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A Phenomenological Research Study on the Effects of Paternal Abandonment on Hispanic Women in South Florida and their Conflict Management Skills

by

Diana Herrera

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Nova Southeastern University
2019

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March 2019

Nova Southeastern University
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

This dissertation was submitted by Diana Herrera under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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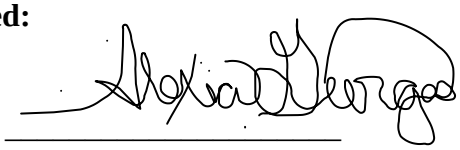

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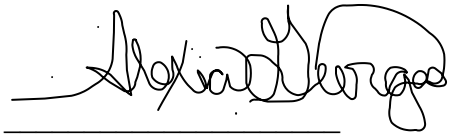

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Date of Final Approval

Alexia Georgakopoulos, Ph.D.
Chair

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to the participants in this study. Without them, this study would have not been possible. To all those women who have experienced and will experience father abandonment, I hope this research is helpful in understanding this phenomenon. Especially, I would like to dedicate this study to the most important women in my life: my mother, for being a single mother working many jobs and still supporting your daughters every day of your life; my sister, for growing up without a father and still becoming a strong and hard working woman; and my daughter, to guide you and show you that growing up without a father is not an obstacle but a motivation to help you become anything you want to be in life.

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Abstract

Even though women who have been abandoned by their fathers at a young age are more likely to exhibit destructive behaviors as adults, there are cases in which women develop new social skills and become successful at building new relationships (Stolberg, Complair & Wells, 1987). The main purpose for this phenomenological research was to understand the shared experiences of Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers at a young age and explore their conflict management skills. This research was guided by the following research question: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers before the age of seven? Through conducting and analyzing phenomenological interviews with 25 participants and using the lenses of attachment theory, social construct and phenomenology, this research will contribute to scholarship in different arenas. Findings of this research used the participant's shared recommendations and suggestions as a means for discussion to help women who were abandoned as children prevent and cope with conflict effectively. Finally, this research will help social scientists understand whether being abandoned by a father at a young age has any effects in a Hispanic woman's conflict resolution skills.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

This research explored father abandonment of Hispanic women through phenomenological analysis. Father abandonment at a young age can have several effects on a child's self-esteem and intimacy as well as premature development, early sexual activity and unstable relationships as adults (Dennis, 1998; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Comings et. al, 2002; McGolerick, 2012). This is contrary to children who experience a peaceful environment when growing up who show delayed development, sexual activity and they take their time building stable relationships (Comings et al., 2002). However, there are several factors that can influence a child's view of the world. Some of those factors include cultural beliefs, attitudes, and values. Therefore, whether a child can adjust to an event such as abandonment can depend on society's outlook of family, marriage, women's status and children's rights (Kurdek, 1981). Furthermore, Stolberg, Complair and Wells (1987) added that there are factors that can actually help in a child's development by placing an emphasis on the demands of having to learn new skills. For example, children would have to develop new social skills to create new relationships and communication skills to express their feelings. Lastly, children would also have to develop internal control skills due to the lack of attention from his parents. Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger and Mas (1992) also added that the ability to develop new skills help children interact effectively with parents and friends which then results in the ability to manage stress effectively. For this reason, the main purpose of this phenomenology is to understand how Hispanic women who have been abandoned by their fathers before the age of 7 deal with conflict and to find out if in fact the research is correct.

Statement of the Problem

Even though the literature review has shown that a father plays an important role in the development of a daughter, little attention has been paid to how daughters who have been abandoned by their fathers at a young age grow up to deal with conflict. In this research, the researcher's intent was to identify whether Hispanic women who have been abandoned by their fathers at a young age would have difficulties dealing with conflict effectively. Research by Goossen (2009) & Smith (n.d.) suggest that girls who grow up without a father are more susceptible to destructive behaviors and that abandonment issues are difficult to solve. In addition, Krohn & Bogan (2001) also added that abandonment issues are expressed through actions such as getting upset when their boyfriend or significant other arrives late. Other examples include becoming possessive or jealous of their boyfriend's time or simply obsessing about the idea that he could cheat on them. A trigger could be that he does not answer his phone when is called or simply becoming extremely depressed when the relationship has ended. Smith (n.d.) added that in general, relationships from which the woman suffers from abandonment issues often tend to fight frequently, loudly and violently. One of the symptoms in relationships of abandoned women is to cut off, betray or abandon the relationship themselves. Finally, women with abandonment issues grow up to have difficulties in relationships with others (Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Kalmijn, 2015). However, other studies (Stolberg et al., 1987) contradict these findings. Stolberg et al. (1987) indicate that a way in which a child behaves has a lot to do with their environment and social support rather than whether or not the child is raised with one or two parents. Stolberg et al. (1987), also stated that it is important to look at each child individually and not make general assumptions because

every child reacts differently to specific situations and experiences. In order to fully understand this research, it is important to know what abandonment means.

According to the definition of child abandonment, this occurs when a parent, guardian or person in charge leaves a child without caring about the child's physical or mental welfare. In other words, child abandonment involves leaving a child in the care of another person without having any communication with the child. Also, child abandonment means to be absent from the home for an amount of time that creates risks and severe harm to the child left at home. Finally, child abandonment means to not be willing to care and support for the child ("Child Abandonment", n.d.). Most important, abandonment is about the loss of love and connectedness and it can take many forms such as desertion, divorce or death (Well, n.d.). Although child abandonment is a common event, little research has been done on such social matter (Burnstein, 1981). Therefore, there is a need for research to be done on the aspects of social behavior on women who have experienced child abandonment at a young age.

The proposed research will contribute to the field of conflict resolution in that it will look at the way in which conflict exists on women who were abandoned by their fathers. As a result, this research will help the human services field as well as human resource management, psychology and counseling, social services and marriage and family therapy with an understanding about this particular population's experiences and perceptions about their relationships and conflict interactions with others. Once women are able to identify their conflict styles, it will benefit their relationships with others. Furthermore, increasing knowledge about women's experiences of conflict after abandonment from their fathers could be beneficial to the development of treatment

programs that target specific conflict behaviors. Also, this research will contribute in order to establish school-based programs for girls and therapeutic interventions for girls who display abandonment issues. Experiences from this population can be used in future interventions with younger abandoned women. Lastly, a topic of interest could be to create education classes for mothers who have children who have been abandoned by their fathers.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to describe and understand the conflict management skills of Hispanic women who have experienced paternal abandonment at a young age because there exist different views on how women may react to conflict. For the purpose of this research, two themes were discussed: conflict and abandonment.

Folger, Poole & Stutman (2009) defined conflict as the interaction between people who perceive things differently. The most important aspect of conflict is that it involves human interaction. Conflict is defined by how individuals behave with one another, particularly through the use of verbal and nonverbal communication. Communication is the most important aspect of all interpersonal conflict. Communication and conflict are related in different ways: communication can create conflict; communication reflects conflict; and communication is the source for positive or negative management of conflict (Hocker, 2007). The actions taken in a conflict are called conflict styles.

Jones & Brinkert (2008) defined a conflict style as a tendency or behavior for a specific conflict situation. They described a five-style conflict model as the most

common, which includes: avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising and collaborating. Avoiding is to act in a way in which the conflict is not addressed. This type of style shows very low concern for one self and others. Accommodating is to accept the other person's position or interest over yours. This style shows low concern for oneself but high for the other person. Competing is defined as seeing your interests or concerns as priority over the other party's interests or concerns. This style shows a high concern for oneself and low for the other party. Compromising is where both parties give in a little in their interests and concerns. This type of style shows moderate concern for both oneself and the other party. Last but not least, collaborating means that all the parties try to work together to meet all or most of their interests and positions. Collaboration shows a high concern for both parties (Jones, T. & Brinkert, R., 2008). Knowing the five-style conflict styles is important in the process of analyzing how Latin women react to conflict in any particular situation. Hocker (2007) also added that by having a choice of styles one can enhance their chances for productive conflict. By understanding their process of dealing with conflict, experts in the field of psychology can help them identify techniques that would target a specific conflict style.

Augsburger (1992) explained that conflict can either be destructive or constructive. A conflict is destructive when all the parties are not happy with the outcomes and feel as if they have lost as a result of the conflict. Destructive conflict has the four following tendencies on the individuals: 1. Increase the number of problems, increase the number of parties involved in the conflict, add negative attitudes and add more excuses that contribute to the conflict; 2. Separate the conflict from its roots, so that it can continue after the causes are forgotten; 3. Grow the conflict by using destructive

strategies such as threats, coercion and deception; 4. Use authoritative leadership through the separation of opinions. In destructive conflict, individuals are less flexible because their goals tend to be limited, not allowing room for creativity. Furthermore, individuals are trying to defeat each other at any cost possible (Folger etl., 2009).

On the other hand, Augsburger (1992) added that a conflict is constructive when all parties are happy or satisfied and feel they have gained as a result of the conflict. The more satisfaction, the more constructive the conflict is. Constructive conflict also has four tendencies. The individuals are able to: 1. Define the conflict so that it can be clearly stated and resolved; 2. Do not introduce new issues into the conflict until the original issue has been resolved; 3. In order to resolve the conflict, tactics such as problem solving and controlled competition should be used; 4. Be confident in the leadership that puts importance on positive outcomes.

In Constructive conflict, individuals are more flexible by participating in a range of behaviors in order to reach a mutual solution (Folger etl., 2009). In addition, conflict has some positive approaches to interactions (Hocker, 2007). Even though conflict is not given credit for having a positive impact on certain interactions, it is important to acknowledge them. For example, Hocker (2007) stated that conflict is an inevitable interaction in life, therefore learning a constructive way to deal with conflict is a fact of life. Second, conflict can be used as a way to bring problems afloat. Third, conflict helps people come together and clarify expectations. Lastly, conflict can solve resentments and help people understand each other. It is important to understand one's emotions in order to understand others.

Folger etl. (2009) & Weeks (1992) stated that feelings and emotions are important components of conflict. In most instance, feelings and emotions impact conflict because they evoke behavioral responses. For example, the most typical negative emotion related to conflict is anger. Anger is triggered when an individual feels that his or her goals are being jeopardized by others. Causes of anger include threats, aggression, and unfairness or inequality. Typical responses to anger are physical attacks, verbal attacks and nonverbal expressions of disapproval. Folger etl. (2009) described another negative emotion that arise in conflict as fear. Fear occurs when harm is perceived. Causes include physical aggression, verbal aggression, threats or loss of a person or a thing. The behavior associated with fear is flight, withdrawing, accommodating and avoidance. The third negative emotion that occurs during conflict is hurt. Hurt occurs when someone feels psychologically wounded by someone else. Causes of hurt include accusations, negative evaluations, lies and betrayal (Folger etl., 2009).

Many agreed that the way in which individuals communicate has a lot do on their gender, whether they are males or females (Gray, 2004; Augsburger, 1992). In order to understand the differences in conflict, Augsburger (1992) stated that one must first understand the differences of power in gender to understand gender differences in conflict. The main notion about power, is that it is most of the time controlled by men. The argument states that if a woman cannot be trusted the same way a man can be trusted on certain matters, then she cannot be considered equal to a man when a decision needs to be made over two disagreeing parties (Augsburger, 1992). The main question about male and female power asks: is this notion part of nature or has it been created through time? The answer involved a blend of notions: power is a blend that involves the

environment, physical, emotional, religious and political needs that make up culture. Culture plays an important role in defining gender power as it guides behavior. Such behavior shapes the development and growth of young women and men from which cultures they will see for the rest of their lives (Augsburger, 1992).

Therefore, to answer the main question about male and female power: is this notion part of nature or nurtured? The answer is that male dominance is cultural. It is not human but learned. This absolutely contradicts any notions of human quality such as dignity, worth and freedom. Female patterns of conflict management are superior to male styles. Therefore, it is necessary to learn from both genders (Augsburger, 1992). The main behavior tendencies of conflict between men and women are: women tend to use less violence in relationships and political matters. Violence represents male dominance. Instead, women tend to use negotiation and nonviolent techniques rather than power, coercion and violence. On the other hand, men are competitive and irritable. They distance themselves through macho, power styles that put themselves at the extremes of the spectrum such as either win or lose conflict styles (Augsburger, 1992).

Eldridge, K; Sevier, M; Jones, J; Atkins, D & Christensen, A. (2007) explained how women are in more demanding roles and men in withdrawing roles when in a dispute. In other words, women look for interaction whereas men resist dialogue. Women are usually more demanding than men because men are more easily satisfied than women. By demanding women are described as criticizing, nagging and making demands. Withdrawal for men is described as avoiding confrontation and becoming silent (Siffert, A. & Schwarz, B., 2011). In sum, women are more grounded with their identity making them productive at relationships (Augsburger, 1992).

The second main theme discussed in this study was that of abandonment. According to the Encyclopedia of Children's Health (2012), Dennis (1998) and Condrell (2003) fathers abandon their children in different ways: through divorce, death, military duty, addictions, incarceration and chronic physical or mental illness. Some reasons are considered honorable as the one where the father has to leave to serve his country. While other reasons are seemed as disgracing and stigmatizing such as the one where the father has to leave for reasons such as incarceration or a father who tries to commit suicide. In general, children suffer from some degree of abandonment at one time or another. However, not all children are able to handle the separation whether it is with treatment or without treatment and end up having difficulties sustaining intimate relations with their own families by personalizing the rejection. Furthermore, Goossen (2009) added that a way a daughter loses her father has a significant impact on how she will view men. For example, girls who lose their fathers due to divorce or abandonment are harder on their fathers and on the opposite sex. However, if a girl loses her father to death, she would have a positive view about her father even though she would still feel the impact of his abandonment and in return still avoid other men. In other words, girls who have little contact with their fathers, grow to have difficulties forming long lasting relationship. Whereas those who had contact with a father grow up and learn to interact with males by using the father-daughter relationship as a model. If the relationship or model was positive, a girl will view males with confidence and trust. If the relationship or model is negative, the girl will view males with doubt and fear (Goossen, 2009.).

Dennis (1998) and Krohn & Bogan (2001) stated that fathers abandonment impacts the child's ability to develop and sustain positive, self-worth relationships as well

as feeling inferior and feeling like something is wrong with them. Dennis (1998) further questions: how can a child grow and develop intimate bonds with others when they never had a model from their father for emotional intimacy? The abandoned child develops two types of intense feelings towards their absent fathers: emotional reactivity or over-identification with their father. The first one, emotional reactivity refers to the feeling of never wanting to be like him, the father. This emotion leads the child to reject the importance of the father resulting in denial and grief. It is not until the child identifies her unfulfilled needs for her father that she would begin to develop healthy intimate relationships with others. In the second type of emotion, over-identification, the child idolizes and worships the absent father. The child bases her worships on the fantasies that she wishes for. The child creates a fantasy image from pieces of information that was gathered about the father.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In this section is a review of the literature that is most important in order to have further understanding of the relationship between Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers at a young age and their conflict management skills. In order to provide a well-rounded research study, the following topics were discussed: Latinos vs. Hispanics, a description of the difference between the two terms were discussed to understand why the study choose one over the other; Hispanic American culture was selected to understand more about the culture; Hispanic women in the United States was included as it was important to understand the background of Hispanic women and the impacts they had in the United States; divorce in the Latin American culture was described to understand the impact divorce had on the culture; the topic of divorce and children provided and insight as to the implications divorced has on children; divorce and women also provided and insight as to the effects divorce had on women; father abandonment and its effects was used to explain how fathers played an important role in a woman's life; and different states of a daughter's development shows how abandonment is viewed differently according to the stages of a woman's development . Furthermore, in order to explain the problem, the following theories were explained in depth: attachment theory, social construction theory and phenomenology as a theory.

Latinos vs. Hispanics

The term Latino has been around for some time now among those who advocate to bring political and social change. The term was used to keep together Latino groups whose identity was constructed by the concerns of the Spanish-speaking population

regarding education, politics and economy. Even though Chicanos wanted to popularize the word, over Spanish-American, with the blessing of many politicians, the U.S. Census Bureau and other government agencies replaced it with the term Hispanic (Calderon, 1992). "The term Hispanic comes from the Latin word for Iberia, Hispania" (Haverluck, 1997, p.134).

According to Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez (2002), Latinos are considered a mixed-race whose mix comes from "mestizo" or "mulato", which is a mix of the Spanish with indigenous Native Americans or African slaves. Latinos began to be counted in the census back in 1930 and it was in 1990 when "Hispanics" began to be counted. "Hispanic" is a label created to refer to people with family origins from Mexico, Central or South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Spain. The term "Latino" refers to the same group as "Hispanics" except those from Spanish-European ancestry (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). Furthermore, Portes & MacLeod (1996) added that the label "Hispanic" came about by the US Census to organize the numbers of Latin-American population in the United States. Also, Haverluck (1997) argued that Hispanic was based on history and geography than ethnicity because Hispanics can be from any race.

The United States Census Bureau (2010) defined "Hispanic" or "Latino" as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture regardless of race. In addition, Vaquera & Kao (2006) stated that the U.S. government classifies Hispanics as members of any ethnic group that can be of any race. Terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000; Haverluck, 1997; Oboler & Gonzalez, 2005). Furthermore, Oboler & Gonzalez (2005)

added that “Latinos” and “Hispanics” are terms used to label individuals of a particular group who may use one or the other label depending on their ideologies.

An increase in the Hispanic population was the main cause for more than half of the growth of the total population in the United States between 2000 and 2010. Data from 2010 reported that 308.7 million people reside in the United States of which 50.5 million (16%) were Hispanic or Latino. The Mexican population increased from 20.6 million to 31.8 million (54%) making them the Hispanic group with the largest increase. Puerto Ricans grew from 3.4 to 4.6 million (36%) and Cubans grew from 1.2 to 1.8 million (44%) in 2010. Other Hispanics increased from 10.0 to 12.3 million (22%). Among those who were classified as Other Hispanic, 1.4 were Dominican origin, 4.0 million were of Central American origin (not Mexican) 2.8 million were of South American origin and 635,000 were Spaniards. Vaquera & Kao (2006) & Haverluck (1997) summed these numbers as most Hispanics coming from Mexico, with significant numbers also coming from Puerto Rico and Cuba.

California with 27.8%, Texas with 18.7%, and Florida with 8.4% are the three states where over half of the Hispanic population in the United States reside. Other states with Hispanics include: New York with 6.8%, Illinois with 4.0%, Arizona with 3.8%, New Jersey with 3.1%, Colorado with 2.1% and other states with 25.4% (U.S Census Bureau, 2010).

In the previous section, the study was able to identify the differences between “Hispanic” and “Latino” and for purposes of this research, the researcher decided to use “Hispanic” since the word can be used interchangeably with “Latino” and it encompasses

all members of this ethnic group that can be of any race. In the next section, characteristics of the Hispanic American culture will be listed.

Hispanic American Culture

Riggio & Valenzuela (2010) stated that ethnicity is a key element in understanding interactions between family members because of culture values. Hispanic families specifically tend to focus on family unity and harmony. Furthermore, parents serve as emotional support to their children. Hispanic families tend to exhibit frequent interaction among its family members and the family is viewed as the best source for advising and helping each other. The goal of socialization in the Hispanic family is to develop individuals who are able to function as adults in a social group. It is through the process of socialization that Hispanic children learn their attitudes, beliefs and roles that set them up as functional human beings. For Hispanics, family is considered the most important aspect of socialization (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). Riggi & Valenzuela (2010) also added that modern Hispanic parents share child rearing, decision making and household responsibilities. Fathers are considered the heart of the family and are very well respected among family members. Mothers are viewed as self-sacrificing agents and usually tend to satisfy others before their own needs. Due to the emphasis that family members put on close relationships, the quality of the interactions between parents and children are considered to be extremely important for the social and psychological development among Latin American children (Riggio & Valenzuela, 2010).

According to Umana-Taylor and Fine (2003), women's common age for first marriage is at 25. Recent research shows that young adults are waiting longer to get married. Women's median age for marriage is at 27 (Raley, Sweeney, & Wondra, 2015).

