of each predictor in each one of the 9 models following simple linear regression. Two major variables (income and family members) were identified as not significant contributors to the prediction on the criterion variable using of 95% confidence interval and $p < .05$. As shown, income only explained 7.4% of the variance with a $p = .40$, and family members explained only 1% of the variance with a $p = .91$. Otherwise, the others major variables met the criteria of $p < .05$ explaining more than 70% of the variance.

Table 7 Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for each predictor individually conducted with the Criterion Variable

Model	Std. Error	Unstandardized	Standardized	t	Sig.
		Coefficients B	Coefficients Beta		
1					
Economic dependency	.018	.231	.759	13.12	.000
2 Self-esteem	.005	-.005	-.715	-11.58	.000
3 Income	.000	.000	.074	.838	.403
4 Family members	.020	.002	.010	.113	.910
5 Religiosity	.019	.353	.850	18.25	.000
6 Type of abuse	.038	-.508	-.761	-13.28	.000
7 Social support	.015	-.304	-.875	-20.44	.000
8 Patriarchal values	.012	.312	.921	26.79	.000
9 Depression	.047	.549	.717	11.63	.000

Then, in an attempt to find the best statistical way to analyze the data of this study, given the fact of a nominal dichotomous criterion variable logistic regression analysis was conducted using enter method. The original model (with the nine variables) and in addition, the same model without the variables income and family members were conducted. Nevertheless, logistic regression does not offer the adequate answer as a statistical analysis since the data conforms perfectly to the discrete dichotomy of the dependent variable where it accumulates the scores

within the acquired values of 0 (not in the relationship) or 1 (remains in the relation). The logistic regression does not assume any another value when considering the level of ordinal measurement of the independent variables (1-5), except depression (0-3) and self-esteem (0-1). In spite of the transformation of the level of measurement of these variables to an interval level, their values continue grouping themselves to the absolute values (0, 1) of the criterion variable.

A phenomenon with a perfect prediction emerged, which caused the logistic regression not to assume the distribution of its values because of the nature of the level of its dichotomous measurement. Subsequently, the regression equation cannot work. This can be explained by identifying the average of each item of the variables patriarchal values and religiosity where the scale of the measurement level is of 1-5. It can be observed that 47.7% of the 1-3 religiosity values and 54.6% in patriarchal values are associated with the group of women who are not in the abusive relationship (value 0 of the variable criterion) and 45.4 % in patriarchal values and 52.3% in religiosity of values 4-5 were associated with the women who remained in the abusive relationship (value 1 of the criterion variable). In other words, in the values of 1-3, the values get together and are identified as 0 and the ones near the 5 (4-5) are together as a group of 5, and are located with the 1.

The variable social support behaves in similar manner. The difference however, is that the correlation is a negative one as the values of the 1-3 (51.5%) are grouped with the women who remain in the abusive relationship (1) and the values of the 4-5 (48.5%) are grouped with the women who left the relationship. This behavior of the reported Mexican women in this study apparently follows a model so perfectly predictable that the equation of the logic cannot explain it. Given these circumstances the model of analysis of linear regression is run since this model assumes that the dependent variable is at a continuous level although it conserves the variable

criterion values of 0.1. Thus, it considers as if these had intermediate values and tries to associate the independent variables (with measurement at level of intervals) between the values 0-1.

Due to the disadvantages identified by the logistic regression (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001) in this case, multiple standard regression were conducted in an effort to test the original model that included the criterion variable and the group of the nine variables (type of abuse, income, family members, level of self-esteem, degree of depression, economic dependency, patriarchal values, religiosity and social support). In addition, two methods (stepwise and enter) were conducted to find a single group of predictors in the Mexican abused women decision to stay or to leave their abusive relationships.

Thus, a standard multiple regression using a stepwise procedure, (probability of \underline{F} to enter, $PIN=.05$; probability of \underline{F} to remove, $POT=.10$) was performed between the total confidence scores as the criterion variable (stay/leave decision) and the nine independent variables. Since stepwise regression was required, SPSS first tested a model with the most-correlated independent variable (patriarchal values). Secondly, it tested a model with patriarchal values plus the variable with the highest partial correlation (Religiosity) with the dependent variable (stay/leave) controlling for patriarchal values. Then it tested a model with patriarchal values and religiosity plus the variable with the highest partial correlation (social support) with the dependent variable (stay/leave) controlling for patriarchal values and religiosity. Six other independent variables were suggested by the researcher (family members, income, economic dependence, depression, self-esteem, and type of abuse), but these did not significantly increase R square when patriarchal values, religiosity and social support were controlled, so model with these independent variables were not considered.

