

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES TOWARDS DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE: ANALYSIS OF CASES FROM FEMALE SURVIVORS IN WINDHOEK,
NAMIBIA.

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

ELLA SHIGWEDHA

STUDENT NO.: 200202553

JANUARY 2018

SUPERVISOR: DR TOM FOX

ABSTRACT

The domestic violence against women, especially from male counterparts, has escalated in Namibia to the extent that women suffer physical violence and even murder. Thus, the Government of the Republic of Namibia established the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) to provide services to domestic violence survivors, both men and women. This research investigated how both married and single-status female victims and survivors experienced and coped with physical violence by their male counterparts. The objectives of the study were: to investigate and analyse the nature of domestic violence experienced by female survivors; to establish the survival and coping strategies of women who have experienced domestic violence, and to establish women's knowledge on how and why domestic violence occurs. It was found that pervasive cultures of male dominance and patriarchy were the structural cause of domestic violence, as the power vested in men by societal tradition influenced them to physically abuse their partners. Most African cultures prohibit women from 'back-chatting' men, which in many instances results in violence when they challenge male authority. It was reported that culture allowed men to view extra marital affairs as acceptable, leading to gender based violence (GBV) when women objected. Alcohol was reported as another core factor contributing to domestic violence against women, as men are likely to be more abusive when under the influence of alcohol as predicated in these findings. Archaic or harmful traditions should no longer be acceptable, and should be revised, since gender equality is a key element to development. It is, therefore, recommended that men be educated on how to give women equal partnership rights in relationships and family life, and opportunities to express themselves without violent reactions. Regarding alcohol as a contributing factor to domestic violence, it is recommended that the government amends the law in terms of the suspension sentence for the perpetrators to stop drinking alcohol for a period of time while under rehabilitation services.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
DECLARATION.....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	viii
Chapter 1	1
Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study:	1
1.2 Problem statement	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Significance of the study	6
1.5 Contextualising the study	6
1.6 Brief discussion of the methodology for this research: Narrative qualitative methods	8
1.7 Outline of the chapters	9
1.8 Conclusion	11
Chapter 2	12
Literature review	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 International studies on domestic violence against women.	12
2.3 Why violence against women occurs	19
2.4 Definition of the key concepts	21
2.5 Theoretical framework that explains gender based violence against women: A sociological feminist perspective.	24
2.6. Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) situated in Windhoek at Katutura Intermediate State Hospital.	33
2.7. Discussing domestic relationships from a legal perspective	34
2.8. Coping strategies during domestic violence by female survivors	36
2.9 Gender based violence against women as a concern in Namibia	38
10. Conclusion	41
Chapter 3	43
Methodology	43
3.1 Introduction	43
3.2 Justifying the choice of narrative interviews	45

3.3 Population and sampling	47
3.4 Research instrument	49
3.5 Data collection	50
3.6 Data analysis	53
3.7 Limitations of the study	54
3.8 Ethical consideration of this study	55
3.9 Conclusion	56
CHAPTER 4	58
Experiences of gender based violence in Windhoek: Findings and analysis	58
4.1 Introducing the Windhoek research results	58
4.2 How partner-relations with the men were first established, and how the women perceived them.	58
4.3 Problems in relationships and general marital/partnership problems	61
4.4 Conclusion	65
CHAPTER 5	66
Windhoek participants and the causes of domestic violence	66
5.1 Introduction	66
5.2 Domestic violence in Namibia	66
5.2.1 How women reported what might be the causes of violence against them	66
5.3 Conclusion	81
CHAPTER 6	82
Survival strategies of domestic violence	82
6.1 Finding support network for abused women	82
6.2 Gender laws and coping strategies in Namibia.	88
6.3 Inadequate legal protection	94
6. Conclusion	98
CHAPTER 7	99
Conclusion and policy recommendation	99
7. 1 Introduction	99
7.4 Concluding the main findings of the research	101
References	104
Annexure	110

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed in many ways towards the success of this study. First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Tom Fox for the professional mentorship, valuable support, and communication and for the timeous supervision of this study. My gratitude also goes to my fellow Master's students for the encouragement to never give up, but rather, to work hard. Thank you to my friends, Mr Andreas Thomas and Mr Lasarus Masule, Mrs Catrien Du Toit, Ms Patience Kamanga for the technical assistance; and also, Dr Aramanzan Madaada for the professional advice.