Hispanic families tend to have an average of 3.71 members compared to 2.97 members for White and 3.31 members for Black families. Puerto Rican women tend to have their first child before marriage, while Mexican and Cuban women wait to be married in order to have their first child. Hispanic families tend to be a single parent home compare to White families. What this means is that these single-family homes create a large percentage of children who grow up in single family homes, especially since Hispanics tend to have large families (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). Different cultural backgrounds influence the way in which individuals commit to each other and the reasons why they commit to each other. For example, this research found that Anglos find belongingness and trust aspects of commitment whereas Hispanics find moral commitment aspects more important. For Hispanics, moral commitment is when their own value system such as right from wrong influence their decision of whether to stay in the relationship. For Americans, it is easier to end a dating relationship than it is to end a marriage. However, for Hispanics ending a dating relationship is not as easy as it is for Anglos. Because Hispanics value the institution of a family, they tend to do less casual dating or end dating when they know it will not lead to marriage. In addition, Umana-Taylor & Fine (2003) stated that structural commitment plays an important role in relationships for Hispanics. Structural commitment is when the environment makes it difficult to leave the relationship. Social reaction is a source of structural commitment and it deals with the social pressure of staying in a relationship. Due to the attachment that Hispanics have on their family members, social reactions affect the decisions Hispanics make about relationships. Hispanics value traditional views and behaviors about family life, therefore they tend to demonstrate similar attitudes regarding dating.

Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez (2002), argued that there four values that distinguish Hispanics: *personalismo, familismo, marianismo* and *machismo*. The first value, *Personalismo* is about the emphasis Hispanic put into doing good and getting along with others. The second value, *Familismo* deals with family closeness, getting along with each other and contributing to the well-being of the family. South (1993) added that Hispanics tend to marry at a younger age than non-Hispanics. This is due to their *familistic* orientation. Familism deals with the attitudes, behaviors and family structure. It is believed to be the most important structure in the Hispanic Culture (Velez-Pastrana, Gonzalez-Rodriguez, & Borges-Hernandez, 2006). There are four aspects to *familism,* especially in the Mexican families: demographic, normative, structural and behavioral. Demographic familism deals with the demographics of a family such as family size. Normative familism deals with the values family members put on family unity. Structural familism deals with extended family members. Finally, behavioral familism refers to the way in which families interact (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). The third value, *marianismo* comes from the Catholic idea of the Virgin Mary to signify a mother's role and self-sacrifice for her children. In marianism, the mother-child bond is more important than the husband-wife bond. On the other hand, the four value, *machismo*, stresses a man's role not as a father but as head of the house (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). Velez-Pastrana, Gonzalez-Rodriguez, & Borges-Hernandez (2006) & Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez (2002) added that the idea to create a family differs between men and women in the Hispanic culture. For example, for men, the concept of *machismo* is a typical explanation. *Machismo* is a concept of dominance and superiority. Such concept demands submission among wives and children.

However, recent formulations argue a more positive view of men desiring a family and that is due to strong family bonds and responsibilities. Whereas before machismo was related to control, power and violence. It is now viewed with honor, respect and dignity creating a sense of personal accomplishment. For women, the idea to create a family was based on the concept of being submissive and dependent on the husband. Now, it is based on equality as it is to control ethnic differences and labor force experiences.

Now that there is an understanding of what the Hispanic American culture is like, it is important to dig deeper into understanding the cultural traits of Hispanic women in the United States.

Hispanic Women in the United States

According to the Latinas in the United States Encyclopedia (2006), Latina is a term used for all women of Latin America birth or heritage that includes women from North, Central, and South America and the Spanish speaking Caribbean. Mexicana and Mexicano are those born in Mexico and Mexican American means born in the United States. Chicana and Chicano are political terms that emerged from the Chicano student movement from the 1960s and 1970s. Nuyorican refers to Puerto Ricans born on the mainland, not just in New York. Whereas Puetorriqueno and Puertorriquena includes both the islanders as well as the Nuyoricans. Boricua means empowerment and unity for all Puerto Ricans (Ruiz & Korrol, 2006).

In her paper, “Hispanic Women in the United States, 2007”, Gonzalez (2008) mentioned that there are 30.1 million Hispanic adults in the United States and 48% of them are women. Half of all Hispanic women were born in the United States or born to a parent who is a United States citizen. The other 52% were born in countries other than

the United States. Most immigrant Hispanic women in the United States were born in Mexico. The majority of Hispanic women in the United States speak only English in the home or speak English very well. Hispanic women are less educated than non-Hispanic women. Most Hispanic women are in the labor force, they are either employed or seeking employment. Hispanic women are much more likely than non-Hispanic women to live in a lower-income household. Hispanic women are nearly twice as likely as non-Hispanic women to live in poverty. Over the last decades, Hispanic women have suffered the most changes in the family system: they are less likely to be married, more likely to be heads of households and more likely to have children at younger ages (Cauce & Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002). This study believed that it was important to understand the role that Hispanic women played in the United States in order to have a more complete understand of the Hispanic culture as a whole. Next is a description of divorce in the Hispanic American Culture.

Divorce in the Latin American Culture

In the Hispanic culture, divorce has a lower rate than the rest of the population of the United States. Hispanics tend to see divorce as the last resource. According to the U.S Census Bureau (2018), the divorce rate per 1,000 Hispanic women is 8.9. This rate is lower compared to that of all other racial and ethnic groups which are at 11.6 divorces per 1,000 women. The highest rate of divorce is among women with come college education (Gibbs & Payne, 2011). Therefore, education plays an important role with divorce rates. Hispanics with less education tend to stay married. On the other hand, those with more education are more likely to divorce. Ho (1987) further stated that divorce seems to be higher among educated Mexican-American females, which is the

opposite for Anglos, except for women with a graduate education. Mexican American women with higher levels of education tend to be more emerged into the American culture therefore are more accepting of separation and divorce.

The low rates of divorce in Hispanic families have a lot to do with the idea of familism, where self-worth is dependent on one's relationship with one's family. In other words, familism occurs when a family's values are held higher than values of the individual member of the family. Traditionally, Hispanics view marriage as a family affair and it cannot be dissolved without the approval from both families. Furthermore, most Hispanics come from the religion of Catholicism which prohibits divorce in families (Ho, 1987). Now that we have a better understanding of how Hispanics view divorce, this study finds it extremely important to address the implications divorce has on children.

Divorce and Children

Of all the changes in life, divorce has been considered by parents and children as one of the most stressful life events (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999; Amato, 2010). Over the last decade, research on divorce has changed tremendously. Previous research was based on two assumptions: first, it was assumed that two-parent family structure was necessary for successful child socialization and that the absence of a father would have a serious impact on child development; second, divorce has been a traumatic event that has caused harm to children's adjustment (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). In addition, in his article "The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children", Amato (2000) describeed how past scholars argued that a two-parent home is the correct institution of a family. Such establishment provides adults with a sense of

meaning, stability and security and children with the resources to grow into healthy, productive human beings needed to be successful in life. This idea supports the fact that single-parent homes contribute to social problems, substance abuse and a declining in education. However, in the same article, Amato (2000) also mentioned that current scholars find that adults find satisfaction and children develop positively in other types of family structures. Although divorce represents a negative impact on the family, it is only temporary. The temporary stress caused by the divorce, represents a second chance to achieve happiness for adults and an escape for children from the dysfunctional home environment. Recent studies have also focused more on the patterns of adjustment and interactions that support the adjustment of children (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). In order to understand those patterns of adjustment, it is important to remember how children are impacted by divorce. There are several factors that can influence a child's response to divorce. Some of those factors include cultural beliefs, attitudes, and values. Therefore, whether a child can adjust to such an event can depend on society's outlook of family, marriage, women's status and children's rights. Furthermore, Stolberg, Complair and Wells (1987) added that there are two processes that influence a child's adjustment to divorce: one, the lack of one parent; second, the external variable that affects them. Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan (1999) added that after a divorce, children experience problems such as depression, anxiety, anger, non-compliance and a drop-in school performance. However, despite all the difficulties of dealing with parental divorce, most children are resilient and are able to adapt to divorce (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). Also, these factors actually help in the child's development by placing an emphasis on the demands of having to learn new skills. For example, children

would have to develop new social skills to create new relationships and communication skills to express their feelings. Lastly, children would also have to develop internal control skills due to the lack of attention from his parents (Stolberg, Complair and Wells, 1987). Portes, Howell, Brown, Eichenberger and Mas (1992) also added that the ability to develop new skills help children interact effectively with parents and friends which then results in the ability to manage stress effectively. Furthermore, Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan (1999), stated that the effects of divorce are not all negative. When a child moves from a conflicting, abusive and neglecting family to a calmer one, they show less problems following divorce, particularly this is true for girls who may develop into competent individuals with less behavior problems. However, divorce not only impacts children, but it also causes effects on women.

Divorce and Women

Gender has been one of the characteristics that researchers have found interest in due to the vulnerability that women and children face of the changes and challenges that divorce bring into the home. Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan (1999), suggested that behavior problems in children from divorced parents are more apparent on girls than on boys. Single parenthood has a greater impact on the education success and well-being of adolescent girls. However, in response to divorce, girls tend to show exceptional competence after a divorce. Girls benefit from having to deal with the responsibilities, independence and challenges that arise from parental divorce when in a supportive environment. For most of these young girls, when they reach adulthood, they have a better sense of what failure looks like giving them upper hand at what they would want in their relationships with men (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1999). Reed, Lucier-Greer,

& Parker (2016) added that the presence of a social support system such as aunts, uncles, grandparents and a peer network are also an important source of support that protects women from negative outcomes from the experience of parental divorce. Such support can provide counsel, companionship, and emotional support.

When girls reach adulthood and it is time for them to divorce, Amato (2000) added that women feel much better when they end their relationship with their husbands. Although divorce brings many negative strains, it can also have positive consequences when couples resolve their issues successfully. Couples who end their distressed marriages feel happier after divorce (Bourassa, Sbarra, & Whisman, 2015). For most mothers, divorce provides them with an opportunity to improve their careers and social lives. Even though some scholars might argue that divorce affect a woman's psychological well-being, no evidence shows that one gender is more vulnerable than the other after divorce. However, it would be safe to say that economic consequences are greater for women than for men following divorce (Amato, 2010; Bryan, 1999; Duffy, Thomas, & Trayner, 2002). In a study conducted by Bianchi and colleagues, they found that following divorce, mothers had a 36% decline in standard of living, whereas men had a 28% increase. Such a difference showed how divorced women reported to have more financial difficulties such as not being able to pay bills. A cause for such difference is because women usually do not have a steady work history and experience more wage and employment discrimination compared to men. However, in a study conducted by Duffy, Thomas, & Trayner (2002) on "Women's Reflections on Divorce-10 Years Later", the results showed that women reported that their lives had improved showing high levels of self-esteem, control of their lives and overall assessment of life. For these women,

accepting single parenting was a positive impact on their adjustment to divorce giving them personal strength.

To that end, one of the central research questions will be:

Research Question

What are the lived experiences of Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers before the age of seven?

Father Abandonment and its Effects

Father abandonment and its effects were deemed important topics for this study because it is necessary to understand the meaning of father abandonment and the implications it has. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2017) in 2017, there were 2.9 divorces for every 1,000 population and in the state of Florida, there were 3.6 divorces for every 1,000 population. According to these figures, divorce has declined and if the number continue dropping, only one third of American marriages will end up in divorce. However, divorce rates are higher on some groups than for others. About 39 percent of men with a high school education or less divorce or remarry in their lifetimes, compared to 37 percent of women with a similar education. As opposed to roughly 29 percent of women and 28 percent of men with a bachelor's degree getting divorced (Swanson, 2016). Americans in the late 20s have a less than 50% chance of getting divorced. In 1992 there were 4.8 divorces per 1,000 population. In 2017 those numbers dropped to 2.9 divorces per 1,000 population. For most millennials, they rather obtain a degree before getting married. 1 in 4 children in the U.S. live without a father. More specifically, Riggio & Valenzuela (2010) add that 41% of Latin American children are raised in single parent homes. Furthermore, at least 150,000 divorces will

occur every year or 1 in 7 will end in custody battles. As if that is not enough, the number of single parents has quadrupled since 1960 (Harvey & Pauwels, 1999; Condrell, 2003). Furthermore, Amato (2010) added that at the end of the 20th century 43% to 46% of marriages are predicted to end in divorce. Even though divorce has played a major role in marriage in the last decade, it is important to recognize that at times divorce can be a good thing for the child's well-being. When there is much conflict in a marriage, divorce can provide a sense of relief to the child. In a conflicting household, when parents' divorce, the child is able to accept a single parent family with a better attitude (Kalmijn, 2015; Cui et al., 2010). However, it is when the father completely leaves the home and has no contact with the child that brings problems to the development of the child. This review will analyze a woman's effects of father abandonment at a young age.

The predominant number of absent fathers across cultures creates problems to the families of the abandoned children (Balcom, 1998). During the nineteen century, the main reason why fathers left home was because of economic reasons. One of the reasons fathers are absent from their children's lives was due to society's impact on the family. Men had to work long hours outside the home which created alienation from the father (Balcom, 1998). Furthermore, social and economic institutions do not support fathers who after divorce wish to stay an active father. Those who seek joint custody find themselves working less hours, earning less money and are ultimately powerless. For these reasons, fathers become less involved in their children's lives after a divorce. Father abandonment can create severe effects on a child's self-esteem and intimacy (Balcom, 1998; Dennis, 1998; Krohn & Bogan, 2001; Comings et. al, 2002; McGolerick, 2012). Children who have been abandoned by their fathers at a young age, suffer from

emotional attachments, problems recognizing their feelings and communicating with their adult partners (Dennis, 1998).

Dennis (1998) and Krohn & Bogan (2001) agreed that an absent father is one who when he leaves does not provide any explanations to the children as to why he is leaving home. Another aspect of the absent father is that he does not stay in contact with his children and in return the children feel disconnected and abandoned. Mancini (2010) and Dennis (1998) described an opposite example of an absent father as one who is in the military and tells his children that he is leaving to perform his military service duty. He maintains in contact in several ways such as letter, phone calls and lets them know of his return date. However, Dennis (1998) further explained how this is an example of a physically absent father but not emotionally or psychologically absent father. Through his lack of communication, the father conveys powerful messages to his children to hide their feelings from others.

Dennis (1998) includeed that in addition to impacting a child's ability to develop and sustain intimate relationship, an absent father can also impact a child's sense of worthiness throughout the child's lives. In other words, a child may create a sense of distrust and instability in relationships but more deeply, girls tend to have low self-esteem. Questions about why the father left creates doubts about his value to others. Abandonment can also create feelings of shame and stigma. Shame is when a person feels worthless and inadequate affecting an individual's entire life. A feeling of shame creates conflict with the ability to communicate and the ability to access the child's needs and emotions. Shame constrains the ability to express their feelings, which in turn makes the individual feel inferior and hidden (Dennis, 1998). To make things worse, girls, who

grow without a father, obtain a low self-esteem and need more attention and love from men. Consequently, it is not unusual to see girls who grow without a father, to cut themselves, scratch their skin or burn themselves. In most cases, these women act discriminately towards men who show them attention and end up being promiscuous, and bitter towards men (Condrell, 2003).

Fathers determine how girls view the opposite sex, and other views about the world. The bond between a father and a daughter has been considered the strongest bond in the world. If the daughter is able to experience the right role models in her mom and dad, then she will grow as an independent young woman. This is the reason why a father's involvement in his daughter's life is important for her health and development (Goossen, 2009).

Different Stages of a Daughter's Development

In her article, *The Dynamic Influence a Father has on a Daughter*, Nancy Morgan (n.d.) explained the importance fathers have on children in general. However, this is especially true for little girls. The relationship developed during the early years of a little girl establishes how well she would be at solving problems. They show less anxiety and withdrawn behaviors. Girls manage school stress better. For girls whose father show support and control tend to have higher academic success. A little girl's relationship with her father will make her feel cared for and loved if he shows affection and attention. Fathers can definitely shape their daughter's lives and even save them (Morgan, n.d.).

When a little girl becomes a teenager, the father's role remains of much significance: For instance, a father's involvement in a teenage girl will determine whether she will engage in premarital sex, drugs and alcohol. Daughters who experience

closed relationships with their dads experience less suicide attempts, depression, low self-esteem and other unhealthy behaviors. Fathers help daughters become independent, more competent and more successful. According to Morgan (n.d.) girls with positive relationships with their fathers wait longer to have sex, therefore they have lower rates of teen pregnancy. Unlike girls who grow up with the support of their fathers, those who do not get male attention from their fathers, grow to fill the void through sex and most times become involved in abusive relationships. By her mid-twenties, a daughter will size her boyfriend to her father. By her mid thirty's she will determine how many children she will have depending on the type of life she had with her dad. Lastly by the time she is seventy-five, the way she views her future will be based on the memories she has about her father. There will be many men in a girl's life, but her father's influence will be with her forever (Morgan, n.d.). Amato (2010); Riggio & Valenzuela (2010); Cui et al. (2010) also stated that children who are raised without a father compared who are raised with both parents tend to be less educated, have a more unstable well-being, report more problems with their own marriages that also result in divorce and tend to be less close to their parents.

The development of personality plays an important role in the field of psychology. Therefore, it is necessary to take into consideration all of the phases of a development of a woman. According to Landis & Bolles (1940), a 15-year-old girl who has never gone out with a boy shows different psychological attitudes from that of a 27-year-old woman who has had the same experiences. At 15 to 17 years of age, the average girl is still somewhat tied to her family emotionally, and economically and has not reached an independent adult status. At this age, girls show no interest in boys but rather

show more interest to members of the family or to girlfriends, and she shows an unfavorable attitude towards sex. At 18 to 21 years of age, the average girl has many friends and activities outside of the home, she is not fully independent of her family, she has had more experience with boys but has not been thinking in terms of marriage. At this age girls are somewhat autoerotic and narcissistic. At 22 years of age and beyond, the average woman has completely resolved her family ties and is free from any signs of narcissism and free from any unfavorable sex attitudes.

In sum, the literature review began by looking at the differences between Latinos and Hispanics. After a full description of each term, the study determined that the term Hispanic was the most appropriate as it includes all members of that ethnic group without discriminating locations. Secondly, the literature review discussed how important family is to socialization in the Hispanic culture. This study also found it important to discuss the role of Hispanic women in the United States and how they are defined. A description of how divorce is viewed in the Latin American Culture was presented and the impacts divorce has had on children and women. This section ends with two more significant topics for this study, father abandonment and its effects and the different stages of a daughter's development. Furthermore, because the study is a qualitative study, it must be understood through a theoretical context. Phenomenology is the research paradigm used in this study in order to understand father abandonment and its implications on conflict resolution. Attachment theory was used to explain the relationships between family members and romantic partners. Lastly, even though Social Construction Theory was used, it was mainly used for information purposes because this theory is a good predictor on relationships.

Theoretical Framework

The topic of father abandonment is a complex issue. Such topic is not a recent phenomenon. The topic of father abandonment has been discussed and researched for decades. Modern research has introduced a differing understanding of the impact that father abandonment has on the development of women and the way in which they deal with conflict. The goal of this section is to gain a perspective on the phenomenon of father abandonment and how it impacts conflict resolution through phenomenology, the interpretive lenses for the study; Attachment Theory and Social Construct Theory.

Phenomenology as a theory

This study is a qualitative study because it addresses everyday experiences of the research participants. For this study, a phenomenological approach has been used to analyze the data of the semi-structured interviews that took place during the research stage of the study. Phenomenology is considered a process as well as a method, and it is the main theory guiding this research. The procedure involves studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. In this process the researcher sets aside his own experiences in order to understand those of the participants in the study. Phenomenology was first introduced by the German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and it has a strong philosophical component to it (Creswell, 2007). In Phenomenology, the researcher explores the individual lived experiences of the key participants through unstructured interviews. The participants are chosen because of their unique experiences of growing up without a father. This research design is appropriate because the responses

of the participants are shared and used to educate child health professionals and social agencies about this phenomenon.

