

Perspectives of Orthodox, Jewish women regarding the perceived effects of Jewish religious and cultural values on women's choices in abusive relationships.

ABSTRACT

This research attempted to gain insight into the perspectives of Orthodox, Jewish women regarding the abuse of women in heterosexual relationships, in their community. Feminist theory and social constructionism were utilised in order to facilitate in greater insight into the roles of women in Judaism and the manner in which Jewish doctrine and ideology influences women who are abused by their husbands. The research focused on specific principles that are intrinsic to Jewish faith and identity. It also explored Jewish persecution and its influence on the formation and perpetuation of many of the Jewish customs and traditions as a means of preserving or upholding Jewish faith. The sample comprised of nine women who fell within an age range of 25-35 years. Jewish women from Orthodox backgrounds were utilised. A qualitative paradigm was applied in order to gain access to information thereby ensuring that the content obtained was of a more personal nature involving the private perceptions of this study's participants. The following themes were identified from the data and formed the basis upon which the analysis and discussion took place. The themes include: Jewish men treat women according to what men are taught, marriage precipitates acknowledgement of women and the Jewish community is not immune to social ills. The results of the research support the argument that Jewish religious and cultural values appear to influence women's choices in abusive relationships. Furthermore, the roles that women typically assume in Jewish society seemingly perpetuate existing gender stereotypes in relation to women.