The permission granted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and Ministry of Safety and Security made the completion of this study possible. I say thank you to the Management of the two Ministries for granting me permission to interview the female survivors who reported cases at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU). Additionally, thank you to the Social Workers, Ms Alice Umurerwa and Elizabeth De Wee for their professional support. I do not want to forget the participants who voluntarily took part in the study. Their participation made the study achievable.

Ella Shigwedha

Date: 22 January 2018

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the almighty God, who gave me courage and strength to carry on with my studies; the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, Ministry of Safety and Security, Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. Also, to my late father, Mr Fanuel Nelumbu Max Shigwedha (Nelumbu the hero), my late Grandmothers Kuku Kristofina Kambonde Shipiki (Galandy) and Kuku Ndamonoghenda Johannes (Omushakati). Furthermore, this work is dedicated to my mother, Mrs Selma Shigwedha for her inspiration, encouragement, understanding and support during my studies; and to all female survivors and families affected by domestic violence particularly, physical violence.

DECLARATION

I, Ella Shigwedha, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

No part of this thesis/dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the author, or The University of Namibia in that behalf.

I, Ella Shigwedha, grant the University of Namibia the right to reproduce this thesis in whole or in part, in any manner or format, which The University of Namibia may deem fit, for any person or institution requiring it for study and research; providing that The University of Namibia shall waive this right if the whole thesis has been or is being published in a manner satisfactory to the University.

E. Shigwedha

Date: 22 January 2018

Student name: Ella Shigwedha

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GBVPU- Gender Based Violence Protection Unit

WACPU- Women and Child Protection Unit

GBV-Gender Based Violence

MGECW: Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

MSS: Ministry of Safety and Security

LAC: Legal Assistance Centre

WHO: World Health Organisation

UNAM: University of Namibia

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organisation

LGBT: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender

Chapter 1

Introduction

Orientation of the study

1.1 Background to the study: Explaining how female victims experience and cope with domestic violence

Domestic violence has become a perennial problem because of its increase and prevalence in contemporary Namibian society. Domestic violence occurs to both men and women, although women tend to overwhelmingly be the primary victims. From the outset, this study invariably notes that the domestic environment is not merely about heterosexual relations between men and women. As such, the thrust of this thesis is domestic heterosexual relations between men and women which may be deemed to exclude lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) in which one partner may play a feminine role and the other a masculine role. Also, important to note is that this research excludes violence by women against other women within the domestic sphere. Precisely, the study intends to investigate how women of both single and married status experience and cope with domestic violence by male partners. It concentrated on cases reported directly to the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU), of the Namibian Police. This unit, formerly known as the Women and Child Protection Unit (WACPU), is based in Windhoek, at Katutura State Hospital. It is important to note that, according to Regain Trust (2015) GBVPU under discussion was established in 1993 in Khomas region, by the steering committee consisting of different Ministries, a variety of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the University of Namibia (UNAM).

Currently, there are 17 units in 14 different regions of Namibia, recommended by the government to tackle the problem of gender based violence (GBV). The GBVPU also offers survivors a safe and friendly environment, promotes GBV prevention approaches such as

conducting public awareness campaigns, offers inexpensive and confidential service to survivors and investigates and prevents abuse. In this study, females who have reported incidences of interpersonal violence were sampled and contacted for interviewing. The qualitative narrative case study approach used in this research enabled the abused women to share their experiences, describe and explain their possible coping strategies (if any). The research gave new insights into contemporary violence against women in Namibia.

Silverman (2005, p.126) defined a case study research as:

The basic idea that one case or perhaps a small number of cases will be studied in detail, using whatever methods deemed appropriate. While there may be a variety of specific purposes, and research questions, the general objective is to develop a full understanding of that case as possible.