According to Creswell (2009) the two most well-known types of phenomenological research include transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology. For purposes of this study the researcher has chosen to use transcendental phenomenology because it uses a more systematic process in analyzing data. Transcendental phenomenology focuses more on the descriptions of the lived experiences rather than on the interpretations (Creswell, 2009). In transcendental phenomenology everything is perceived fresh and new. Therefore, it works well with bracketing, where the researcher sets aside his or her experiences to take a new and fresh perspective about the phenomenon being researched. However, that is not the only important factor of this type of phenomenology. In transcendental phenomenology, the researcher must identify a phenomenon, bracket out his experiences and collect data from several individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. The data is then analyzed by selecting only the most important statements and combines such statements into themes. Finally, the researcher develops textural descriptions, in other words descriptions of what the participants experienced and a structural description of their experiences which includes how they experienced the phenomenon such as the conditions, situations or context. By combining both the textural and structural description, the researcher is able to show the overall essence of the experience (Creswell, 2007).

During the bracketing process also known as *epoche*, where judgments are set aside, the researcher puts aside his or her own experiences and takes in a different perspective of the phenomenon being studied (Mouskatas, 1994; Creswell, 2007).

During the bracketing process, the researcher must identify his or her experiences of growing up without a father and the many different aspects it affects her life in order to move with the experiences of others. After a thorough examination of what her own experiences and biases may be, she would be able to move forward with the process of the phenomenological methodology.

When dealing with research, advances have been made to the human sciences to where now research can be represented through the use of guided experiences. In doing so, one must be very careful in measuring the phenomenon as accurate as possible. The goal of a good research is to reflect the world as it is. It is important for the researcher not to allow personal biases to get involved into his observations. The researcher must keep a good distance from the subject (Gergens, 2009). For purposes of this research, it is important to recognize that whatever the researcher does in the research will reflect his or her own values and traditions. However, the idea of this research is to know about the consequences of growing up without a father and to be able to identify factors that can help women deal with conflict effectively. The idea is to make predictions about the future and help control events in a way that will be beneficial to these women. At the end, it is the researcher's responsibility to clarify mixed opinions and come up with a clear solution or answer to the research questions. It is not the researcher's voice but the voices of the subjects being heard. Their realities are the ones being shared with the world of what it is like to live with such phenomenon (Gergens, 2009).

In order to clearly understand the process of this study, the researcher used Moustaka's (1994) nine principles for conducting human research: 1. The core of Phenomenology deals with how things really are, away from routines and preferences but

rather from logic and truth; 2. Phenomenology deals with totality. It looks at a phenomenon from many angels and perspectives until a universal vision of the essences of the phenomenon is accomplished; 3. Phenomenology looks for the essence through manifestations and reaches to the bottom line through a series of acts such as intuition, reflection, ideas, concepts and understandings; 4. Phenomenology deals with descriptions rather than on explanations. However, the descriptions must be as clear as possible to the event without leaving any details out. Descriptions are the most important aspects of phenomenology because they keep the phenomenon alive by giving it meaning by keeping its essence; 5. Questions are the principle strategies that guide a phenomenology. They give meaning and direction for theme formation and provide curiosity by what is being experienced. Phenomenological studies involve the researcher in a personal way by allowing him to find answers to important questions and by making a connection that would enable him to make a revelation for the future; 6. Subjectivity and objectivity mix together. Perceptions and experiences connect with one another. What one sees connects with how one sees it; 7. Bias is present throughout the investigation, and perceptions are present creating meanings; 8. Vital data in a scientific investigation is gathered through the use of reflections, judgements, thoughts, experience and intuitions; 9. The research question plays a critical role in the investigation. It must be well thought out as it is what guides the investigation. The research question should capture the audience's attention guiding them through the process by reflecting and learning. The question is present throughout the entire process and it provides a picture of the phenomenon.

This study used the theoretical context of phenomenology because its purpose was to capture the true essence of what it was like to be abandoned by a father at a young

age and how that affected a woman's conflict skills. Since Transcendental Phenomenology looks at a phenomenon in its totality, 25 Hispanic women were able to share their experiences through different angles and perspectives allowing for the study to reach a unified vision of the essences. Detailed descriptions were gathered through the use of intuition, reflection, experiences, and understanding. Finally, meaning was obtained through a carefully constructed research question which is what guided the entire study.

Attachment Theory

The researcher has chosen this theory to explain the "bonds and relationships that exists between family members and romantic partners" (Abascal, 2012, p.326) but it is not the main theory of this research. The researcher's intent is to use this theory in order to explain the concerns about intimate human relationships such as how individuals deal with conflict, what draws them together and what drives them apart (Rothbaum, F., Rosen, K., Ujiie, T., & Uchida, N., 2002). Rothbaum et al., (2002), stated that attachment theory focuses on the protection, care, and security of the individuals. The central idea is based on the interaction between one another and it is concerned with children and their development.

Attachment theory was introduced by British psychiatrist John Bowlby in 1951. Bowlby's attachment theory focused on how children formed emotional bonds with their caregivers (Abascal, 2012). Abascal (2012) added that a child's attachment system does not disappear, but it continues throughout their life span and it is shown in different ways. In some cases, the attachment style changes through adulthood (Davila, Burge & Hammen, 1997). Infants create a mental representation of their relationship with others,

specifically with their parents or caregivers (Shi, 2003). There are three types of caregivers: 1. Warm/Responsive-A warm and responsive parent is one who knows how to be loving and supportive but also knows when to back off; 2. Cold/Rejective- The parent is not very responsive to the relationship; a narcissist. A cold/rejective parent does not consider the child as a priority; 3. This type of parent is all over the place, one-minute loving, the next minute cold. For this parent, his own agenda is more important the child. Might love the child but does not always show it (Abascal, 2012).

According to the attachment theory, children who grow up in a household where the father is absent are not able to use their mothers as a basis for security in order to explore the environment (Rothbaum et al., 2002). Fathers are important in the formation of a child's sexual attitudes, sexual development and for the development of paternal attitudes. The phenomenon of a father being absent creates a sense of violence, delinquency and perversion in the physical and emotional state of a child (Botero, 2012). Rothbaum et al, (2002) added that these children also develop a sense of distress when separated from their mothers and when reunited fail at the attempt to get close. They also develop an exaggerated and babyish behavior, extreme expressions of need and attention and failure to be independent. If a child has a positive view of his infancy, he grows up thinking that he can do things on his own. Botero (2012) also added that a child who is well nurtured in a place where all his or her needs are met, will grow with a sense of security and trust which is a fundamental part of his or her development. However, if a child has a negative view of his infancy, he tends to rely on others who may or may not meet his needs. As a result, insecure adults compared to secure adults tend to be needier, clingy, and dependent on others and with a high anxiety level of being accepted by

others. As adults, these children become confused and preoccupied about their past attachment relationships and experiences. They cannot focus and instead jump from topic to topic with long descriptions of relational problems. If the cycle continues, these adults eventually have children who have an ambivalent attachment (Rothbaum et al., 2002). However, this might not happen in every case. In a study conducted by Cowen, Pedro-Carroll and Alpert-Gillis (1990), they found that children who had social support had fewer negative beliefs about their feelings towards the divorce and showed less negative behaviors and attitudes such as delinquency, disobedience, aggression, depression and anxiety. Dubow and Tisak (1989) added that children who develop social skills are more likely to cope with academic and behavioral problems such as acting out, learning problems, frustration, task orientation and assertiveness. Furthermore, girls are better at obtaining social support and to deal with stress than boys. Therefore, as long as the child is able to obtain social support, he or she can cope with divorce more effectively.

It is not surprising that attachment styles that are developed at childhood transfer over into adulthood and reflects their behavior when in romantic relationships (Abascal, Brucato, Stephenson, & Brucato, 2012). The three styles that describe how adults behave in intimate relationships are: 1. SECURE: the main theme across this attachment style is that of feeling comfortable. Secured individuals interpret episodes of disagreement less negatively than those who are anxiously attached. Adults when feeling secured do not show any concerns of abandonment or on becoming dependent on their partners. The main characteristics of this attachment style include trust, friendship and happiness. Secure adults have no problem seeking comfort and support from others. When married,

they understand the importance of accepting others for who they are which in return end up having happier and healthier relationships (Abascal, 2012; Simpson, 1990; Rico & Sierra, 2017). 2. AVOIDANT: the main theme with avoidant adults is distance. They frequently tend to keep a distance in order not to get hurt. Unlike secure adults, they are not comfortable getting close to others. Avoidant adults are not as concerned as secure adults in maintaining relationships and usually are quick at leaving them. The trait they value most is independence. One of their tendencies is to leave when feeling troubled instead of seeking support from others. Their relationships are bipolar with frequent highs and lows and they rather not get emotional involved (Abascal, 2012; Simpson, 1990). 3. ANXIOUS: Obsessive is the main trait of anxious adults. Anxious individuals are less confident about controlling their emotions when in conflict. The main characteristics of this attachment style include insecurity, distrust, jealousy, possessiveness and constant reassurance. A common theme with these adults is instability. A common reaction is to drive their partners to leave (Abascal, 2012; Simpson, 1990; Ricco & Sierra, 2017).

Often times individuals who suffer from attachment issues suffer from the "too close, too far" (Rothbaum et al., 2002, p. 336) syndrome. They go from one extreme to the next. In other words, some individuals desire to be in exaggerated close intimate relationships. Whereas others desire to maintain certain distance from romantic and affectionate relationships. While one individual wishes to have his or her needs met, the other one increases his defensive responses and distances himself from the relationship. The more they perform these behaviors, the more it becomes a cycle therefore, making the relationship more susceptible to conflict. The basis for conflict surrounds the idea of

discontent, deprivation and abandonment (Rothbaum et al., 2002; Cui et al., 2010; Simpson, 1990). In a study that examined the impact of secure, anxious and avoidant attachment styles on romantic relationships involving 144 couples showed that individuals that exhibit a secure attachment style tend to be involved in relationships that have high levels of trust, commitment and satisfaction. Individuals who showed avoidant attachment styles showed opposite characteristics from that of secure attachment styles (Simpson, 1990).

The difference between secure and insecure adults is that insecure adults are less likely to compromise, are more defensive and destructive when in conflict. They show low conflict resolution strategies: these individuals show high levels of distress, hostility and anxiety when dealing with conflict. In most cases their perceptions about their partner are negative and unhealthy (Rothbaum et al., 2002). Even though research studies have documented many negative impacts on children of divorced parents than on intact families, a study conducted by Hammond (1979) concluded that there were no significant differences on self-esteem on children of intact and divorced families. Furthermore, in a study titled Divorce in Urban Hispanic Families, Hinojosa (1998) found that there was no significant difference in mood, self-perception and perceptions of family composition between children who come from divorced families to those who came from intact families. In addition, the study also supported the fact that divorce did not have a negative impact on the children's self-perceptions. Lastly, the research also found that depression was not an effect on girls from divorced families and gave credit to the support from family members that increased family cohesion and minimized symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Not only are attachment styles that are developed at childhood transferred over into adulthood, but they also can also change because some people are more prone than others to change their attachment styles. For example, early personal and family dysfunction that could prevent the development of views can turn into an unstable attachment style in adulthood. Furthermore, attachment instability is associated to attachment insecurity. Individuals who shift attachment styles, are not certain about their level of security. In other words, being uncertain provides insecurity. In a study conducted to 155 women after high school graduation and 2 years after that showed how women who had an unstable personal history, personality disorder and came from an unbroken home are more prone to attachment changes. This study was consistent with other studies of instability that indicated that the highest rates of instability are among those individuals who classify themselves as anxious-ambivalent. These findings suggest that attachment and personality are related in adolescence and adulthood which explains why attachment theory was developed in part as a personality development theory (Davila, Burge & Hammen, 1997).

Through the lenses of attachment theory, one can understand the dynamics of a healthy family relationship versus a non-healthy family relationship. For example, in a family where there exist marital problems, it creates attachment issues for the children. In a household where the mother desires to be close, it pushes the father to be distant and or goes away. This type of behavior causes for the child to be trapped in their inadequate interaction. The son then creates an attachment behavior because of the mother's unresolved attachment needs. As the son seeks for security from his mother, he is left with attachment issues of security.

A question that rises from this theory is: how does security impact a child's development? Based on the descriptions above, if a child is raised with a stable and secured home, then he will grow to believe that his needs will be met through his own efforts. However, if a child is raised on an unstable and unsecured home, he will grow to rely on others who would want to satisfy or not their needs creating a sense of neediness, clinginess and dependency on others (Rothbaum et al., 2002).

Social Construction Theory

Social Construction Theory is being used for information purposes because it is a good prediction on relationships. However, I will let the participants speak and guide the study. One of the goals of social constructionists is to focus on processes that deal with the understanding of world lived experiences as well as how meanings are created based on the perspectives of those who live in it (Andrews, 2012; Gergen, 2009). Society is viewed both objectively and subjectively. The experience of society as objective reality is done through the interaction of people with the world and the world influencing their views. Such views impact an individual's routine and habits. For example, any repeated action turns into a pattern that is done without much effort after a long period of time. After a while, such patterns become routines. Such objectivity becomes continuous in an individual's patterns as they interact with others (Andrews, 2012). This is not far from an interaction that a woman who is raised without a father develops. Her interactions with her mother and others become a pattern as she matures. If those interactions are positive, then her patterns are positive, if they are negative, then her patterns are negative. For example, a father figure brings stability as a child develops. However, if that child is raised without a father some of the patterns she might develop include low self-esteem

that when full grown can turn into serious problems in her intimate relations. The repetition of destructive behavior becomes a pattern which in turn affects their intimate relationships. Cui et al. (2010) added that a child who experiences his or her parent's divorce can shape his or her attitudes towards divorce in future romantic relationships. In other words, experiencing such a traumatic event, the child creates cognitive representations, which consist of memories of the past and such experience can influence the child's belief, attitudes and expectations about himself and others in terms of romantic relationships.

The experience of society as subjective reality establishes identity and a place in society. It stated that our identity is created from social interactions rather than from inside the person, in other words, socialization. Socialization is developed from the interactions with others and how those interactions represent the idea of reality is then given meaning and internalized by individuals (Andrews, 2012). For example, if we look inside a family whose child is raised with both parents, one can see how such child grows up with a sense of stability. The interactions among the child and her parents help in the development of her own self-esteem and depending on how she interacts with them will determine how she interacts with the world. It is safe to say that based on such model, if a child has positive interactions with her parents, then she will have positive interactions with others. On the other hand, if a child has negative interactions with her parents, then she will have negative interactions with others.

Whether one sees through lenses of objective or subjective reality, one can see how important it is to have positive interactions early in life. Those interactions not only influence how we view the world around us, but it also influences behavior that turn into

repetitious patterns. Furthermore, it is important to recognize how socialization can influence one's interactions with others and how that can affect how we deal with situations.

According to Gergens (2009) social constructionist must have a shared reality. There must have an agreement of what exists. In doing so, individuals create a shared understanding of reality. Once individuals are able to agree on a reality, they create a foundation for what is right and what is wrong. This reality is created through the process of interactions such as talking and communicating with one another. When a father interacts with his daughter, he affirms the significance of their relationship. Their verbal constructions give meaning to their interactions. They not only construct together, but they live out of the interactions of such constructions. Through such interactions daughters are able to achieve a sense of order and understanding.

This study used the theoretical context of phenomenology as a theory to gain a perspective on the phenomenon of father abandonment and how it impacts conflict resolution through phenomenology. It also used the theoretical context of attachment theory in order to explain the concerns about intimate human relationships and individuals deal with conflict, what draws them together and what drives them apart. Based on the descriptions, if a child is raised with a stable and secured home, then he will grow to believe that his needs will be met through his own efforts. However, if a child is raised on an unstable and unsecured home, he will grow to rely on others who would want to satisfy or not their needs creating a sense of neediness, clinginess and dependency on others. Lastly, this study also used the theoretical context of social construct theory only as a basis of information as a predictor on relationships.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

In the literature review section, there was an overview of several studies that reflected the impact of father abandonment on Hispanic women. The literature review also suggested that little attention had been paid to how daughters who had been abandoned by their fathers at a young age grew up to deal with conflict. From this standpoint it was necessary to conduct a study to examine whether Hispanic women who had been abandoned by their fathers had difficulties dealing with conflict effectively. Since the research question required data that described the experiences and perceptions of the participants, it was appropriate to use a qualitative methodology for this research. Yin (2009) stated that a methodology is chosen according to the research question. For example, questions that focus on the *how* and the *what* are explanatory and tend to use phenomenology. Therefore, the design of this research was phenomenology. The epistemological assumption of a phenomenology is that it uses the lived experiences of people to describe the essence of a particular phenomenon. A phenomenology further develops descriptions of experiences rather than explanations or analyses. (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009). A qualitative, phenomenological approach was used to investigate and describe the conflict management experiences of women who were abandoned by their fathers before the age of seven. Through a comprehensive analysis of interviews, the researcher was able to understand and analyze such behaviors and then provide a suggestion for those in the field of human services who deal with women who have had this type of experiences.

Transcendental Phenomenology

The researcher chose transcendental phenomenology as the most appropriate qualitative method for this research because according to Creswell (2007), it has systematic steps for analyzing the data and guidelines for forming the textual and structural descriptions. Transcendental phenomenology focuses on analyzing lived experiences whereas ethnography focuses on describing or interpreting a particular culture; grounded theory focuses on developing a theory from the data collected; narrative research focuses on one specific individual and even though case studies focus on interpreting several cases it does not focus on lived experiences. Furthermore, transcendental phenomenology describes the essence of a lived experience whereas ethnography describes and interprets patterns used in a particular cultural group. Grounded theory is centered on the idea of developing a grounded theory in the views of the participants. Case studies provide a well-rounded understanding of a specific problem and narrative research re-tells the stories of the individual participants (Creswell, 2007).

The main components of Transcendental Phenomenology approach include: Epoche, Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction and Imaginative Variation. Epoche is a Greek word that means to avoid judgment. Individuals tend to be judgmental and create presuppositions about things based on how they perceived past experiences. However, Epoche requires for things to be looked at from different angles. In other words, Epoche is to remove one's assumptions and judgements from research (Moustakas, 1994). To discover the objective and subjective reality of the participants, the focal point of this study was the phenomenon of father abandonment. The objective

reality was the participant's view of the phenomenon with no interpretation. The subjective reality were the interpretations that the participants got from their experiences. Together the objective and subjective realities showed a picture of the reality and interpretations the participants experienced through father abandonment. As the researcher, I had to remove myself from the study. In doing so, I was able to observe and interpret the essence of the phenomenon without conveying my own judgments. Otherwise, the essence of the phenomenon would not have any validation.

Role as a researcher. According to Moustakas (1994), in Transcendental Phenomenology, bracketing is a very important process where the researcher must put aside his or her own preconceived experiences and judgements in order to better understand the experiences of the participants in the study. However, as any human being, it is difficult to be 100% neutral. therefore, I was reflective of my role as the researcher which provided validity to the study. I had to check-in with the participants when an experience seemed familiar by following up with questions or repeating back what they were saying in order to clarify and confirm meaning. To provide trustworthiness, as the researcher, verification and clarification took place during and after the interviews. I made sure that it was the participant's voice that were being shared and not mine.

The second component of Transcendental Phenomenology is Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction. In reduction, everything is perceived new and fresh. The phenomenon is described in its totality with thoughts, feelings, sounds, colors and shapes. Reduction is where textural descriptions and essences of the phenomenon are gathered (Moustakas, 1994). An example of Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction was

used to capture what the participants were experiencing, feeling and thinking as they talked about their experiences. All of that was gathered from the verbatim examples that the participants shared during their interviews. Once the textural descriptions have been developed, in other words what the participants experienced, the last component of Transcendental Phenomenology takes place which is Imaginative Variation. The focus of Imaginative Variation is to capture the structural essences of the experience. A description of how the participants experienced the phenomenon is developed. When both the textual and structural descriptions have been combined, then the overall essence of the experience is presented (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, 2007).