Table 8 Regression Model Summary: Stepwise

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.921	.848	.846	.20	.848	706.47	1	127	.000
2	.931	.867	.865	.18	.019	18.45	1	126	.000
3	.933	.871	.868	.18	.004	4.01	1	125	.047

a Predictors: (Constant), Patriarchal values

b Predictors: (Constant), Patriarchal values, Religiosity

c Predictors: (Constant), Patriarchal values, Religiosity, Social support

d Dependent Variable: Stay/leave decision

As seen in table 8, the multiple regressions were significant for model #1, 2 and 3. R-square is the percent of stay/leave decision (dependent or criterion variable) explained by patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support (independents or predictors variables). Patriarchal values explain the 84.8% of the variance. Patriarchal values added to religiosity explained the 86.7% of the variance. In that case, the three variables Patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support explain the 87.1% of the variance.

Adjusted R-square is a standard, arbitrary downward adjustment to penalize for the possibility that, with many independents, some of the variance may be the result of chance. If the number of independents are high, adjustment penalty increases. Since in this case there are only three independent variables, the penalty was minor.

The F value 706.42 shows the significance level of .00 associated with adding the variable patriarchal values for the first step; $F = 18.45$ with significance level of .00 adding religiosity for the second step, and $F = 4.00$ with significance level of .00 with the addition of the variable social support.

Table # 9 Regression Coefficients for the independent variables of each model: Stepwise

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	Patriarchal values	.311	.012	.921	26.58	.000	.288	.335
2	Patriarchal values	.237	.020	.701	11.59	.000	.197	.278
	Religiosity	.107	.025	.260	4.30	.000	.058	.157
3	Patriarchal values	.195	.029	.578	6.73	.000	.138	.253
	Religiosity	.0981	.025	.237	3.90	.000	.048	.148
	Social support	-.0545	.027	-.157	-2.00	.047	-.108	-.001

a Dependent Variable: Stay/Leave

The table 9 reported the regression coefficient of each significant predictor in each one of the three models following stepwise method. Three independent variables were identified as significant contributors to the prediction of 95% confidence interval for B in the first model: Patriarchal values: Beta=.92; t= 26.58; p=.00. In the second model, the two variables together, Patriarchal values and Religiosity cross the threshold. Patriarchal values showed a variance explained of 70% with a significance of .00. Religiosity scored a variance of 26% with a significance of .00. Finally, the third model includes: Patriarchal values, Religiosity and Social support. These variables reported an explained variance of 57%, 23%, and -15% subsequently. Patriarchal values reported a significance of .00; nevertheless, social support reported a significance of .04.

In an attempt to validate the model, a statistical multiple regression analysis with enter method was run. The table 9 shows the findings of the enter method. Three strong predictors

(patriarchal values, religiosity and social support) shown in stepwise analysis have been included in enter method. Additionally, a new strong predictor (depression) was included in the analysis.

Table 10 Regression Coefficients for each predictor variable: enter method

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Stay/Leave	.182	.245		.743	.459
	Family members	-.0051	.007	-.025	-.767	.445
	Income	.000025	.000	.027	.850	.397
	Religiosity	.106	.028	.256	3.723	.000
	Economic dependency	.02514	.015	.083	1.626	.107
	Type of abuse	-.04285	.036	-.064	-1.198	.233
	Social support	-.06377	.028	-.183	-2.276	.025
	Patriarchal values	.159	.033	.470	4.790	.000
	Depression	-.112	.054	-.146	-2.070	.041
	Self-esteem	-.00678	.005	-.085	-1.326	.187