Therefore, case studies will allow the participants to ‘tell their stories’ about domestic violence and provide valuable personal data to the researcher. The research is confined to the study of physical violence against women because this form of violence often leads to economic abuse, psychological trauma, physical injury and death, as seen with the cases which are frequently reported to the GBVPU. The Namibian Combating of Domestic Violence Act, No. 4 of 2003 defined domestic violence in the context of a domestic relationship, as “engaging in physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, intimidation, and harassment, emotional, verbal or psychological abuse.” Significant to note, is that the Namibian government has enacted several laws to protect women and men and punish perpetrators of domestic violence. These laws include, among others, the Combating of Domestic Violence Act (Act No. 4 of 2003) mentioned before. The Combating of Domestic Violence Act, No. 4 of 2003 was enacted as a guideline to tackle domestic violence issues and aid in the prosecution of perpetrators thereof. Also, it assists the courts in deciding the circumstances under which protection orders may be issued and varied or cancelled. It also, aids in the decision of the type of punishment and

appropriate sentences imposed on those convicted of domestic violence offences. Additionally, the said Act was required to allow domestic violence victims to make submissions in courts before offenders are sentenced. This enables the courts to determine the types of offences committed.

Radford and Hester (2006) pursued this line of thought by defining domestic violence as the coercive control of an adult by an intimate partner, involving physical, sexual, psychological and financial abuse. Ellsberg et al. (2001) further defined it as the frequency of physical violence such as pushing, slapping, and throwing objects at the respondent, physically beating them or threatening them with a weapon. The most common type of violence against women worldwide is what has come to be termed “domestic violence” or the physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse of women by their intimate partners or ex-partners (Ellsberg et al., 2001). It has a profound impact on the health, emotional wellbeing, life opportunities taken or missed and security of female adults and their children (Radford & Hester, 2006).

‘Coping strategies’ refer to the specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to ‘master’, tolerate, reduce, or minimise stressful events. Two general coping strategies have been distinguished, namely, the problem-solving and emotion-focused strategies. Problem-solving strategies are efforts to do something positive to alleviate stressful circumstances, while emotion-focused coping strategies involve efforts to regulate the emotional consequences of stressful, or potentially stressful, events (Taylor, 1998). These insights are relevant to this research because of its focus on physical abuse within the household which include assault or use of physical force against female adults. The abuse by the male partners also includes forcibly confining or unlawfully detaining the complainant, or physically depriving her of access to food, water, clothing, shelter or rest, or exposing them to physical aggression.

The researcher examined official reports and obtained in-depth accounts from the women's narrative stories. This eluded information of shocking extents of violence in the various communities of Namibia which were used in this research. Most survivors of domestic violence either suffer in silence and never seek help or wait until the violence has escalated to severe levels before seeking assistance. Some remain silent due to fear of retribution or because of their financial dependence on the abuser. Others fail to speak out because they do not recognise domestic violence as being anything other than normal (Legal Assistance Centre, 2012). A study by the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) highlights that several studies indicated that survivors of domestic violence seek help only when they perceive the situation as having become extremely dangerous, especially when there is threat of death, or where abuse becomes intense and regular. Garcia-Moreno et al. (2005) describe an international research by the World Health Organisation (WHO) which has provided evidence of the magnitude of violence against women, particularly cases perpetrated by intimate male partners. Their findings revealed that violence against women is a more serious and common problem now than it was in the past. Studies from 35 countries prior to 1999 indicated that between 10 percent and 52 percent of women around the world reported having been physically abused by an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Tjitemisa (2015) indicated that in Namibia, 40 percent of women have experienced physical violence compared to 28 percent of their male counterparts. Citing recent statistics, the Head of the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit, Chief Inspector C. Araes, indicated that from "01 December 2014 to 31 January 2016, 935 adults (men and women) reported that they had been physically abused. Unfortunately, the statistics provided are not disaggregated by sex" (Personal communication, February 2, 2015). Significant to note is that, domestic violence is now regarded as an epidemic in Namibia and may be the most underreported form of violence in the country. Based on this evidence, the research sought to show that domestic violence against women is a serious phenomenon not only in Namibia, but

worldwide. It was, therefore, very timely to conduct research on female survivors' experiences with domestic violence and their coping strategies.