The study used Mouskata's (1994) seven methods of collecting transcendental phenomenological data: 1) Identifying a topic or question to be researched. The researcher determined that this was the best approach for the research problem because it provided a process for which to understand 25 individuals' common or shared experiences of the phenomenon of how being abandoned by their fathers affect their conflict resolution skills. 2) In depth review of the literature review. The researcher provided an overview of several studies that reflected the impact of father abandonment on Hispanic women. The literature review also suggested that little attention had been paid to how daughters who had been abandoned by their fathers at a young age grew up to deal with conflict. 3) Identifying a criterion. The researched established parameters in order to locate the most appropriate participants for the research. For example, (a) women who resided in South Florida, (b) were of Hispanic or Hispanic descent, (c) between the ages of 25 and 40, (d) had experienced father abandonment before the age of 7 and (e) had to be fluent in English. 4) Providing instructions for the research to fulfill

ethical guidelines. A protocol was established in order to obtain informed consents and assure confidentiality. 5) Developing the interview process. All 25 participants were asked the same exact questions. Two general questions were asked: "Can you please share with me your experience of what it was like growing up without a father?" and "How did your experience of not having a father affect you with how you engage in conflict?" These questions were use in order to develop the textual and structural description of the experiences. 6) Conducting and recording interviews. The researched conducted one-on-one interviews with each participant and recorded each of them. This was done in order for the researcher to go back and review the interviews and conduct a data analysis. 7) Analyzing the data to include textural and structural descriptions, composite textural and structural descriptions of the essences. The researcher used Moustakas (1994) transcendental data analysis which will be described in the next section. The reasoning behind using this process was because methods are used to complete a process in an orderly and disciplined fashion. They provide guidance for a study to be moved into action (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, it provides structure for novice researchers (2007).

Participants

In this research, 25 Hispanic women or from Hispanic descent who reside in South Florida were identified and interviewed. All 25 participants shared their experiences of what it was like growing up without a father. According to Polkinghorne (1989), in phenomenology, the number of participants range from 5 to 25 of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. Participants met the criteria for participation in the study: all participants resided in South Florida. All twenty-five participants were

Hispanic women or of Hispanic descent. Seven of them were Colombian; five of them were Puerto Rican; four of them were Nicaraguan; two of them were Cuban; two of them were Cuban/Puerto Rican; one of them was Venezuelan; one of them was Peruvian; one of them was Dominican; one of them was Venezuelan/Colombian and one of them was from El Salvador. The age range was from 26 years to 39 years of age. Such sample was considered criterion sampling because all cases met the same criterion, which was useful for quality assurance (Creswell, 2007).

Table 1

Demographic Information of Twenty-Five Participants

Participants	Age	Origin	Career	Education	Type of Abandonment	Age of Abandonment	Status	Children
1 Allison	33	Cuban	Accountant Administrator	Some College	Father left	2	Single	1
2 Barbara	39	Puerto Rican	Paralegal	Associate's Degree	Mom took her away	5	Single	No
3 Cassie	33	Nicaraguan	Program Manager	Bachelor's Degree	Divorce	3	In a relationship	No
4 Debbie	38	Puerto Rican	Investigator for FDA	Master's Degree	Divorce	5	Married	2
5 Estephania	38	Colombian	Investigator for FDA	Graduate School	Father left	1	Single	No
6 Fiona	30	Venezuelan /Colombian	Unemployed	Some College	Father left	3	Single	1
7 Georgette	29	Nicaraguan	Secretary	Bachelor's Degree	Dependency		In a relationship	No
8 Heather	34	Colombian	Hygienist	High School	Encarceration	Before Birth	Married	6
9 Isis	29	Puerto Rican	Referral Coordinator	Associate's Degree	Dependency	7	Married	2
10 Jessica	39	Nicaraguan	Registered Nurse	Master's Degree	Military	Birth	Married	2
11 Katherine	26	Colombian	Sales Specialist	Associate's Degree	Father left	Birth	In a relationship	No
12 Lauren	28	Cuban/Puerto Rican	Bartender	Some College	Father left	Before Birth	In a relationship	No
13 Maria	39	Cuban/Puerto Rican	Unemployed	Bachelor's Degree	Divorce	5	Married	2
14 Nancy	27	Colombian	Switch Board Operator	Bachelor's Degree	Father left	Birth	Never been married	No
15 Oprah	30	Puerto Rican	Unemployed	Bachelor's Degree	Father left	6	In a relationship	No
16 Pepita	27	Nicaraguan	Clinical Research	Master's Degree	Divorce	3	Single	No
17 Quiana	26	Venezuelan	Real Estate Developer	Bachelor's Degree	Divorce	5	Single	No
18 Rosita	31	Cuban	Registered Mental Health	Master's Degree	Father left	6	Married	2
19 Sandra	30	Puerto Rican	Realtor	Bachelor's Degree	Father left	3	Single	No
20 Teresa	33	Peruvian	Student	Associate's Degree	Father left	3	Single	No
21 Ursula	28	El Salvadorian	Medical Assistant	Bachelor's Degree	Father left	Do not remember	Single	No
22 Viviana	37	Dominican	Government Studies	Associate's Degree	Dependency		Married	1
23 Wendy	38	Colombian	Professor	Master's Degree	Divorce	4	Married	2
24 Xiomara	27	Colombian	Stay home mom	Associate's Degree	Divorce	4	In a relationship	4
25 Yesenia	34	Colombian	Manager	Some College	Father left	1 or 2	Married	3

Note. Type of Abandonment = Reason why dad left the home. Age of Abandonment = Age of the participant when dad left home. Status = Status of the participant at the time of the interview: married, single, in a relationship. Children = The number of children the participant has.

Recruitment

For this research there were 3 types of recruitment methods: Social media, direct contact and by using a snowballing or chain technique, where according to Creswell (2007) participants identified cases of interest from people they knew and from cases that were rich in information. Under the social media technique, a Facebook ad was created only for the research, www.facebook.com/dianasresearch. The researcher paid to promote the page to a specific target audience, in this case it was all South Florida, women, between the ages of 25-40. The page had all the information needed for participants to determine whether they qualified to participate in the research study. A link then took them to a registration page. This page was created under Eventbrite, dianasresearch.eventbrite.com. They filled out their information such as their name and contact information. That information was saved in a database and an email was sent to the researcher. The researcher contacted the participant via email to make sure the participants qualified to be part of the research. Those participants who agreed to participate met at a mutually agreed time and location to sign the informed consent and complete the interview. For those who were not able to meet in person with the researcher, the informed consent form was signed electronically, and a telephone interview was conducted.

A flyer was also be created (Appendix A) and was distributed to those participants who the researcher had direct contact with and who were interested in the study or who knew someone who was interested. Flyers were also posted at different locations throughout the NSU Campus and other Universities such as Lynn University

and FAU. The flyer had the Facebook page link where they could go for more information and register.

Process

Both Creswell (2007) and Moustakas (1994) agreed that the best method for collecting data in phenomenology research is through the use of in-depth interviews. For this reason, the researcher used Moustakas' (1994) interview process which entails the development of five to ten open-ended questions (Appendix C). The interviews were conducted at neutral locations mutually agreed by the participants and the researcher or over the phone. The questions allowed the researcher to obtain rich and vivid descriptions of the participant's experiences. The main questions derived from Moustakas' (1994) general interview guide that included general questions such as: "What dimensions, incidents and people intimately connected with the experience stand out for you? and how did the experience affect you?" (p. 116). Other open-ended questions were asked to further gather textural and structural descriptions from which the researcher provided an understanding of the essence of the lived experiences of the participants. For the purpose of this research, the research questions focused on describing and understanding the experiences of how women who have been abandoned by their father dealt with conflict:

1. Please state your name
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you from?
4. What do you do for a living?
5. What is your highest level of education?

6. Can you please share with me your experience of what it was like growing up without a father?
7. How old were you when your father left?
8. How did your experience of not having a father affect you with h ow you engage in conflict?
9. Let's pretend you are having a conflict with your significant other and I'm looking outside a window, what would the argument look like?
10. Why do you think you experience conflict the way do you?
11. How did you experience of not having a father affect you with your relationships with others?
12. How many serious relationships have you been in?
13. What happened?
14. How many non-serious relationships have you been in?
15. What would you like to tell women who read this research and have been abandoned by their fathers?

Furthermore, this information was gathered by conducting narrative interviews, where the participant was able to describe the experiences of what it meant to grow up without a father and the affects it had on their conflict management skills in their personal relationships. The interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Verification of data analysis was done by using double coding. The coding was performed by two coders: Diana Herrera and Alexia Georgakopoulos, PhD. Once the interviews were completed, each participant received a $25 VISA gift card to use at their convenience.

Data Collection

Steps taken for the data collection of this dissertation included. 1) Completed the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Internal Review Board's (IRB) form to conduct human research. In doing so, permission was granted to conduct human research. 2) Used several recruitment methods to obtain potential candidates: Facebook ad/Eventbrite, flyer and in person. 3) Potential candidates were identified. The researcher verified via email that participants met the research's criteria which included: women who reside in South Florida; be Hispanic or Hispanic descent; between the ages of 25 and 40; had experienced father abandonment before the age of 7 and fluent in English. If the participant met the researcher's criteria, then a brief research synopsis was given to the participant. 4) Researcher set up appointments that were convenient for the participants to be interviewed for at least 45 minutes. Interviews were either done in person or interviews were made over the phone. 5) Informed Consent forms were completed. If interviews were in person, Informed Consent forms were done in person. If interviews were done over the phone, Informed Consent forms were sent electronically. However, the researcher did not meet with the participant until a completed informed consent form was received. 6) Interviews were conducted. The researcher used Kvales' (2007) seven stages of an interview:

I. Thematizing- The researched identified the purpose of the research. The why-was referred to as not enough literature review regarding conflict styles on women who were abandoned by their fathers at a young age. The what-was to research if in fact being abandoned by their fathers at a young age had an impact on how

women dealt with conflict. The how- by gathering information through the use of interviews.

II. Designing-The researcher designed the study by identifying the best method of gathering the information needed to answer the research question: What were the lived experiences of Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers before the age of 7?

III. Interviewing-Interviews were conducted with a reflective approach using the Transcendental Phenomenology methods.

IV. Transcribing-Interviews were transcribed verbatim into a word document in order to prepare the material to be analyzed.

V. Analyzing-Once all the interviews were transcribed, the material was analyzed using Moutakas' (1994) eight steps analysis of phenomenological data.

VI. Verifying-The researcher used the double coding for validation with a co-researcher to verify the accuracy and trust worthiness of the study that was in agreement with Moustaka's (1994) recommendations for trust worthiness in a phenomenological study. This study used all the verbatim transcripts from the participant's interviews to code each experience. The first coder was me, Diana Herrera, the second coder was the dissertation chair, Alexia Georgakopoulos, Ph.D. Two coders were necessary to ensure the data was analyzed with same accuracy. Moustakas (1994) stated that double coding is essential as it reduces subjective interpretation.

VII. Reporting-the findings of the study were reported in a readable product.

Step 7 of the data collection is where the participants were thanked for their time, effort and willingness to participate in the research and for sharing their information. Each participant received a $25 VISA gift card.

Informed Consent

Kvale (2007) stated that informed consent is the best method of informing participants about the purpose and possible risks of a research. Prior to participation in this study, all participants were required to review and sign an informed consent agreement (Appendix B). Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the potential benefits of the study and possible risks prior to signing the informed consent. In addition, all participants were told how their interviews would be used in the analysis of data and final report. Participants were informed that they would have the option to revoke their consent at any point during the interview, at which point all materials would be collected from them, sealed and destroyed. The researcher answered all of the questions that participants had prior to the interviews; verbally confirmed understanding of the process; and obtained a copy of the signed informed consent form from each participant.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality simply means that a participant's private data such as identifying information is not reported (Kvale, 2007). Participant's confidentiality was ensured throughout the entire study. First, the informed consents only had the participant's names. The forms were stored in a sealed envelope in a locked, fireproof safe in the researcher's home office. Second, the audiotapes and transcriptions of the interviews were coded with numbers, participants' names did not appear on their interview

materials. The number code corresponded to the same number of the consent form. Only the researcher had access to these forms. When writing the dissertation, participants were given unique names. Names had no relation to them.

One year after successfully defending this dissertation, all documentation and transcriptions will be shredded. The audiotapes will be incinerated. Every participant will be informed, prior to participation of the limits of confidentiality to include court orders.

Chapter 4: Analyses and Findings

The previous chapter described the research process and the steps taken in collecting data. This chapter will focus on the analysis of the data collected and the outcome of that analysis. The data gathered from the interviews followed Moustakas (1994) eight step analysis of phenomenological data: (1) listing and preliminary grouping, (2) reduction and elimination, (3) clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents, (4) final identification of the invariant constituents and themes, (5) individual textual description, (6) individual structural description, (7) participant textural-structural Description and (8) composite group description (p. 120-121). Once all the data was collected, it was transcribed and analyzed by the researcher.

Step 1: Listing and Preliminary Grouping (Horizonalization)

The first step in Moustakas' (1994) approach to transcendental phenomenological data analysis was that of horizonalization. In this step the researcher went through the data, in this case the interview transcriptions and highlighted and circled all of the "significant statements" given them all equal value. These statements or quotes provided an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Along the margins, the researcher formulated meaning of each statement that showed the horizons of the experiences and how those experiences were processed by the participant.

Step 2: Reduction and Elimination

In the reduction and elimination phase, the researcher focused on significant statements (horizons) that were unique and stood out. Then the horizontal statements were organized into those that met the following requirements: a) Does the statement contain information essential to understanding the experience, and b) Can the researcher

abstract and label the statement (Moustakas, 1994). If the answer to these questions were yes, then it was a horizon of the experience. If the answers were no, then the statements were eliminated. The horizons that remained were the invariant constituents of the experience. During this step, the researcher read the transcripts over and over and took notes for invariant constituents.

Step 3: Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents

In this step, the horizons that remained, in other words the invariant constituents of the experience that resulted from the process of reduction and elimination were grouped into similar themes creating the "core themes of the experience." (Moustakas, 1994, p.121). Each participant was kept separate when the themes were reduced into statements that captured the participant's experience. This stage was important in order to gather all the similar themes that established patterns related to the experience of growing up without a father had on the participant's conflict styles. The main overarching themes of each participant are reflected in the composite description of the twenty-five participants as a group.

Step 4: Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and themes

This step is the validation of the process. It required for the researcher to analyze the invariant constituents and themes against the participant's transcripts to make sure that the resulting themes were correctly expressed. During this step, the researcher reviewed all the transcripts to validate if the statements expressed the themes and descriptions of the experience accurately. The researcher clustered all the themes of the participants except for the idiosyncratic themes which were experienced by one or two

participants. If a particular theme was experienced by three or more participants, then it became a core theme.

Double Coding for Validation. This study used all the verbatim transcripts from the participants to code each experience. The first coder was the researcher. The second coder was the dissertation chair. Two coders were crucial to ensure that the data was analyzed with the same importance.

Step 5: Individual Textual Description

Individual textual descriptions of the experiences were developed. In this case, it represented what each participant experienced. With the descriptions, verbatim examples were extracted from the participant's interview transcripts.

Step 6: Individual Structural Description

Individual textual descriptions of the experiences were developed. In this step, the researcher identified how each participant experienced the phenomenon by using the participant's verbatim statements.

Step 7: Participant Textural-Structural Description

This step combined everything together. The researcher created a combine description of the what, of the textual descriptions and the how, of the structural descriptions by incorporating the invariant constituents and the themes.

Step 8: Composite Group Description

The last step of Moustakas' (1994) eight step analysis of phenomenological data was the construction of composite description of the experiences of all twenty-five research participants. The final description included the essences and meanings of the participant's experiences of the phenomenon.

Findings

Based on the scope and purpose of this research, step eight will be the focus of the findings to present a comprehensive summary of the collective perceptions of this unique group of Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers and how that affected their conflict resolution skills.

This research's main question was looking to understand the shared experiences of Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers at a young age and explore their conflict management skills. In ultimately trying to answer the question, two answers developed: the first one described a sense of negative impact of their lives, and the second described a sense of positive impact on their lives. At the end of the study, for some of the participants, the findings show a transformation on their conflict management skills that go from destructive to constructive.

After completing the data analysis of all twenty-fiver participants and comparing the transcripts of each participant, there were a total of fifteen group composite themes that were developed from this study. Eight group composite themes that described the negative impact were developed: 1) Experiencing Abandonment, 2) Experiencing Abuse, 3) Facing Self Crisis, 4) Confronting Instability in the Home Front, 5) Perceiving Ambivalence, 6) Repeating the Cycle, 7) Demonstrating Co-Dependency and 8) Expressing Negative Conflict Styles. In addition, there were seven six group composite themes that reflected a positive impact on the participant's lives: 9) Having a support system, 10) Seeking Mind and Body Well Being, 11) Becoming Strong, 12) Being a Positive Force as a Parent, 13) Overcoming Negative Emotions, 14) Developing Constructive Conflict Styles and 15) Achieving Transformation. The following figure

represents the group composite themes that emerged through data analysis. It does not include sub-themes as they will be included in the discussion of each theme.

Figure 1. Group composite themes for the experience of being abandoned by a father

Negative Impact

Theme 1: Experiencing Abandonment

The first group composite theme analyzed in this study is that of experiencing abandonment from their fathers. In this research, father abandonment refers to fathers who were not present in their daughter's young lives, whether because of dependency, divorce or incarceration. In this study the majority of participants reported experiencing abandonment as a result of their fathers not being there when they were young. When asked to please share their experience of what it was like growing up without a father, most participants showed and talked about negative emotions, in particular, the emotion of feeling abandoned. Throughout their lives, this emotion drove them to feel like people were going to leave them. Examples of verbatim textual and structural descriptions for abandonment include:

> **Allison:** *"Whether it came to friends whether it came to family there was like this super imposed mediums that would happen and you know that started early on because I had abandonment issues….I didn't want to be by myself, I didn't want to keep experiencing this desolation that I had."*
>
> **Nancy:** *"I did the love abandonment issues where I immediately assumed that anyone that I was having a relationship with was subconsciously assume that they were going to leave."*
>
> **Nancy:** *"There was like a situation that repeated often and it was that for instance if someone wasn't doing some things the way in my mind I had expected them to, then I would just assume they were not going to be around or involved."*
>
> **Oprah:** *"I do feel unwanted and unloved and slightly abandoned."*

Nancy: *"I would have to hold on to them like they would leave at any second."*

Rosita: *"I don't want to lose something again like I did when I was little. I lost my dad and I practically lost my mom."*

Wendy: *"As I got older, I began to have feelings of abandonment and lack of self-esteem."*

Wendy: *"I have always been very possessive with my friends, family members and relationships. But I think it has to do with trust. I think I felt possessive over people because I felt they were going to leave me."*

Due to the abandonment, three main subthemes developed: a) negative emotions, b) questioning self and c) negative perceptions (see Figure 2).