The table 10 reported the regression coefficients for each predictor variable. It reports the b (slope) coefficients, Std. Error, Beta coefficients, t score and Significance level. Based on enter procedure analyzing the model of nine⁷ predictors in stay/leave criterion variable family members contributed with 2.5% of variance, income 2.7% explained of variance, religiosity explained 25% of variance, economic dependency explained the 8.3% of variance, type of abuse contributed with 6.4% of the total variance explained, social support explained 18% of variance, patriarchal contributed with 47% of the whole variance explained, depression explained the 14%

⁷ family members (Beta=-.025; p=.44); income (Beta=.027; p=.39); religiosity (Beta=.256; p=.00), economic dependency (Beta=.083; p=.10); type of abuse (Beta=.064; p=.233); social support (Beta=-.183; p=.025); patriarchal values (Beta=.470; p=.00) depression (Beta=-.146; p=.04); self-esteem (Beta=-.085; p=.18)

of the total variance, and self-esteem had only the 8.5% of the variance to predict stay/leave decision.

Table 11 showed a comparison of standardized coefficients (variance) testing the nine predictors (independents variables) throughout a variety of methods: 1) individually throughout simple linear regression, and 2) throughout multiple regression analysis (enter and stepwise methods).

Table 11 Comparison of the Coefficients between Simple Linear Regression analysis of each predictor individually and Multiple Regression analysis

Variables	Standardized Coefficients in Multiple Regression (enter method)	Standardized Coefficients in Multiple Regression (stepwise method)	Standardized Coefficients in Simple Linear Regression
	Beta		Beta
Stay/Leave			
Family members	-.025		.010
Income	.027		.074
Religiosity	.256	.237	.850
Economic dependency	.083		.759
Type of abuse	-.064		-.761
Social support	-.183	-.157	-.875
Patriarchal values	.470	.578	.921
Depression	-.146		.717
Self-esteem	-.085		-.715

The results showed in table 11 explained that patriarchal values, social support, and religiosity had the highest coefficients in both: simple linear regression and multiple regression analysis

(stepwise and enter methods). In addition, income and family member reported the lowest coefficients in the same approach of multiple regression with enter method analysis.

Thus, within these nine predictor variables the criterion stay/leave was explained significantly only by patriarchal values, religiosity, social support, and depression. The three predictors on stepwise method were validated with enter method and simple linear regression. The differences between methods were that stepwise selectively decided the best predictors, stepwise deleted the less significant predictor (depression with $p=.04$), which was on the borderline of $p<.05$ reported in enter method and left the most significant predictors: patriarchal values, religiosity and social support.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Stay/Leave Decision

Significant predictors of Stay/Leave Decision were identified in a model-building, model-testing multiple analysis procedure. Stepwise procedure identified three different sets of significant predictors of stay/Leave decision. For the stay/leave variable, a combination of patriarchal values, religiosity, and social support were found to contribute 87.1% (86.8% adjusted) of the shared variance. Increases of patriarchal values and religiosity predicted an increase in the decision to stay. Decreases in patriarchal values and religiosity predicted increases in the decision to leave. On the other hand, increase in social support predicted increase in the decision to leave and decrease in social support predicted increase in the decision to stay.

In an effort to test the models, significant unique predictors of patriarchal values, religiosity, social support, and depression were further identified. Thus, with this sample and this set of variables, the decision for staying in an abusive relationship was predicted by the increase in patriarchal values, religiosity, and depression, and the decrease of social support. On the other

hand, decision for leaving an abusive relationship was predicted by decrease on patriarchal values, religiosity, and depression but increasing social support.

In an attempt to have a better framework view of the strongest predictors, a correlation analysis was conducted. Findings of strong correlations between patriarchal values, social support, religiosity, and depression were found. Depression was the least scored variable as seen in the analysis corresponding to the predictors in stepwise method. Nevertheless, because the literature review (APA, 1994; Lammoglia, 1995; Beck, 1987; Bernal, 2000; Jones, 1994; Barnett, 2001) supports this variable as a strong predictor in abused women's stay/leave decision, the enter method findings will be considered in the final analysis in chapter V.

Chapter IV had described the sample and summarized the results of data analyses. An examination of all variables in the study and their relationships with other variables were presented. Chapter V will present a discussion of the findings and the implications for researchers, clinicians and policy makers involved in the care of abused women.