1.2 Problem statement

The study examines domestic violence as represented by the narratives and testimonies of Namibian women who are victims of this abuse. It intends to explore the perceived causes of domestic violence from the point of view of women who have experienced it, as well as their possible coping and survival strategies. The experiences and coping strategies are the variables of this study. Physical violence cases reported at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit included beating, use of guns or knives, kicking, slapping amongst others. An examination of these cases helped identify knowledge gaps regarding domestic violence in Namibia. It also provided new insights and up to date information regarding the problem of domestic violence.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to examine and determine how female survivors experience and cope with domestic violence. The following were the objectives of the study:

- To investigate and analyse how female survivors experienced domestic violence;
- To find out the survival and coping strategies of women who experienced domestic violence;
- To obtain in-depth insights into women's knowledge of how and why domestic violence occurs.

The researcher was able to achieve all the objectives using the narrative interviews through the qualitative research design. The findings of the research showing how women experience and cope with domestic violence by their male counter parts are presented in this study.

1.4 Significance of the study

Scientific investigations about personal experiences of the survivors of domestic violence are very important because they allow women an opportunity to tell their stories of how they experienced domestic violence. The findings of the study can be used as guidance by policy makers and other stakeholders in their efforts to address the scourge of domestic violence. It will also enlighten them on how they can assist female Namibians affected by the problem.

1.5 Contextualising the study

This study investigated domestic violence perpetrated against women. Aghtaie and Gangoli (2015, p.6) shared the United Nation's definition of violence against women as "any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." Aghtaie and Gangoli (2015) argued that women are more likely to suffer domestic violence and abuse than other forms of gender based violence. The terms "domestic violence" and "abuse" are sometimes used synonymously, though some scholars prefer the term "abuse" because it has a broader meaning and includes emotional, financial and sexual violations, while domestic violence is restricted to the physical act of violence. A report of the Legal Assistance Centre (2005) documented that although women can be violent, most violence that causes injury is perpetrated by men against women, and they are mostly at risk of violence from men that they know. Injuries caused by domestic violence are more common than assaults by strangers.

High degrees of violence usually exist in interpersonal relationships. The violence worsens overtime, from men who are exercising what they see as their natural right to dominate women in a patriarchal society. Many theories have evolved in an attempt to explain unrestrained violence against women in human societies. Tong (2014, p.55) points out that "the radical-libertarian feminist Kate Millett insisted that the roots of women's oppression are buried deep

in society's patriarchal gender system." Tong referred to Kate Millet's remarks in her book *Sexual Politics* (1970) in which she claimed that the male-female sexual relationship is basically the paradigm for all power relationships. According to Millet (cited in Tong, 2014, p.55):

Social caste supersedes all other forms of egalitarianism: racial, political, or economic, and unless the clinging to male supremacy as a birth right is finally forgone, all systems of oppression will continue to function simply by virtue of their logical and emotional mandate in the primary human situation.

Millet argues that because male control of the public and private worlds maintains patriarchy, and she states that male control must be eliminated if women are to be liberated. However, this is not an easy task as patriarchal ideology exaggerates biological differences between men and women, making certain that men always have dominant or masculine roles, and women always have the subordinate or feminine ones. This ideology is arguably so powerful such that men are usually able to secure the apparent consent of the very women they oppress (Millet, 1970). Men do this through institutions, such as the academy, the church, and the family, each of which justifies and reinforces women's subordination to men. This study posits that women should refuse to accept patriarchal ideology by casting off or challenging 'femininity'; that is, submissiveness and subordination. Millet (1970) also claimed that men will use coercion to accomplish what conditioning has failed to achieve. Intimidation is heavily entrenched in patriarchy, and according to Millet (1970), it is one of the major root causes of domestic violence.