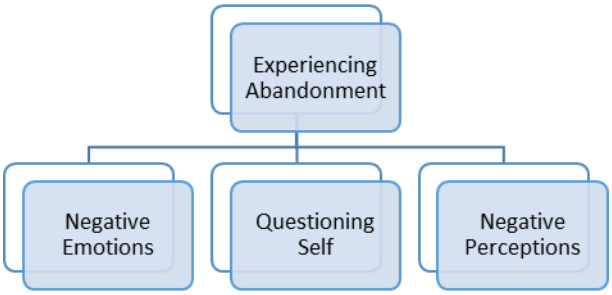

Figure 2. Subthemes under Experiencing Abandonment

Negative Emotions. Negative emotions was the main emphasis of the participant's responses. Besides feeling abandoned, which was the most repeated emotion among the participants, many of the participants also reported feelings of anger and sadness. While some participants were scared and lonely, others felt hurt. Examples of verbatim textual and structural descriptions include:

Anger

Allison: *"I vacillated from being a complete loner to being a bully, that I remember, because I had so much anger in me, I needed someone to feel it."*

Cassie: *"At the beginning I was mad, upset and kind like I need to hate this person for what he did."*

Fiona: *"I had a lot of anger issues. I had to go to a court appointed family counselor."*

Heather: *"I used to be angry. I was a very angry person and I always blamed my father and my mother both of my parents for the way I was growing up."*

Oprah: *"I have a little bit of I guess anger issues, anger management issues, which I get mostly from my mother because my mother has severe anger management issues."*

Xiomara: *"I would make my mom cry a lot and I realized it was because I had so much, so much anger against her."*

Sadness

Estephania: *"My experience of what it was like growing up without a father, it was sad."*

Oprah: *"It was actually kind of hard for me to adjust, it made med kind of sad."*

Ursula: *"I used to, I used to be, I used to be sad about not having my father in person on most important days, especially on my birthdays and Christmas."*

Afraid

Allison: *"I was a serial monogamist because I was scared of being alone and I would endorse certain thing and I would inflict certain things too that were not kosher, you know that were not kosher at all."*

Lauren: *"I was always afraid of being you know, abandoned by people so it was pretty tough feeling loved and accepted."*

Lonely

Rosita: *"It was very lonely sometimes, depressing to me."*

Wendy: *"I remember feeling very lonely and scared most nights."*

Hurt

Isis: *"I would definitely say it was hard and hurtful especially when you feel rejected."*

Questioning self. The second subtheme of experiencing abandonment is questioning self. When one has been abandoned, often questions as to why arise. For some of the participants, self-blame reflected as part of their shared experiences and questions such as *why did dad leave?* and *is it my fault?* developed. Examples of verbatim textual and structural descriptions for self-blame include:

Barbara: *"….feelings of abandonment and shame and also guilt internalized built because I felt like I did something wrong."*

Heather: "*I always thought it was me." "Wasn't I good enough for him because I know he raised my little sisters. You know he raised my sisters he never raised me." "What do they have that I didn't?"*

Isis: *"My dad has another daughter and he raised her all of her life and didn't….why was he [dad] not around for me?" "It affects you, you know, emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally, you just like think okay why one and not the other, why not me?"*

Jessica: *"I see my 2 year old and I think until this day I think how does my dad like not want to be part of what I'm going through with my own child. Why wouldn't he [dad] want to see me doing the things that I see my own child doing?"*

Quiana: *"Was it something I did?"*

Negative Perceptions. The third subtheme under experiencing abandonment is that of negative perceptions. This category focuses on the participant's interpretations of negative experiences they had caused by their father's abandonment. Those perceptions include the interpretations of resentment, lack of attachment and depression. For those who experienced resentment, they talked about how they were resentful towards their moms and dads for the way that they were raised.

Resentment

Allison: *"I moved back to Miami and then it was just on and off I guess I held a lot of resentment."*

Oprah: *"When I go to a friend's house and you know the dad is there and everybody is happy, I definitely have some resentment towards that just because you know I never had it."*

Oprah: *"I had a lot of resentment towards my mom as well….You know he [dad] left because of her [mom]. She [mom] had a very, very volatile personality."*

Wendy: *"Later on in life, I felt betrayed by my mother when I felt like she [mom] chose men over me. For a long time I held a lot of resentment towards her [mom]."*

Other participants revealed a lack of attachment towards their fathers. A desire for a bond with their dads that they were never able to achieve.

> **Cassie:** *"I would like to talk to him [dad], I would like to have a relationship with him [dad]." "I would like to have a relationship with my dad just like I have with my mom….Regardless of what happened between my mother and dad, I still admire that person [dad]."*
>
> **Fiona:** *"There were some circumstances where I feel that a father figure was needed…..there is certain things that every child requires that only a father figure can give."*
>
> **Ursula:** *"I always wanted him [dad] to be there." "I always wanted him [dad] to be there and that's why it was more emotional than anything else."*

For other participants, depression negatively affected the way they thought and acted: Depressed

> **Isis:** *"I was depressed because of him [dad]. Like emotional depression just thinking you know if my dad was around he [dad] could guide me in the way what my mom can't because he [dad] is a man."*

Theme 2: Experiencing Abuse

The second theme analyzed in this study is that of experiencing abuse. According to the Florida Statues (2018), abuse of a child is defined as "Intentional infliction of physical or mental injury upon a child." When asked, why do you think you experience conflict the way you do, these participants stated that it was because of the abuse that they experienced when they were young. For one, the abuse was due to the lack of protection from the father:

Barbara: *"I was sexually molested uh as well and it happened infrequently from when I was in diapers because I remember that until I was 17 year of age. It happened infrequently but it still happened so I felt that this is what happens to people who don't like have a father because there is no one protecting you." "The way I experienced conflict in the beginning of my life had a lot to do with the fact that I didn't feel worthy of being protected because there wasn't a stable presence there that I could call a father."*

For the other participants, there were signs of abuse through various channels such as molestation and rape.

Molestation

Allison: *"I was molested when I was 4, when I was 5, when I was 9."*

Jessica: *"I had a rough childhood. I was abused as a child and my mom wasn't there for me." "I was molested and abused by two different people as a child."*

Xiomara: *"When I was young, I went through a lot of molesting by other men." "It happened once when I was probably 9, then it happened again here then another time."*

Rape

Oprah*:* *"When I was a child I was actually raped by my father's family member."*

Theme 3: Facing Self-Crisis

Theme 3 includes experiences of participants facing self-crisis. For purposes of this research, self-crisis is defined as experiencing a difficult time or danger that is produced by one-self. Participants shared experiences that described difficult instances

of their lives. Within this group composite theme, two subthemes emerged: a) self-harm and b) dependency (see Figure 3).

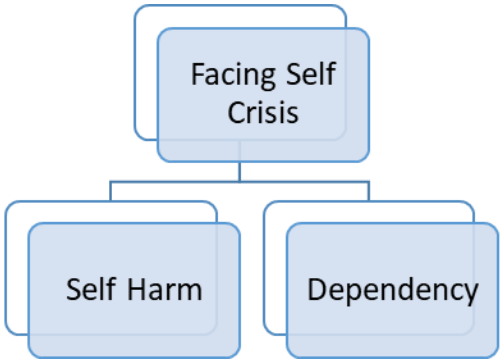

Figure 3. Subthemes under Facing Self Crisis

Self-Harm. The subtheme of self-harm is very important in this research because participants described instances where they had suicide acts and or thoughts. In some cases, they were tired of life at a very young age and tried to end the pain.

Barbara: *"I tried to attempt suicide when I was 9, when I was 17 and when I was 29."*

Fiona: *"I'm self-destructive, before someone comes to destroy me. I would rather tear my feelings apart and have to deal with pain and get it over with than have to live through that."*

Dependency. The second subtheme of facing self-crisis is dependency. Participants relied on alcohol and drugs in order to cope with the negative emotions that most felt such as depression. Examples of verbatim textual and structural descriptions include:

Alcohol

Barbara: *"I am in recovery by the way, I have been in recovery for 8+ years, uh I was an alcoholic and a drug addict and uh like heavy and you know I would engage in certain criminal activities as well."*

Lauren: *"I was drinking a lot, I was taking medication at the time for anxiety and depression. I was just in a really, really terrible place."*

Drugs

Heather: *"I am a recovery drug addict."*

Theme 4: Confronting Instability in the Home Front

The fourth group composite theme to emerge was that of Confronting Instability in the Home Front. While growing up, many participants share that their lives were very difficult due to several issues that had to deal with instability in the home. From this main theme, three subthemes developed: a) financial challenges, b) changing partners and or cheating and c) substance abuse (see Figure 4).

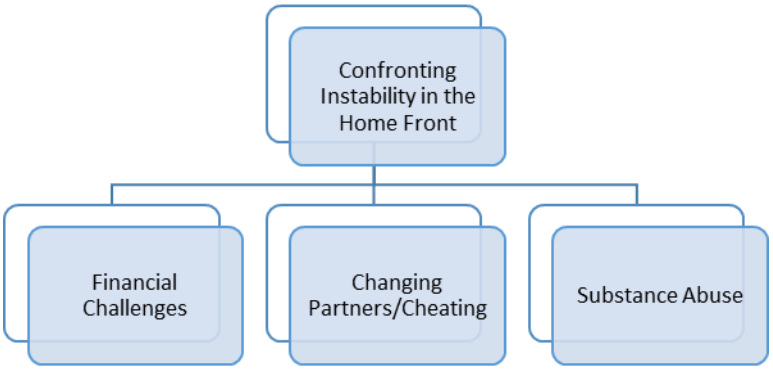

Figure 4. Subthemes under Confronting Instability in the Home Front

Financial Challenges. After their fathers abandoned them, participants and their moms had to go through rough financial times. Mom was no longer able to stay home and take care of them and their siblings, but now mom had to go out and work two and three jobs. Examples of verbatim textual and structural descriptions Include:

Allison: *"My mom was going through some hard times and she [mom] actually said I need you [dad] to take her for a year because I need to do something. She [mom] needed to work 2 jobs."*

Jessica: *"My mom and I were alone and struggled financially very much."*

Katherine: *"It was just me and my mom and my mom was a single mother raising not just myself but my aunt and she was going to work and going to school."*

Maria: *"I spent years bitter and annoyed and angry especially when he [dad] came and saw the situation that we were in over losing our home…. He [dad] saw the situation my mother was and he [dad] didn't lift a finger."*

Oprah: *"She [mom] was working two to three jobs….we struggled with either she [mom]tried to paid the rent or her [mom] trying to get to work on time or try to find someone to take care of me."*

Quiana: *"I saw first hand how she [mom] suffered in Venezuela….when she[mom] got divorced, she [mom] had to go back and work full time."*

Wendy: *"I feel my sister and I grew up by ourselves because our mother had to work all the time."*

Changing Partners/Cheating. The second subtheme from confronting instability in the home had to do with changing partners and/or cheating. What this means is that either mom or dad cheated on each other before their relationship ended. One theme that repeated itself often was that of "*he cheated on mom*", or "*mom cheated on dad*. " Therefore, participants were exposed to cheating very early in their development.

Heather: *"My understanding was like when they separated, it was because he [dad] cheated, left her [mom] for another woman and I used to blame myself."*

Rosita: *"She [mom] was always with boyfriends….she [mom] was always with one man if not him another, another and another."*

Rosita: *"She [mom] cheated on him [dad] but he [dad] was very brutally abusive."*

Viviana*: "He [dad] cheated on my mom a lot."*

Substance Abuse. The third subtheme in this category is substance abuse. For most of these women, their dads had drinking problems.

Georgette*: "He [dad] had like drinking problems so that kind of pushed us away*.

Isis: *"My dad was an alcoholic*."

Viviana: *"He [dad] also had alcohol issues."*

Theme 5: Perceiving Ambivalence

The fifth group composite theme to analyze in this study is Perceiving ambivalence. According to Abascal (2012) ambivalence is another word for inconsistent. Someone who is unpredictable and does not put the other person's needs first. According to Abascal (2012), ambivalent is one of the three relationship patterns under the attachment theory. The other two are warm/responsive and cold/rejecting. Most of the participants in this research felt ambivalent about their fathers and or significant others. Due to the lack of consistency, most of the participants also felt uncertain about themselves and about how their lives would have been if their fathers would have been in their lives. This theme has three subthemes: a) broken expectations of father, b) broken expectations of significant other and c) anxious attachment (see Figure 5).

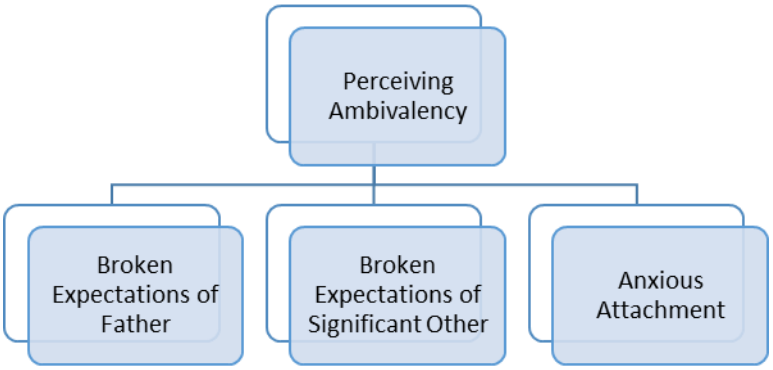

Figure 5. Subthemes for Perceiving Ambivalence

Broken Expectation of Father. For most participants, not being able to trust their father brought them a lot of insecurities. In their mind, they thought, if he did it to me, anyone else can also do it. Besides feeling a lack of trust, most participant also felt uncertainty and insecurity.

Lack of trust. Participants shared the experience of finding themselves waiting for their fathers to pick them up and him never showing up. Then they referenced back to those memories whenever something like that happened in their lives and it was difficult for them to trust.

> **Barbara:** *"My father said he [dad] was going to pick me up but he [dad] didn't and I waited for him and it never happened."*
>
> **Debbie:** *"So growing up ummm, yeah not having my father there or he [dad] said he [dad] was going to come and he [dad]didn't come, those kinds of things made me basically want to kind of protect myself."*
>
> **Jessica:** *"You learn not to trust. You think everybody is going to do the same thing again. So trust issues a lot. The things that affected me the most with others was trust. If my father did it to me, why wouldn't a stranger perfectly do it again?"*

Maria: "*He [dad] spent some money here and there but he [dad] was very irresponsible not dependable. He [dad] would say that he [dad] would come at a certain day and then he [dad] would not show up."*

Pepita: *With time I realized that I attract in a way someone similar to my father. It ended because it drove me crazy the inconsistency and I wanted consistency in the relationship."*

Participants wondered if by having their fathers while growing up, their lives would have been different. They wondered if they their father's advice would have made a difference in their lives.

Uncertainty

Fiona: *"I think that you know maybe there were things that I didn't speak to my mom about that I could have been able to speak to my father about.*

Fiona: *"Maybe there were things that my mom advised me of that would have been different from my father and I could have had different ways of maybe an outlook on which path to go through or to concluded you know."*

Isis: *"I think if my dad was around maybe I would have not been a teenage mom cause he [dad] would have talked to me and tell me what to look out from guys. What are men looking for."*

Teresa: *"I think having him [dad] at an early phase in my life would have really helped me like growing up with my anxiety, which I do have now."*

Participants shared how they felt by not having the security that a father would provide. They wanted to be accepted by people but especially by males. Their fathers leaving left a lot of insecurity for these participants.

Insecurity.

Allison: *"I kind of felt lost and insecure and a part of me when I was growing up felt like I wasn't good enough."*

Heather: *"I was trying to find someone to accept me." I was just looking for love and acceptance."*

Isis: *"I feel that there's always like an alternative motive behind most men."*

Jessica: *"….And then the other part was seeking acceptance, especially from the males I guess…..it was important to me to be accepted. In high school I would date a lot."*

Nancy: *"Subconsciously I felt that I was left or that I didn't have that security a father figure would provide."*

Broken Expectations of Significant Other. Besides all of the challenges that participants had to face, they also had to deal with the disappointment of not having someone by their side who would be up to their expectations. Many of them had in mind the type of men they wanted by their side. They wanted certain principles, stability and commitment in their lives. When they realized that the men they were with did not have any of these, then they let them go.

Holding unmet expectations

Allison*: "He's [significant other] going to have to have a job. He is going to have to have a career. He has to be smart. I have to look up to him."*

Barbara: *"I want a man who not only lives by certain principles like spiritual principles would be ideal….someone who really has had a 180 degree in their life….continue to move forward with doing things that will help us heal more you*

know. A man who is totally financially, mentally and emotionally stable would be ideal."

Cassie: *"Moving forward I want stability….Yeah like having someone that I can lean on, count on and someone that I will have by my side instead of me kind of taking care of this person. Someone who wants to be better and grow instead of staying at the same level."*

Estephania: *"I'm looking for, for commitment, I'm looking for stability. I'm looking for somebody that I can have a family with, an equal partner, somebody that I can do life with."*

Fiona: *"Didn't want to be with him [significant other] because he wasn't up to my standards….well like I feel like a man is supposed to be like the head of the house you know, like I'm his backbone."*

Oprah: *"I've been told I'm very picky and I like things a certain way so I think that has to do with it. I'm looking for specific qualities."*

Pepita: *"He [significant other] didn't know what he wanted….that kind of frustrated me because I wanted someone better put together.*

Quiana: *"I look for a guy who is a protector, very smart, very attentive. I like to feel secured and be with someone who is reliable."*

Ursula: *"His [significant other] goal in life was not what I expected and basically he didn't have goals in life, he didn't have dreams."*

Anxious Attachment. The third sub theme under perceiving ambivalence is that of anxious attachment. This was particularly in relationships. Abascal (2012) stated that those who experienced an inconsistent and ambivalent childhood would display anxious

attachment as adults. Anxious attachment over abandonment is related to the use of threats, physical and verbal aggression and feelings of guilt after conflict (Shi, 2003). For these participants, their unstable upbringing brought them instability into their relationships.

> **Georgette:** *"I'm more of the attached person." "Attached to the person as in like very connected. I guess when I feel the connection I make sure to keep that person near me try to you know do things with them talk to them as often you know like that."*
>
> **Rosita:** *"I stay because of that inner child need for love and attachment with the only thing I find love in as far as the romantic relationship is concerned."*
>
> **Wendy:** "*With relationships, I got extremely attached to them almost to the point that was overwhelming."*

Theme 6: Repeating the Cycle

When dealing with relationships, participants felt they kept repeating the cycle of choosing the wrong men. Participants believed that the instability in their relationships had to do with the fact that they kept choosing bad partners. For some, their choosing of bad partners mirrored the type of men their fathers were. In addition, most of these men had bad characteristics that included being cheaters and abusive. Lastly, as a result of all of these negative conditions, participants had no other choice but to end their relationships. Within this theme, there were three subthemes that were identified: a) choosing a bad partner, b) bad characteristics, and c) end relationships (see Figure 6).

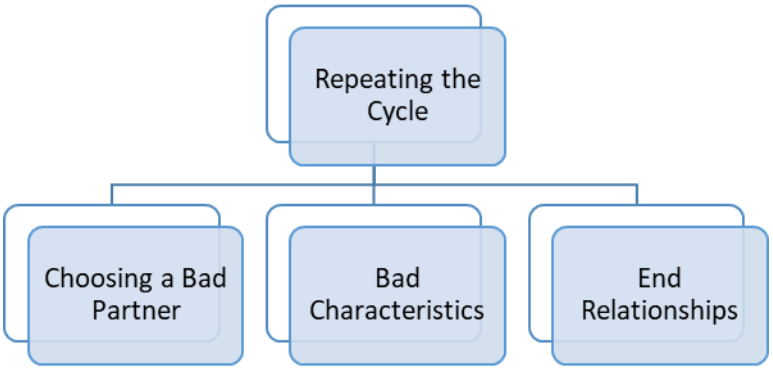

Figure 6. Subthemes for Repeating the Cycle

Choosing a Bad Partner. For most of the participants, choosing a bad partner meant always getting involved in relationships with men who were broken themselves; men who grew up with their own issues or men who were similar to their fathers.

Allison: *"I felt like I picked the worst guy to move in with. Everything I feared in my entire life and I said to myself I don't want to live with a guy because of that reason. I don't want to be in a position where I am with someone that is completely disruptive and I picked the worse one and now I'm just trying to….I have my own apartment, I have good you know financial stability."*

Barbara: *"I had a tendency of picking men that were beautifully tragic you know and they had, there were a lot of things that were in parallel to what they were doing or what they were about, it was completely running parallel to what my father was like."*

Estephania: *"I believe that women who don't grow up with their dads have like what they call daddy issues, like they have problems with maintaining relationships with men or picking the wrong men."*

Bad Characteristics. There was a pattern that was constant between the men who the participants got involved with and that was of cheating and being abusive.