Barnish (2004) indicates that the feminist and socio-structural theories originate from cross-cultural ethnographic studies, which demonstrate that violence against women is more endemic in cultures and sub-cultures in which men dominate in decision-making and assign fixed, subservient gender roles to women. Other socio-political theories point to structural

inequalities as the cause of men's violence to women. Whilst domestic violence occurs across all socio strata, there is evidence that men with lower socio-economic status perpetrate more domestic violence. Socio-structural theories also explain abuse as a stress reaction to a masculine identity crisis in situations of relative deprivation, unemployment, or changing gender roles. Furthermore, feminist and socio-structural theories have been criticised for ignoring individual differences and failing to explain why most men (most poor) are not violent to women (Barnish, 2004).

Waldrop and Resick (2004) highlighted the coping strategies of women who have suffered physical abuse by their partners. These include the cognitive and active coping strategies. Cognitive coping strategies are those in which some women leave their abusive partners to stay with other women. Active strategies are those where women seek help legally by opening cases against the perpetrators for prosecution, and seeking professional help where female victims are protected. While still married or in a relationship, women use active strategies such as arguing with the abuser, calling the police, talking to a friend, to mention a few. This type of classification helped the researcher to analyse those coping strategies that female GBV victims used against violent male counterparts in the Windhoek research.

1.6 Brief discussion of the methodology for this research: Narrative qualitative methods

A research method is a plan that helps to answer the research questions. For the purposes of this study, a narrative qualitative case study method was used throughout the research process to obtain in-depth information from female survivors who had experienced domestic violence, particularly, physical violence.

The unit of analysis was the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit, based at Katutura Hospital in Windhoek. Ritchie and Lewis (2012) define qualitative research as any type of research that produces findings which are not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of

qualification. The authors state that it provides an in-depth and interpreted understating of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, experiences, perspectives and histories. Similarly, Punch (2012) stresses that qualitative research offers four main ideas: the strategy, the conceptual framework, the question of who or what will be studied, and the tools to be used for collecting and analysing empirical material. The design situates the researcher firmly in the empirical world, with direct engagement with people or actors. Punch (2012) promotes the key advantage of the “case study” approach as a method of studying social phenomenon through the analysis of an individual or collective life. The case may be a person, group, an episode, a process, a community, a society, or any other unit of social life. All data relevant to the case are gathered and all available data are organised accordingly. The case study method gives a unitary character to the data being studied by correlating a variety of facts to a single case. It also provides an opportunity for the intensive analysis of many specific details that are often overlooked by other methods. The researcher opted for a qualitative approach to answer the research question, which will be a meaningful contribution for policy-makers. This method will allow the researcher to understand the experiences as well as the coping strategies of female victims of domestic violence. When conducting narrative qualitative research, it is important to use in-depth interviews as they aim to create a deep understanding of the subject’s experiences. It is of utmost importance to note that, this method was chosen in order to allow the research participants to directly narrate their experiences of and coping strategies of domestic violence.

1.7 Outline of the chapters

Chapter one *of this study is introductory* and it gives a general overview of the topic under study. It also defines domestic violence, justifies the study and indicates the methods used in analysing data.

Chapter two (2): *Literature review and theoretical framework* gives an overview of the theoretical literature that guided the planning of the study and the research analysis. Besides discussing the relevant literature, the chapter also defined and discussed the theoretical framework. The gender theories focusing on domestic violence against women were reviewed to organise concepts and ideas deemed important for the research.

Chapter three (3): *Qualitative methodology applying case studies in terms of narrative story.* In this chapter the researcher seeks real life narratives or stories from the women who survived domestic violence by their male counterparts. The procedures and possible limitations are discussed. Also, the way in which the methodology was conducted in the Windhoek setting, and the sampling and interview procedures are explained.

Chapter four (4): *Mediated biographies as per themes and concepts identified to present the main research findings. Experiences of gender violence in Windhoek.* The chapter gives a detailed picture of how female victims experienced domestic violence and their coping mechanisms as reflected in their biographies and narration. The first theoretical codes that emerged from the interviews are also established.