Cheating

Allison: *"He [significant other] cheated on me. He said he was put under a lot of pressure so he cheated on me and I left him for that."*

Barbara: *"That was my pattern too. I would side step in a minute and they would side step in a minute too and then we would be at a stale mate because we both would have cheated on each other."*

Isis: *"He [significant other] cheated on me a lot….I just stayed because I felt like maybe that was the norm basically. Because he was taking care of me financially and my daughter, then it was normal you know for a guy to do that."*

Katherine: *"He[significant other] went to Colombia and when he came back, I sensed that he wasn't the same and found out after that he cheated on me."*

Teresa: *"I was cheated on and it just became like very frustrating for me. It made me very stressed out, anxious."*

Abusive

Estephania: *"The controlling, the what to wear, what not to wear, what to eat, what do to. To the point that he [significant other] became abusive mentally to where then that relationship ended. So he [significant other] played the father figure and I wasn't, I knew I wasn't looking for that. I didn't feel comfortable in that relationship being controlled.*

Heather: *"Two of the relationships I had were very bad, domestic violence, the men abused me. One of them, I was pregnant with one of my children and it was really bad to the point that I had to separate."*

Maria: *"Pretty much some of them were abusive. They were all abusive but they all had common denominators and that was the abuse part, not all physically."*

Maria: *"First there was a couple early on when I was a teenager and they were abusive but not physically abusive, they were abusive with other things like cheating, emotional abuse. Then my first marriage, my first husband was abusive physically and emotionally, both."*

Rosita: *"He [significant other] has actually himself admitted, yeah I treat you bad, sorry I have to think about my pain not yours."*

End Relationship. Not only did participants get tired of the abuse that was coming from their significant others, but they also fell out of love easily. This was a pattern that was very obvious from most of the participants. After being in relationships, most of the participants fell disconnected from their partners which made them end their relationships. This pattern occurred frequently throughout their lives.

Allison: *"The experiences that I had with my emotional relationships all broke real easy because I was broken."*

Cassie: *"I think we broke up because I was fed up of so much…..I guess I got tired."*

Estephania: *"I finally got tired of being taken advantage of and being hurt and so I ended the relationship."*

Heather: *"I didn't really care about people more than so I got tired of them."*

Teresa: *"I would try to appreciate the person and then I would get bored of them. Like they wouldn't do anything for me. I wouldn't feel any kind of connection at the end. I think they wouldn't be good enough."*

Wendy: *"I fell out of love….I decided to leave….I learned that it was easier to leave than it was to work it out….when I hurt, I left."*

Yesenia: *"I just got tired and fell out of love. I fell out of love and you know I notice I think that I take the easy route out."*

Theme 7: Demonstrating Co-Dependency

The seventh theme that participants highlighted was that of demonstrating co-dependency. Co-dependent individuals are those who depend on others because they feel they cannot survive on their own (Abascal et al., 2012). Under Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, belonging is one of the characteristics human beings require in order to be considered a healthy individual. In other words, there are five characteristics an individual must satisfy in order to sustain life: 1) basic biological, 2) safety, 3) belonging, 4) esteem, and 5) self-actualization. Once an individual has satisfied its basic biological needs, and safety needs, he or she must then satisfy the third set of needs which is that of belonging. Under belonging, and individual seeks connection to others. They crave for affiliation and belonging through social interaction (Abascal et al., 2012). However, there might be instances where an individual's need for belonging goes beyond the norm creating a co-dependency effect. In this case, participants saw their significant others as their father figures and therefore relied entirely on them. For others, they saw themselves in their partners which in return created an environment of co-dependency among each other. This theme had two subthemes: a) complete reliance on the other and b) defining self with partner (see Figure 7).

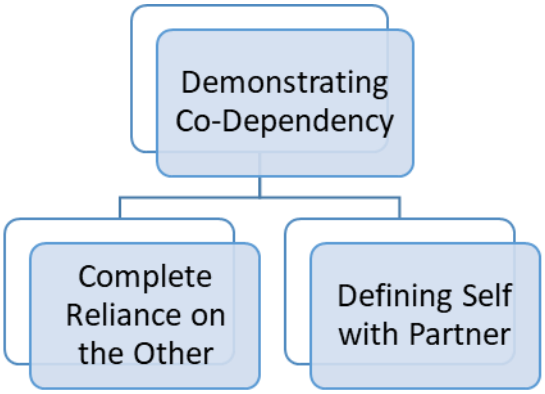

Figure 7. Subthemes for Demonstrating Co-Dependency

Complete Reliance on the Other. Participants showed complete reliance on the other by creating situations where they depended completely on their significant other. They made it known to them that they did not want to be left alone.

> ***Estephania:*** *"I think for my first relationship I was so young and I didn't have a father and he [significant other] was like that hero like that person like taking me out of the situation that I was in. So I think that definitely was influenced by not having a father. I saw him [significant other] as not a father figure but I saw him as a person taking me out and rescuing me. Ironically enough he became the parental figure in our relationship."*
>
> ***Barbara:*** *"I would take hostages you know. The first person I saw some potential because I felt so badly about myself at the time the first person that I looked as though they had any potential I would latch on to them and they would latch on to me and it wasn't love but it was a mutually beneficial situation."*
>
> ***Isis:*** *"With my significant others I've kind of taken two attitudes: I can take the attitude like okay you going to leave regardless so its whatever or I've taken the attitude you know of having this emotional break down that its going to be*

another person that leaves me and you know me not wanting that person to leave."

Lauren: *"I think that I just assumed that if someone loved me, they would do whatever even if it were unfair or drastic or over the top. If they loved me it wouldn't matter, they would just put up with it and if they didn't put up with it then they obviously didn't love me enough because I thought to myself that's what I would do for someone. I would put up with anything and do whatever it took to make them happy so that they would be happy with me."*

Defining Self with Partner. Some of the participants felt that they were attracted to a particular type of man, those who were broken just as they were.

Allison: *"These men were not considered by society standards the best type of men to engage into a relationship with, they were all broken in their own way….during that time I just gravitated towards those men."*

Lauren: *"He [significant other] was a very kind person but I started to see a lot of other things about him which again mirrored a lot of my issues."*

Theme 8: Expressing Negative Conflict Style

The last theme under negative impacts is expressing negative conflict styles. Scholars such as Folger, Poole & Stutman (2009) discuss conflict styles as the way a person responds to conflict. They described five conflict styles as: 1) competing style, 2) accommodating style, 3) avoiding style, 4) collaborating style, and 5) compromising style. The one thing that was most common among all of the participants was the way in which they all dealt with conflict. When asked: Why do you think you experience conflict the way you do? They all blamed their experiences and the way in which they

were raised for how they handled conflict. The two subthemes from this theme were: a) negative social learning and b) destructive conflict (see Figure 8).

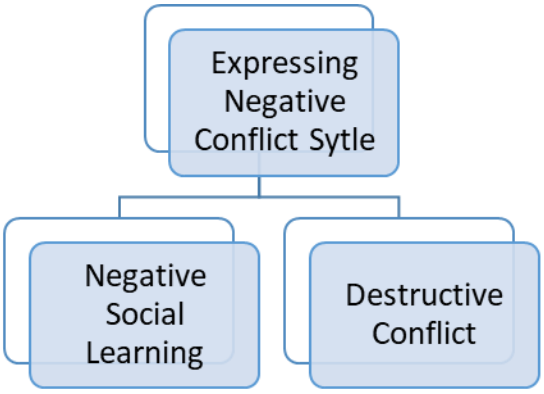

Figure 8. Subthemes from Expressing Negative Conflict Style

Negative Social Learning. Under this subtheme, participants described their experiences of growing up and how that impacted the way they saw conflict. For most of them, it was through social learning, they mirrored their behaviors based on how they saw their mothers dealing with conflict. They believed that they learned the negative behaviors by watching mom or by simply the way in which they were raised.

> ***Cassie:*** *"I see how my mom deals with conflict; I see that I do the same."*
>
> *Cassie: "I grew up like, so that's all I saw and that's how I became."*
>
> ***Estephania:*** *"I grew up with watching my mom in conflict. So that's how she [mom] dealt with it, So I picked it up and that's how I dealt with conflict which was screaming and being trying to be the best, the loudest person being right."*
>
> ***Fiona:*** *"I learned from my mom and just seeing the way she was."*
>
> ***Georgette:*** *"It has to do with the way I was raised. My mom never pushed me to say hey you need to step up and you know tell him something."*
>
> ***Heather:*** *"Habit, I mean I grew up in that setting. My grandmother was always arguing with my grandfather….I think is just a genetic thing for us."*

Maria: *"We learn, we mirror what we what we are around and what we see. I didn't have that type of environment so kind of like figure thigs out of myself through trial and error and through education, workplace, friends, things like that. So I used socialization early on to cope and that helped but that wasn't the solution to everything because you have to make good choices along socializing."*

Oprah: *"I think is more related to seeing and being in this one parent household. That's exactly how my mother is. All I grew up seeing was my mother yelling at me and fighting about things."*

Oprah: *"I do know that in the beginning, I had a negative outlook about men in general. My mom too, growing up she mentioned that men are good for nothing. They use you and then they leave you. So hearing those messages growing up made me very guarded as to men in general."*

Destructive Conflict. Participants responded to conflict by either being defensive and hurtful or by being avoidant and dismissive. The behaviors reflected two opposite spectrums. When asked: "How did your experience of not having a father affect you with how you engage in conflict?" Participants felt that they had to protect themselves from being hurt, therefore, they were defensive towards others. These participants showed a lot of aggressiveness and violent behavior.

Defensive

Allison: *"I was super defensive. I was with my claws out. I was vengeful. I was spiteful….I am a fighter."*

Isis: *"I would definitely say I'm more defensive more so with male figures."*

Xiomara: *"I'm very strong and I'm very aggressive towards any conflict or any body and I'm always very defensive for anything, I get defensive."*

Yesenia*: "A woman when she doesn't have a male figure in her life she has to defend herself from everything that comes along to hurt her."*

These participants were mean and knew where and how to hurt people.

Hurtful.

Allison: *"I have to admit, I am very….he says that my words are like knives because I hurt him where it hurts."*

Barbara: *"Always being so defensive if you will has subsided, but you know there is that thing hurt people, hurt people and I didn't know at the time how to process any of my emotions."*

Quiana: *"I can be very mean sometimes….I have this tendency of being very cruel….I say very mean thing and they could be very hurtful."*

The opposite behavior of the spectrum was that of being avoidant. Individuals with avoidant attachment, tend to withdraw from conflict and show less confidence (Shi, 2003). When asked: "What would the argument look like?" For these participants, it was easier to ignore the conflict. In most cases they walked away every time they saw themselves in an uncomfortable situation.

Avoidant.

Heather: *"Me getting mad at him telling him [significant other] a lot of bad words because I do have a potty mouth. Clearly trying to calm me down and then I storm off and leave to the room or lock myself in the bathroom so that I don't have to deal with it or just ignore it."*

Jessica: *"Me screaming a lot or me just leaving cause that's normally what I would do. If I'm just frustrated and upset I'll just leave."*

Katherine: *"Usually I am either talking but after a while I just give up and walk away."*

Nancy: *"It looks like a lot of leaving on my end and me like pushing somebody away when they are probably just trying to not do that."*

Oprah: *"I tend to retreat. Like I tend to like not engage with anybody just keep to myself…I'm careless, I don't care about the person or the situation." (p15)*

Oprah: *"For me not to be so sad and so depressed about the reality, my initial reaction was to retreat, just to get lost in music, or draw or just be in my room or just retreat from everybody."*

Pepita: *"I would retreat and think about it. I don't show any emotion, everything happens internally*

Pepita: *"I just want to take a nap, I want to keep it off, I want to stay away from everybody or run off away to an island….it is more like a safety net for me just not wanting to be aware of the reality."*

Quiana: *"I used to be very quiet. I used to avoid conflict. I used to be, oh I don't want to fight."*

Rosita: *"It's typically me on the couch, on my phone ignoring him."*

Viviana: *"I just learned how to avoid, how to cope with things….i just learned how to shut everything down and that's how I know how to deal with it versus facing the problem head on.*

For these participants, whatever the other person had to say was not of their interest. In their minds, they already had their mind set on what they wanted and they had no intentions to listen or rationalize with anyone.

Dismissive

> **Debbie*:*** *"I wouldn't necessarily be yelling and screaming but I would in my mind already be dismissive of whatever he was saying and just I guess ready to come back with whatever my argument or my point is and just disregarding his opinion."*
>
> **Rosita:** *"I literally just kind of disassociation….I block out all the noise that's around me….I just space out."*
>
> **Xiomara:** *"Me being the alpha, I'm always trying to be over him."*

During the interview process the participants did not only show a negative impact but there were also six group composite themes that reflected a positive impact on the participant's lives: 1) Having a support system, 2) Seeking Mind and Body Well Being, 3) Becoming Strong, 4) Being a Positive Force as a Parent, 5) Overcoming Negative Emotions and 6) Developing Constructive Conflict Style.

Positive Impact

Theme 9: Having a Support System

The ninth group composite theme of a positive impact is that of having a support system. According to King (2016), social support is when others provide feedback showing that one is loved, valued and cared for. There are three types of support: tangible support; information and emotional support. Under tangible support, family and friends can provide support when needed. Recommendations and strategies can also be

provided as part of the support and that would fall under information. Lastly, emotional support is when family and friends provide reassurance of love when individuals are under stress and depressed (King, 2016). Participants in this study shared that even though most of them had a rough childhood, they had some type of support system that they could count on. Whether it was their family members, friends or work, they had someone they can go to for guidance.

Family

> **Cassie:** *"My mother left when I was 5 so I was raised by my grandmother and basically my uncles were around…..If I needed anything I would go to my grandmother. Umm asked my uncles if I needed let's say guidance in school."*
>
> **Heather:** *"When I first got with my husband I went to a program he helped me, he has been very supportive of my recovery and he's helped me out a lot."*

Friends

> **Lauren:** *"A slow process of being in different relationships, interacting with different people also seeing the people around me. So by seeing the way people reacted to certain situations and how crazy I thought it was the way they were reacting made me kind of look at myself….and I didn't want to be you know doing that."*

Work

> **Debbie:** *"Some of what I've learned is from my job, from my job and work in government service, conflict management things like that. I've been an administrator while I was in a supervisory position so I think a lot of those things I have learned in being in leadership positions."*

Estepahia: *"I've been through relationships, been through experience through my background in the military, I have learned to accept that not everybody sees things my way and appreciate the differences that people see in a situation. So my environment and my experiences have changed the way that I approach or not approach but deal with conflict."*

Theme 10: Seeking Mind & Body Well Being

The tenth group composite theme that was analyzed under positive impact was that of seeking mind and body well-being. King (2016) stated that our bodies and minds are connected. Even though the mind is responsible for what happens in the body, the body can also influence the mind. There are different ways of seeking a healthy mind and body. With that being said, participants understood the importance of seeking some type of intervention in order to overcome all the traumas they suffered as young kids. The two subthemes for seeking mind and body well-being are: a) mental health intervention and b) spirituality (see Figure 9).

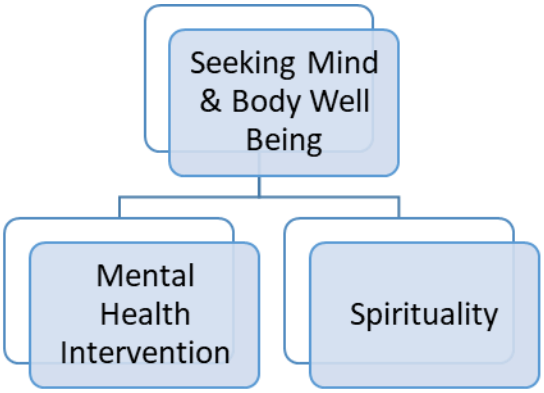

Figure 9. Subtheme for Seeking Mind & Body Well Being

Mental Health Intervention. Participants received therapy and counseling in order to have a better outlook about life. The science of psychology provides various treatments to help relieve psychological suffering (King, 2016). Participants knew it

was important to seek some type of intervention in order to overcome all the traumas they had.

Therapy

> **Heather:** *"I went to therapy to try to get over it, which I did."*
>
> **Nancy:** *"I've gotten to this point through a good amount of therapy and self-introspection as well over the years."*
>
> **Rosita:** *"I'm seeking therapy because even though yes I do love him, or love the idea of him or how he was before with me, I want to let go of my all the anger I have towards my parents of this disgusting attachment I have with this man [significant other]."*

Counseling

> **Maria:** *"It took me a lot of years to really pick myself up. I went for counseling as a good thing because my mom became very ill and it was a very difficult time….and I went through this group session with a therapist and I found it to be quite invigorating."*

Spirituality. Other participants relied on other means in order to seek mind and body well-being. While some relied on therapy and counseling, others relied on their own spirituality. For them, their faith helped them overcome their traumas. Religious faith has been considered a positive technique for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In some instances, weekly religious meetings are contributed to healthy behaviors such as not smoking, taking vitamins, walking, wearing seatbelts, exercising and sleeping well (King, 2016). Religious participation also provides health through social support relationships. This provides individuals with access to people who can be available when

in times of need. These connections can definitely assist with depression and anxiety by preventing loneliness. Lastly, religious faith can be beneficial by providing meaning to life, providing hope and stimulating positive life changes (King, 2016).

Fiona: *"I'm very spiritual so I have a lot of faith in Jesus."*

"For me, it was my faith. You know I'm Catholic, leaning on God especially at times where I felt so alone was very helpful for me you know.

Theme 11: Becoming Strong

Becoming strong is the eleventh group composite theme under positive impact. What this theme highlights is the way in which participants had to be strong for several reasons. One because they were very independent and because they wanted to prove to themselves and others that they did not need anything from anyone. They wanted to show, especially to their fathers that they could do it in life without them.

Two subthemes that developed from becoming strong are: a) self-reliance/independence and b) proving one-self (see Figure 10).

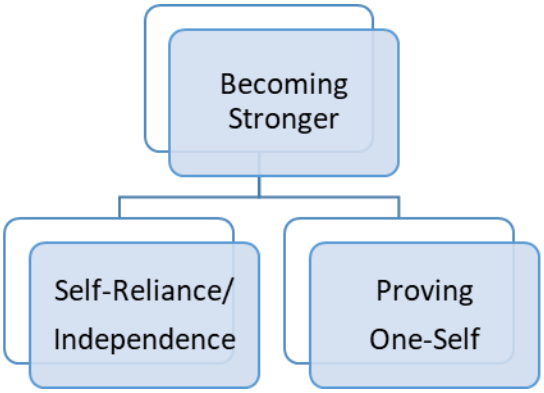

Figure 10. Subtheme for Becoming Strong

Self-Reliance/Independence. For most women, having to rely on one self was the norm. Either because mom was working all the time or because they left home at an

early age, they had to become independent. These women knew they had faced a challenge but that did not stop them from becoming strong and successful.

Self-reliance/Independence

Fiona: *"The positive side was like depending on myself, helping my mom or being stronger for myself……You know like also being the type of person that I am in the sense of like assertive.*

Jessica: *"I've been very independent and very self-sufficient since I was 17. I have not lived with my mom since I was 17 so I grew up with a strong character."*

Yesenia: *"I think it's made me very strong. I've had to actually confront things on my own and deal with things alone. So I think not having a dad has made me a very strong woman, a very strong person, a very strong character."*

Proving One-Self. It did not stop there, these participants wanted to show that it did not matter how difficult life was or what challenges they faced, they were going to be successful in life.

Proving one-self

Allison: *"I did it on my own and here I am I got a BMW, I have my own apartment without you [dad]. He [dad]never gave me shit but I worked my ass off to get what I want because I wanted to prove to him [dad] that I could."*

Maria: *"Driven, probably I would say more accomplished, more educated. I feel a great sense of self-worth, big self-esteem. You know a lot of good things."*

Theme 12: Being a Positive Force as a Parent

Participants reflected on their childhood experiences and shared their desires to be a positive influence on their children. They were intentional about their parenting efforts.

For many, it was a matter of making sure their children did not experience what they went through as kids. For others, it was a matter of creating an environment where they were stable.

Intentional about parenting

> **Barbara:** *"I don't have children for a reason because I chose not to have any kids because I don't want them to experience anything that I have at all."*
>
> **Debbie:** *"I'm grateful that my kids haven't experience what it's like to be raised in a single parent home because me and my husband were married for about eight years before we had kids."*
>
> **Maria:** *"A good parent of course. You know through those trials you can become a better parent because you know exactly what it sounds like and you won't do that to your children. You know you want to be a better parent and you raise more healthier, more stable children."*

Theme 13: Overcoming Negative Emotions

The thirteenth group composite theme to analyze was that of overcoming negative emotions. Participants understood that it was necessary to overcome all of the negative emotions they had in order to move on in a positive manner with their lives. The two subthemes under overcoming negative emotions are: a) forgiveness and b) closure (see Figure 11).

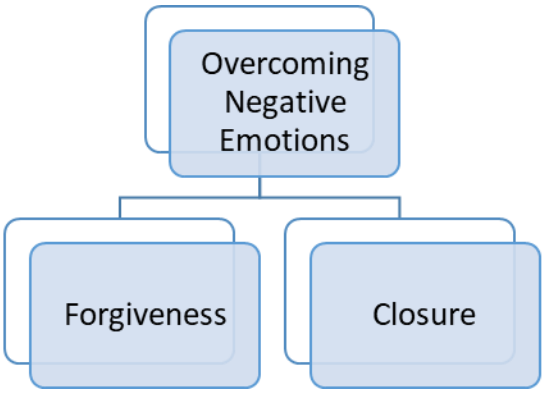

Figure 11. Subthemes for Overcoming Negative Emotions

Forgiveness. For some of the participants, they were able to assist their fathers during their last days of their lives. By doing so, they were able to forgive them and overcome all of the negative emotions they held inside for their fathers.

Allison: *"I was with him [dad] for 3 weeks in the hospital…..I stepped inside, I talked to him [dad], I prayed for him [dad] and I did everything I could."*

Allison: *"So at the end of the day, I am glad I spent those last 3 weeks with my dad."*

Heather: *"I forgave my father and I did, I did forgive him and we had a somewhat relationship until I lost contact."*

Closure. Other participants were able to overcome negative emotions through closure. They understood that, their fathers leaving the home was not their fault. The ability to have closure helped them release all the anger they felt inside.

Allison: *"Through meditation and some healing work I realized it wasn't my fault and then I had closure with my father before he died."*

Heather: *"They told me to talk to my father so I did. I sat down and I spoke to my father I told him that I was hurt. You know he cried and everything you know rest in peace, he is deceased now."*

Heather: *"I'm not really so angry anymore. So I look at my father and me, we had our closure and a lot of women that were abandoned by their fathers don't have that* closure."

Xiomara: *"I found my own closure."*

Theme 14: Developing Constructive Conflict Style

The fourteenth group composite theme under positive impact is developing constructive conflict style. The most significant experience that most participants shared was that of allowing change in the way they responded to conflict. The two subthemes that developed from developing constructive conflict style were: a) learning what not to do and b) changing their style (see Figure 12).

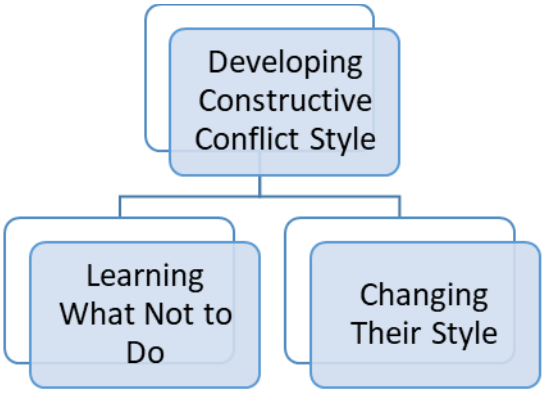

Figure 12. Subthemes for Developing Constructive Conflict Style

Learning What Not to Do. The participants compared their style of dealing with conflict from when they were younger to how they currently deal with conflict and realized that there were things they needed to learn on what not to do.

Cassie: *"In the past, I would be the one staying quiet and then he [significan other] would be the one talking and you know, maybe screaming. Now, not so much. You know, I kind of started dealing with things different a little bit. I don't stay quiet anymore. I argue back."*

Debbie: *"I'm learning now that I know it's not always good to be guarded and protected because then you know you also shut out other people by doing that."*

Debbie: *"Now I think I've learned to stay calm and I don't always react."*

Changing Their Style. All the participants went from a destructive conflict style to a constructive conflict style.

Cassie: *"I try to make the person see my point of view to reason, and I also see his point of view. So now I would say that we will be talking to each other more."*

Debbie: *"I just try and take what he is saying even if he's raising his voice and then re-approach him later after he's calmed down and we can talk about it clearly."*

Estephania: *"In my twenties you would be seeing me yelling to get my point across, to be louder than the other person. But now in my thirties, through just life experience and relationships….more calm, more thinking before I speak but still assertive."*

Theme 15: Achieving Transformation

The fifteenth and last group composite theme that revealed a positive impact on the participant's lives was that of achieving transformation. The researcher found this theme to be the most significant from the entire study as participants revealed an enormous change in their live experiences in relationships but particularly in their conflict styles. Participants showed two extreme behaviors related to conflict. They were either avoidant or aggressive. For example, participants described how when they were younger, they wouldn't stand for themselves but now that they are older, they take the bull by the horns and the arguments look like a woman standing for herself and

knowing her self-worth. Others described how before they stayed quiet and their significant others yelled when in an argument but now they voice their opinions. Before they would have not cared and wouldn't talk about it but now they are calmer. Other examples include participants yelling and getting on people's faces, being very confrontational to now trying to talk things out. Before, participants revealed they were nasty physically and mentally whereas now they are mellower and communicate more instead of being violent.

> **Barbara:** *"I don't use substances today to numb the pain because I got other coping skills. Now I have really good meaningful relationships that are based on reciprocity and you know I have really good people in my life….."Through a series of events and circumstances I am not that person anymore, but like the 12 steps of alcoholic anonymous and additional work that I had to do with a therapist, you know and I shouldn't say commiserating but like kind of it was like precisely that with other women who had the same exact boiler plate upbringing and seen them triumph and have healthy relationships and just be better to themselves you know, that caused a lot of hope and my angst you know that inner angst started subsiding because of that, because I was moving away from that thought of ok you are worthless, you are not worth anything, you don't deserve good things, you know, I was able to move from that but it was a slow painful transition to getting to the point where I am now, where there is more self-love, there is more self-worth."*

Debbie: *"In the past I would raise up to the challenge you know, if he was yelling, I was going to yell but you know I realized after years of marriage that you know that wasn't the best approach because we didn't solve anything."*

Estephania: *"Before you would see me yelling, now I'm more calm, thinking before I speak but still assertive."*

Idiosyncratic Nuances

Aside from the fifteenth group composite descriptions, there were five idiosyncratic nuances that evolved from this study: 1. Caring for a father; 2. Rescuing partner; 3. A daughter's responsibility; 4. Mother's protections and 5. Involvement with the grandchildren.

Caring for a father. Even though her father had abandoned her when she was two years old, she was able to care for him before he passed away. She was glad to have spent that time with him. This was a way for her to be able to heal herself from all of the resentment. She was able to understand that it was not her fault and it was not his fault, it was a mix of events that took place.

Allison: *"So when I went to the hospital, I never left for 3 weeks….I talked to him [dad], I prayed for him [dad] and I did everything I could."*

Rescuing partner. This participant always seemed to fall for the wrong men. She wanted to give what she never received. She wanted to save her partner by providing him with everything. The problem was that you cannot help someone who does not want to be helped

Allison: *"I felt like I could help him [significant other], I felt like I could help [significant other] him not be addicted….I was a fool to think that I could fix*

someone or that I could help someone or that he [significant other] would even change."

A daughter's responsibility. This participant somehow became her father's legal guardian. This was the only case where the roles reversed. What is even more interesting is that instead of the father being thankful and supportive, he mistreats his daughter. As if the pain he caused by abandoning her was not enough, she now has to continue with the hostile environment that he brings to her.

Rosita: *"I ended up being his [dad] legal guardian and I'm the one who takes care of him [dad] but I absolutely hate it…..he [dad] treats me horrible, horrible, horrible."*

Mother's Protection. For this participant, her mother felt that it was in her best interest to be away from dad because his conditions were not fit for her to stick around him. This was probably the hardest thing her mom had to do but she knew she had no choice and therefore, she took her daughter from her dad. This was the only case where the mother was to blame for the separation between the daughter and the father. However, a few years later the participant had the opportunity to reunite with her father but he never showed up.

Barbara: *"My mom kidnap me from my dad. She took me from him because of the way he as living, what he was doing, what he was involved in."*

Involvement with Grandchildren. For this participant, she wished her father would have been part of her life but especially part of her children's life. Even though he was not part of her life, she wished he would be part of it now and enjoy his grandchildren.

Jessica: *"I see my 2 year-old and I think until this day I think how does my dad like not want to be part of what I'm going through with my own child. Why wouldn't he [dad] want to see me doing the thing that I see my own child doing."*

This chapter focused on the analysis of the data collected and the outcome of that analysis. Fifteen group composite themes and three idiosyncratic nuances were analyzed. The findings presented in this chapter speak to the general issues that Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers have experienced. The essence of this phenomena was discussed by the participants in different ways. In the next chapter, the discussion of these findings will be presented, framed through the theoretical frameworks of transcendental phenomenology, attachment theory and social construct theory. Lastly, the limitations and contributions of this study will be discussed.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In the previous chapter, the researcher laid out the findings of this study which included the participant's lived experiences of Hispanic women who were abandon by their fathers at a young age and how it impacted their conflict resolution skills. Chapter 5 describes and discusses the impact of father abandonment and the implications on conflict resolution. In addition, the purpose of this dissertation is reviewed as well as key findings are discussed. The three interpretive lenses for the study are reviewed: transcendental phenomenology, attachment theory and social construct theory. Next, the main themes of the study are discussed: the negative impact of father abandonment and the positive impact of father abandonment. Throughout the discussions, the literature reviews relevant to these findings that was used in earlier will be examined. After the researcher discusses the findings, the researcher will conclude with a discussion on the limitations and contributions of the study for future research.

Purpose

Through phenomenological research the purpose of this dissertation was to describe and understand the conflict management skills of Hispanic women who experienced paternal abandonment at a young age. Through the research process, actual research related to father abandonment and conflict styles were reviewed. While a vast research on father abandonment was found, a relatively small number of research on the topic of conflict patterns of abandoned daughters was found. Actual studies largely focused specifically on the attachment styles of women with abandonment issues.

Discussion

My interview findings from father abandonment expand on the literature. Father abandonment has a negative impact on women by creating development problems, relationship problems as well as problems on the families of the abandoned children. The hurt expressed by abandoned women in available literature was also noted by many of the participants. Father abandonment represented a negative impact on the participant's lives. The negative effects gave some of the participants hope bringing positive outcomes into their lives. Conflicts experienced by women who experienced father abandonment, also missing from the literature was exploded in my study. The way in which participants dealt with conflict range from two opposite stands. Some participants dealt with conflict in a defensive, hurtful manner while others dealt with conflict by avoiding it or dismissing it.

Transcendental Phenomenology Theory

This research was guided by its main theory which was transcendental phenomenology theory. The researcher used transcendental phenomenology to describe the experiences of 25 Hispanic women who resided and South Florida and experienced father abandonment at a young age and how that affected their conflict resolution skills. The most common theme that developed among the participants was that of abandonment. One can see how transcendental phenomenology played an important role in describing the participant's experiences when dealing with abandonment. It showed the essence of what it is like living with pain and learning how to deal with abandonment issues.

The study used Kvales (2007) seven stages of an interview and while most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, there were some that were conducted over the telephone. Vogl (2013) stated that telephone interviews versus face-to-face lack the visual communication, that is the facial expressions and body movements. Telephone interviews makes it more difficult for the parties to build trust and rapport. Even though the telephone interviews were less impersonal. I, the researcher found myself having to work extra hard at building the participant's trust. This was done through the use of follow up questions and showing concern. In some cases, I felt that the participants felt comfortable talking and sharing very intimate information because some of the details were easier to talk over the phone than in person. However, as the researcher, I had to build that rapport because it did not come naturally. In a qualitative study such as Transcendental Phenomenology, consistency on themes that emerged is important. Through the use of bracketing, and by being reflective of my role and by asking follow up questions, I was able to validate and bring trustworthiness to the study. This process is a strength in the research.

Attachment Theory

In addition to using transcendental phenomenology to describe the participant's experiences, the researcher also used attachment theory to describe the relationships that participants had with their family members and significant others. For example, Abascal (2012) gave us three types of relationship patterns under the attachment theory: warm/responsive, cold/rejecting and ambivalent/inconsistent. This theory describes how the participants felt ambivalent about their fathers or significant others. There were many expectations that were broken such as losing trust and feeling uncertain about what their

lives would have been if their fathers would have been around. Abascal (2012) also stated that those who experienced an inconsistent and ambivalent childhood would also display anxious attachment as adults. Anxious is one of the three styles of intimate behaviors under attachment theory. Anxious adults become obsessive in love when faced with problems with trust and insecurity due to their unpredicting upbringing (Abascal 2012). This was the case for the participants. Their unstable upbringing brought them instability into their relationships as adults. They were afraid of being abandoned or rejected by their significant others, therefore, they hung onto the relationship regardless of how abusive it was.

Social Construct Theory

The theory of social construction was used to understand the participant's views through objective reality. Andrews (2012) stated that objective reality is developed from the interactions of individuals and how those interactions influence their views. Those views then impact an individual's routine and habits. For the participants, they learned how to deal with conflict at a young age based on how they interacted with their mothers and how they saw their mothers deal with conflict. Participants created their own views based on those experiences and learned the same social negative behaviors. For the participants, the most repeated behaviors were the screaming, the arguing and the fighting. Through the behavioral responses caused by their feelings and emotions, one can see how the participant's form of conflict was destructive. Participants developed behavioral responses that ranged from aggression to avoidance.

Both aggression and avoidance are related to conflict styles. There are five different conflict styles: 1) competing, 2) accommodating, 3) avoiding, 4) collaborating,

and 5) compromising. Aggression is directly related to competing style of conflict. Folger etl. (2009) stated that in competing, individuals not necessarily use aggression as a result of ineffective conflict but rather as one of the first strategies used when in conflict. This was the case for the participants. They used aggression as a defense mechanism. Futhermore, Folger etl. (2009) added that poor relationships with family during the early years of age, was associated with the use of physical aggression in conflicts in adult relationships, which explains exactly how the participants described their experiences to be. On the other hand, avoidance is a conflict style where individuals tend to avoid conflict. This style of conflict does not allow for issues to come afloat, therefore not allowing for individual's interests to be addressed. A form of avoidance is withdrawal. In withdrawal, individuals work to keep issues of the table (Folger, etl., 2009). For the participants, it was easier to ignore conflict, then it was to deal with it. Every time, they saw themselves in an uncomfortable situation, they walked away.

Figure 13 is a representation of the interpretive perceptions of Hispanic women on paternal abandonment. The blue represents the negative impact while the green represents the positive impact.

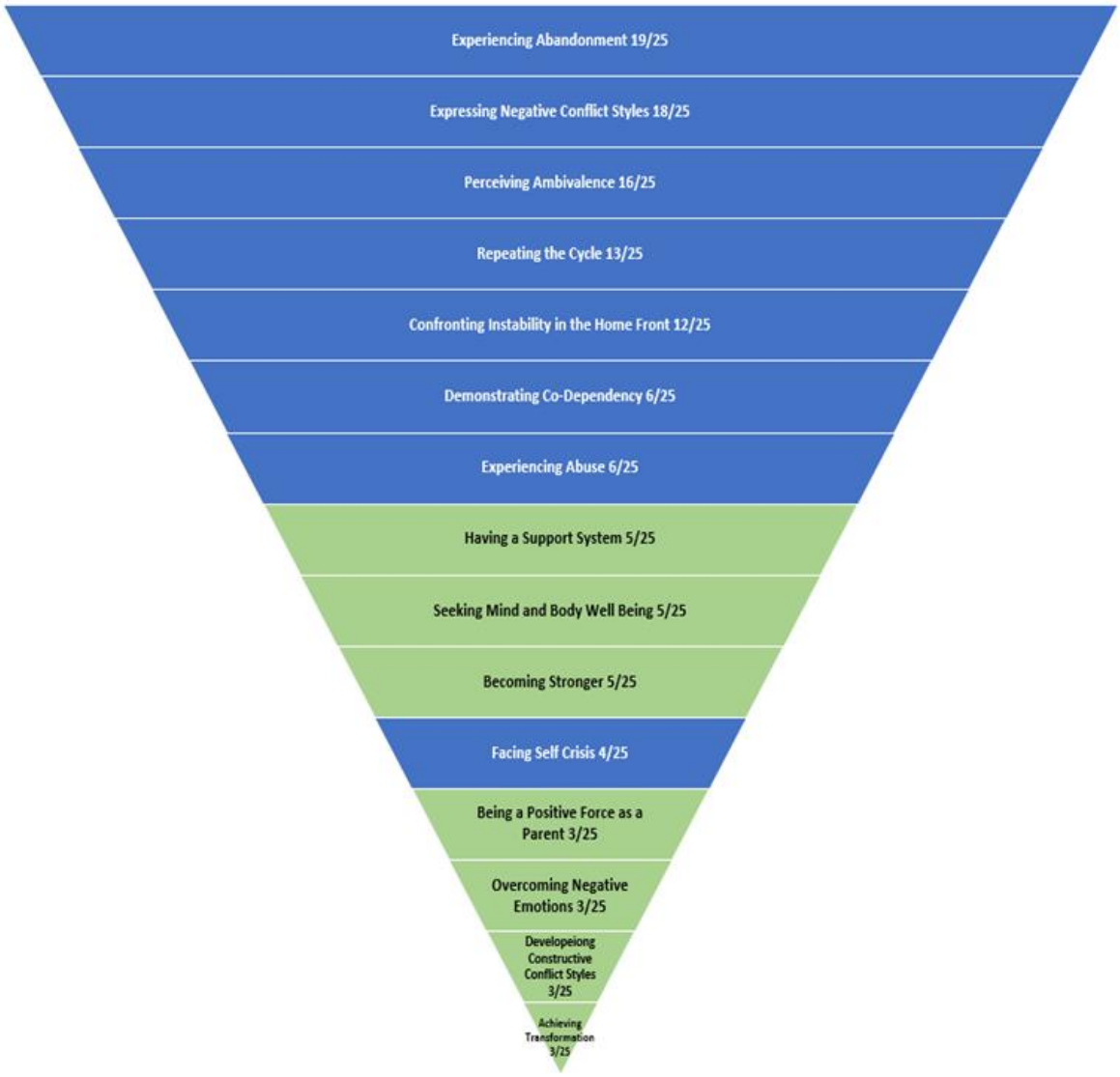

Figure 13. Interpretative Perceptions of Hispanic Women on Paternal Abandonment

Interpretative Perceptions of Hispanic Women on Paternal Abandonment

Theme 1: Experiencing Abandonment

Experiencing abandonment is the overarching theme that also incorporates negative emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, loneliness, hurt, resentment, depression and a lack of attachment of bond towards their fathers; questioning self; and experiencing negative perceptions. Father abandonment caused the participants to experience many

struggles throughout their live spam. Of all the themes that developed from this study, experiencing abandonment was experienced by 19 out of the 25 participants.

When asked to please share their experience of what it was like growing up without a father, most participants described feelings of anger. According to Williams & Williams (1993) anger kills and it is a component of harmful hostility. About 20% of the general population carry high levels of hostility that could be dangerous to their health. Hostile people experience more conflict than non-hostile people. This rationale explains why these participants reacted to conflict the way they did.

Often times participants questioned themselves as to why their dad left them. There was a lot self-blame reflected as part of their shared experiences. They believed dad leaving was their fault. In some cases, dad raised other siblings from other marriages which made the participants feel it was their fault why dad did not stay: “Why not me?”

There were many negative perceptions the participants developed from the experiences they had of being abandoned. One main perception that kept arising from their shared experiences was that of resentment. Participants felt resentful towards their moms and dad for the way in which they were raised. Most participants not only had to experience the abandonment form their fathers, but also experience abandonment from their mothers. When the father left the home, the mother had to take on more responsibility to care for the children which in return left them in the care of a family member or alone. When one is young, it is difficult to understand why mom and dad are not at home creating a sense of detachment and resentment. In return participants grew depressed wondering how their lives would have been if dad would have never left them.

Theme 2: Experiencing Abuse

Aside from all the negative emotions, perceptions and questioning, the participants also experienced abuse. When asked why they experienced conflict the way they did, 6 out of 25 stated that it was because of the lack of protection and abuse they experienced. They blamed the fact that father was not home to protect them, therefore they were left vulnerable to suffer abuse from others. In most cases, the abuse was brought by someone close to the family.

Theme 3: Facing Self Crisis

From the 6 participants who experienced abuse, 4 experienced self-crisis. Not only were the participants being abused by others, but they were abusing themselves as well. For some, there was the suicide attempts, for others it was alcohol and drug dependency. King (2016) stated that alcoholism can be a cause of environmental influences or it could be a biological pattern. In this study, there were a few participants who experienced father abandonment because their fathers were alcoholics which made them emotionally absent from the home. For others, alcohol as well as drugs were used as an escape route to help cope with the negative feelings. Participants felt they had lived through so much already that they were tired of life and wanted to end the pain.

Theme 4: Confronting Instability in the Home Front

Another struggle that 12 out of the 25 participants had in common was that of confronting instability in the home front. For the participants, the father abandonment led to financial challenges in the home. Mom now had to work two or three jobs to provide for them and their siblings. The literature shows how economic consequences are greater for women than for men following divorce (Amato, 2010; Bryan, 1999;

Duffy, Thomas, & Trayner, 2002). In a study conducted by Bianchi and colleagues, they found that following divorce, mothers had a 36% decline in standard of living, whereas men had a 28% increase. Such a difference showed how divorced women reported to have more financial difficulties such as not being able to pay bills. A cause for such difference is because women usually do not have a steady work history and experience more wage and employment discrimination compared to men.

Another instability in the home front had to do with how these women were exposed to cheating and substance abuse at a very young age. They heard from mom how she got cheated on by dad or heard how mom cheated on by dad. Most dads had drinking problems which caused their marriages to end leaving the home and the children.

According to the Encyclopedia of Children's Health (2012), Dennis (1998) and Condrell (2003) fathers abandon their children in different ways: through divorce, death, military duty, addictions, incarceration and chronic physical or mental illness. In this research the main reasons for the father abandonment were due to divorce, military and addictions.

Theme 5: Perceiving Ambivalence

Just as there was a lot of instability in the home, 16 out of the 25 participants perceived ambivalence, inconsistency. There were three types of ambivalence: Ambivalence with their fathers, ambivalence in relationships and anxious attachment. Many times, the participants found themselves waiting for their fathers to pick them up, to call them or simply to be there for them. These experiences brought them a lack of trust. They figured if their fathers did it to them, anyone else can also do it. Their fathers

abandoning them put a lot of insecurities and uncertainty into their lives. They felt that they needed acceptance from males causing them to be heartbroken when those needs were not met.

Participants had high expectations on their significant others and were heart broken when those expectation were broken. The participants had in mind the type of men they wanted in their lives. They looked for men with principles, who could offer stability and commitment. However, none of the men had those qualities to offer. Therefore, they ended the relationships. They found themselves jumping from relationships to relationships. The Literature stated that those who experience an ambivalent childhood would display an anxious attachment style as adults. That was the case for these participants.

Theme 6: Repeating the Cycle

Glenn & Kramer (1987) stated that 'intergenerational transmission of divorce,' is when children from divorced homes are more likely to repeat the cycle of divorcing themselves when adults. 13 out of 25 participants experienced repeating the cycle. The men they were intimate with were broken just as they were. They also showed signs of being cheaters and abusive. The participants all shared that they were attracted to a type of man, a broken man. All these signs and conditions resulted in the participants getting tired, falling out of love, and ending the relationships.

Theme 7: Demonstrating Co-Dependency

Six out of the twenty-five participants shared experiences of co-dependency. They relied completely on their significant other, giving them control over them. In some

instances, they shared the fact that they were attracted to men who were just as broken as they were.

Co-dependency is another factor of attachment theory. Co-dependent individuals are those who depend on others because they feel they cannot survive on their own (Abascal, 2012). Participants entirely relied on their significant others and created situations where they wanted to be in exaggerated close intimate relationships. This created a big problem for the participants as they wished to have all their needs met but instead, it created a cycle of unhappiness and deprivation.

Theme 8: Expressing Negative Conflict Styles

All the abandonment experiences that creative negative emotions, perceptions, abuse, instability, ambivalence and co-dependency made for 18 out of the 25 participants to develop negative conflict styles. The participants experienced destructive conflict behaviors because they did not know any better. They reflected what they saw others doing, in this case through social learning. The main two destructive conflict behaviors were either aggressiveness or avoidant/dismissive. These were defense mechanism that participants used in order to avoid getting hurt.

According to King (2016) aggression refers to a social behavior where an individual's main goal is to harm someone either verbally or physically. There are many reasons why an individual may display aggressiveness in this study frustration, and social learning were the two main causes for aggression. First, when they felt that they could not get their point across or felt misunderstood, it created a sense of frustration that turned into aggressiveness. Second, they learned how to become aggressive by observing

their mothers. They observed their mothers engage in aggressive actions, therefore, they learned to do the same.

Some individuals who experience frustration can also become passive (King, 2016). The other destructive conflict behavior expressed by the participants in this study was that of being avoidant/dismissive. Rather than being aggressive, participants were passive by becoming avoidant/dismissive. They did not speak up, they locked themselves in a room or slept to let time pass by. After a while they would come out as if nothing had happened. The cycle of behaviors continued every time they were faced with a conflict.

Theme 9: Having a Support System

Another aspect of this study was the positive impact of father abandonment. The literature review stated that a way in which a child develops and behaves has to do with their environment and social support, which was the case of 5 out of the 25 participants in this study. A study conducted by Hayashi & Strickland (1998) showed that coming from a single parent home can actually have a positive outcome on a child's life. Coming from a single home teaches individuals to be more sensitive to problems and to have more commitment to solving those problems. Under the attachment theory, the attachment figure does not necessarily need to be formed with the biological mother and father but instead it can be done with other parental figures. This was exactly the case of the participants who shared that even though they experienced a rough childhood, they also had a support system that became parental figures such as their moms, other family members, friends and work that they could count on for guidance when needed.

Theme 10: Seeking Mind and Body Well Being

Our bodies and minds are connected. The mind and the body impact each other interchangeably. For example, the mind influences the body's health and the body influences the mind as well (King, 2016). Five out of the twenty-five participants were able to seek some type of intervention to help them overcome all the traumas they suffered as young girls due to the father abandonment. According to King (2016) therapies are used to relief suffering. Whether it was through therapy, counseling or spirituality, participants shared that they needed this type of support system in order to help them cope and understand why their fathers left them and how to move on with life.

Religious faith is related to a healthy lifestyle (King, 2016). Becoming active in a religious community, can be a very effective means of helping achieve a more positive outlook in life. By joining a religious group, an individual creates bonds with people who share the same ideas, values and traditions (King, 2016 &Williams & Williams, 1993). This was the case for the participants in this study who felt that the practice of prayer improved their physical health. The help of a support community made it easier for them to believe and trust in something and someone especially after their trust had been destroyed by their own fathers.

Theme 11: Becoming Stronger

One common theme that 5 out of the 25 participants had, was that of becoming stronger. They had other choices but decided to be successful instead. These participants were able to turn their negative experiences into positive ones. These participants wanted to prove to themselves that they could do it on their own and they did not need a

father in order to be successful. They went onto getting their master's degrees and obtain leadership jobs with the government or as owners of their own companies.

Theme 12: Being a Positive Force as a Parent

For 3 out of the 25 participants, their children were one of the biggest reasons why they made an effort to change their life styles. They wanted to be a positive force as a parent to their children. They were intentional in their parenting efforts and they wanted to create a stable environment for their kids.

Theme 13: Overcoming Negative Emotions

Three out of the twenty-five participants understood that they had to forgive and overcome all the negative emotions they had in order to get closure. As Williams & Williams (1993) stated, "for many…. long term anger with no forgiveness is deadly." (p. 161). Participants were able to understand that they had nothing to do with their father's decision to abandon them. The negative emotions they had cooped inside was causing more harm than anything else. Therefore, they knew they had to forgive and by doing so it gave them the ability to have closure and release the anger they felt.

Theme 14: Developing Constructive Conflict Styles

Three out of the twenty-five participants were able to achieve constructive conflict styles by analyzing their past conflict styles and learning what not to do. For instance, they knew they had to stop being aggressive. Rather than yelling and wanting to be the controller, they listened and reflected on what was being said. For others, rather than avoiding the problem, they began to talk and communicate more effectively.

Theme 15: Achieving Transformation

According to Augsburger (1992) in order for the transformation to take place in conflict, participants had to create change in the following two areas: attitudes and behaviors. Transforming attitudes: changing negative perceptions. participants had to learn what not to do and change their life styles. For most participants, they had to unlearn what they learned through social learning. All the negative perceptions about relationships had to be unlearned. Transforming behavior: participants went from being aggressive or avoidant to being collaborative. Transformation took place when the participants changed from a weak self to a stronger self. Participants seek transformation through various means such as seeking mind a body well-being, whether it was through counseling or seeking help from spirituality and faith. Participants knew they had to made changes in their lives because they wanted to be examples for their children and families. Lastly, they had to close that chapter in their lives through forgiveness and closure and once that took place, they were able to move on. For most women, they felt they were successful women with careers and families. They felt they had reached their potential once they felt the transformation in their lives.

The overall findings showed how experiencing father abandonment brought the participants many negative emotions such as anger, fear, hurt and resentment. In some cases, they thought they were the reason why their fathers had left them. Most of these feelings and emotions were carried out throughout their lifetime because of the terrible upbringing they experienced. For some participants, their childhood was so harsh because they suffered abuse from others as well as from themselves. The only way to

cope with the pain was through the use of alcohol or drugs or through the suicide attempts and they blamed the abuse to the lack of protection from their fathers.

It is important to acknowledge that even though father abandonment had a negative impact on the participant's lives, the abandonment was not the only variable. Some of the participants found themselves repeating the cycle of getting involved in romantic relationships with men who were as broken as they were. Such relationships were based on trust issues and negative conflict behaviors. Most of the participants shared that their negative conflict behaviors were a representation of how they saw their mothers dealing with conflict. They learned to either be avoidant and dismissive to prevent getting hurt or aggressive because they felt they had to protect themselves from others.

Despite of the negative impact that most of the participants experienced, some of the participants were able to transform their lives. One of the commonalities that they shared was the fact that they had been married for many years. For example, one married her high school sweetheart, another one had been married for 11 years and another one had been married for 20 years. Another commonality that they shared was the fact that they all had children and had high education levels. These findings support the literature review in that according to Stepler (2017) and Gibbs & Payne (2011) college-educated adults have a lower rate of divorce. Under the attachment theory, such commonalities show how a support system such as a husband and children, can help create bonds that do not necessarily include the biological parents.

As part of the transformation, the participants looked for ways to help them overcome all the traumas they suffered growing. For some, they got help through therapy

and counseling, for others through their spirituality. With the combination of a family and through their faith and therapy, some of the participants were able to reach a level of closure making them stronger in order to be a positive example to their kids as well as create a stable environment for them. In return, they were able to overcome the negative emotions and develop constructive conflict styles.

In summary, the findings support the literature review in that for these participants, father abandonment in fact had negative impacts as children and on their development. However, despite all the difficulties, for some of these participants, they were resilient to the divorce and were able to adapt. These findings support what Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan (1999), stated that the effects of divorce are not all negative. When a child moves from a conflicting, abusive and neglecting family to a calmer one, they show less problems following divorce, particularly this is true for girls who may develop into competent individuals with less behavior problems. It is important to acknowledge the fact that more negative themes emerged compared to positive themes for this particular group of participants. However, for the positive themes, some of the commonalities that the participants shared were that those who experienced a positive impact were happily married, had children and an advanced education at the time of the interviews. In reference to conflict, it was the way in which the participants perceived conflict and the support they received that defined how they reacted to it. Even though there were a lot of more negative impacts on the participant's lives, there were meaningful support systems that contributed to the participant's success in conflict management.

Limitations of the study

The findings suggest that more emphasis should be put on conflict management skills from women who have experienced paternal abandonment. The first limitation of this research comes from the literature review. There is a lack of research done on women who has had the phenomenon of being abandoned by their fathers and how they manage conflict. A more in-depth study needs to be conducted to identify how women manage conflict effectively. A second limitation comes from the eligibility criteria. The research utilized a very specific population of participants. The boundaries of the study were limited to only women between the ages of 25 and 40 who experienced abandonment by their fathers before the age of seven. The study was also based on the assumptions that the participants were honest about meeting the criteria for this research. Since sampling was used to identify 25 eligible women participants, the sample size was a representation of the general population of women who had been abandoned by their fathers and were faced with conflict in every level. Another limitation of this research is that there may be other influence characteristics and variables involved in how these women experience abandonment that may not have shown in this particular study given its specific narrow scope. Results of this study suggest that continuing to examine paternal abandonment is an important topic for researchers to expand on. The researcher feels that, as it was the intent, a foundation for future studies has been developed. Future research can be done as a quantitative study in order to grasp a large scale of themes and to see if in fact those themes would correlate with the ones from this study. Lastly, as discussed in the literature review, there are different forms of father abandonment, for example: divorce, dependency, incarceration, military or death and every form is unique

and experienced differently. Therefore, future studies can be those that focus on each abandonment individually.

Contribution of the study to the field of conflict analysis resolution

This study was to look at how Hispanic women who were abandoned by their fathers dealt with conflict using phenomenology. It will contribute to the broad field of conflict analysis and resolution research in that it will look at the way in which conflict exists on women who were abandoned by their fathers. It is important to bring awareness to this population. Narratives are very powerful stories. The narratives of these participants can provide young Hispanics who can relate with a full narrative, so they can hear advice and recommendations. In addition, this study can help narrative mediation where it can be used as a platform to get fathers and daughters to come up with a cooperative alternative story that might open a space for promise and hope for the future. This study will help the human services field as well as the human resource management, psychology and counseling, social services, marriage and family therapy with an understanding about this phenomenon. The information provided by this study such as the conflict styles that women who were abandoned by their fathers at a young age uses, would be beneficial to the development of treatment programs that target specific conflict behaviors.

This study will also contribute in establishing school-based programs and or trainings for girls and therapeutic interventions for girls who display abandonment issues. In addition, this study can be utilized in future interventions with younger abandoned women. Lastly, a topic of interest could be to create education classes for mothers who have children who have been abandoned by their fathers. Trainings should include

substantial education on stages of divorce and conflict resolution. Lastly, educators and practitioners might benefit from more integrated training opportunities where they can exchange practice and knowledge to better understand and assist this population. In doing so, it can improve their communication, their trust and their future.

Conclusion

This study filled in some gaps in the research of father abandonment on Hispanic women and its effects on conflict management skills. However, further research needs to be conducted. This study was purposely conducted as a phenomenology to obtain the vivid descriptions of the participant's lived experiences. This type of study allowed the participants to expand on their experiences through the use of their own words. The shared experiences of the participants suggest that father abandonment generates many negative implications in the lives of Hispanic women. There is a lot of pain and hurt that goes on in the lives of these women and such should not be considered an insignificant impact. There is a lot of personal development that must go on in order to break away from the negative feelings, emotions and patterns. Even though some of the participants were able to achieve a positive transformation of conflict styles, it was only a small percentage of it.

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Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

NSU NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

The Effects of Paternal Abandonment on Latin Women and their Conflict Management Skills

The main purpose for this phenomenological research is to understand the shared experiences of Latin women who were abandoned by their fathers at a young age and explore their conflict management skills. Results of this research will provide the basis for discussion to help women who were abandoned as children prevent and cope with conflict effectively.

Participants must meet the following criteria:

- Women who reside in South Florida
- Be Hispanic or Hispanic descent
- Between the ages of 25 and 40
- Have experienced father abandonment before the age of 7
- Fluent in English

Duration: 45 minutes
Compensation: $25 VISA gift card
Location of Interview: Mutually Agreed

Diana Herrera
Phone: (786) 349-8839
Email: dt508@mynsu.nova.edu

dianasresearch.eventbrite.com

Appendix B: Informed Consent

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled
A Phenomenological Research Study on the Effects of Paternal Abandonment on Hispanic Women in South Florida and their Conflict Management Skills

Funding Source: None
IRB protocol # 2017-503

Principal Investigator
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For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

Site Information
Nova Southeastern University
Center for Psychological Studies
3301 College Avenue Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

What is the study about?
You have been invited to participate in a study designed to understand and explore the conflict management skills of Hispanic women in South Florida who have experience paternal abandonment before the age of seven.

Why are you asking me?
We are inviting you to participate because you are a Hispanic woman in South Florida between the ages of 25-40 who has experienced father abandonment before the age of seven.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?
You will be interviewed by the researcher, Ms. Diana Herrera. Ms. Herrera will ask you questions regarding your relationship with your father and your conflict resolution skills. The interview will last no more 45 minutes.

Initials: _____ Date: _____ **Page 1 of 3**

Is there any audio or video recording?
This research project will include audio recording of the interview. This audio recording will be available to be heard by the researcher, Ms. Diana Herrera, personnel from the IRB, and the dissertation chair, Dr. Georgakopoulos. The recording will be transcribed by Ms. Diana Herrera. Ms. Herrera will use earphones while transcribing the interviews to guard your privacy. Both the audio recording and transcriptions will be stored in a sealed envelope in a locked, fireproof safe in the researcher's home office. Also, the audiotapes and transcriptions of the interviews will be coded with numbers, participants' names will not appear on their interview materials. The number code will correspond to the same number of the consent form and self-identifying survey. The recording and transcriptions will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study. They will be destroyed after that time by shredding them. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described in this paragraph.

What are the dangers to me?
Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience every day. Being recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised. Please be aware that many of the questions asked of you will be of a personal nature and may not be topics you would normally discuss with others. Also be aware that as with participation in any study, questions of a personal nature may cause discomfort in some participants. If at any time during your interview you wish to skip a question or questions or stop the interview, you may do so without penalty. If after your interview, you feel any discomfort and wish to seek professional help or support and need assistance in locating a mental health professional, you may contact Ms. Herrera at (786) 349-8839 and she will assist you in locating proper help. You may also contact the IB at the numbers indicated above with questions about your research rights.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?
There are no benefits to you for participating.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
You will receive at $25 gift card after completing the interview. There are no costs to you.

How will you keep my information private?
Should you decide to participate in this study, please know that your confidentiality will be ensured. Your name will not appear on the audiotapes or transcriptions of your interview. Your name will appear only on this informed consent, which will be kept in a sealed envelope in a locked, fireproof safe in my home office, separate from your audiotapes and transcriptions. I will not discuss any part of our interview with anyone. Your interview materials will be coded with a number that corresponds to the number appearing on top of this form. Please note that there are limits to confidentiality under a few specific conditions. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies or Dr. Georgakopoulos may review research records.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?
You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

Other Considerations: If the researchers learn anything which might change your mind about being involved, you will be told of this information.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:
By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document, or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled The Opinions of Patients on their Treatment

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____
Date: _____

Appendix C: Research Questions

1. Please state your name
2. How old are you?
3. Where are you from?
4. What do you do for a living?
5. What is your highest level of education?
6. Can you please share with me your experience of what it was like growing up without a father?
7. How old were you when your father left?
8. How did your experience of not having a father affect you with how you engage in conflict?
9. Let's pretend you are having a conflict with your significant other and I'm looking outside a window, what would the argument look like?
10. Why do you think you experience conflict the way you do?
11. How did your experience of not having a father affect you with your relationships with others?
12. How many serious relationships have you been in?
13. What happened?
14. How many non-serious relationships have you been in?
15. What would you like to tell women who read this research and have been abandoned by their fathers?