Chapter five (5): *In this chapter, the actual relationship breakdown and violence (Windhoek participants on the causes of domestic violence)* are discussed. Since the female victims narrated their stories, the story-based method was used. The focus was on the victims' experiences of physical violence and determining the causes thereof. The interpretations of the themes and concepts are also given.

Chapter six (6): *This chapter gives an analysis on women telling their stories as direct biographies.* The clarification of their *coping strategies* was also done. The participants shared their coping strategies to curb the problem of domestic violence.

Chapter seven (7): *Conclusion and policy recommendation* summarises the main findings of the research by establishing a general theory of the causes of domestic violence and suggesting solutions.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the orientation of the study, the problem statement, and significance of the study. It also contextualised the study. The researcher used the literature review discussed in the next chapter, to shed more light on the theories of the causes of domestic violence. Also, the coping strategies of domestic violence are discussed.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on women's experiences and coping strategies toward domestic violence. In this section, definitions of the key research concepts are presented and discussed. Such key concepts include gender, survivors, patriarchy, masculinity, violence, gender based violence, physical violence, gender coping strategies and the theoretical framework of this study. Furthermore, discussions in this chapter focused on Namibian and international studies conducted on domestic violence, female victims' experiences and strategies to cope with domestic violence. A discussion of these helps to inform the reader on gender violence in Windhoek, as well as to shape the empirical research design. The literature is used to discuss and make sense of the interview findings.

2.2 International studies on domestic violence against women.

Domestic violence against women is also experienced internationally rather than exclusively African societies such as Namibia. Thus, it is crucial to understand how women experience the violence by their male counterparts worldwide. A broad understanding of violence is relevant to this study to compare the violence experienced in other countries with the violence experienced in Namibia, particularly the cases reported at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. Hayati et al. (2013) indicate that in the early 1990s, gender based violence against women became a focus of international attention and concern. As a result, it is now considered a major social and public health problem, as well as a human rights issue, in which governments all over the world have the right and obligation to intervene. Furthermore, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and studies from other sites have concluded that domestic violence against women is a serious cause of their physical and mental health impairment. The

WHO multi-country study not only confirmed the seriousness of domestic violence worldwide, but it also showed that the prevalence varied between countries. This global perspective on gender based violence seems to be a huge problem, mostly affecting women. This literature will perhaps assist in finding out if this problem is experienced in any ways similar in different countries.

Studies around the globe have shown that multiple factors put women at risk of domestic violence, including the women's and their partners' history of violence, their current demographic, socio-economic, and cultural situation as well as their individual behavioural and relationship characteristics (Hayati et al., 2013). It is believed that examining the cultural situation and relationship behaviours helps to determine whether they are also contributing factors to gender based violence against women.

A research conducted in Bangladesh by Khan (2015) indicates that the concept of domestic violence is often considered gender specific because it is most commonly experienced by women and perpetrated by men and that any type of woman can experience domestic violence regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, disability or lifestyle. Most importantly, domestic violence is repetitive, life-threatening, and destructive to the lives of women and children. Domestic violence often occurs in private spaces and is often tacitly condoned by society as a private or family matter. The study identified physical violence as the most prevalent form of violence. The most common forms of physical violence were pushing and shoving. Approximately, 56% of the women in the study reported to have been beaten once within the past year while 20% reported to have been beaten three to five times.

In addition, Khan (2015) further emphasises the literature on the consequences of domestic violence against women. The researcher found that deaths resulting from violence at the domestic level remained the same while deaths due to other factors decreased during the study

period. In addition, the researcher found that suicides and homicides were often preceded by oppression, physical and mental abuse by husbands. Half of the suicide deaths (45.7%) were caused by quarrels and serious tensions with the husbands. Physically and sexually abused women in Bangladesh experienced various health related problems because of violence such as injury, losing consciousness, emotional distress and suicidal ideation. On the other hand, women who were abused during pregnancy were more likely to have miscarriages. In two research venues (rural and urban) in Bangladesh, on average, approximately 11% of the women were beaten during pregnancy and 4% of the women were not only beaten during pregnancy but also kicked and punched in the abdomen. Again, on average, around 18% of the women in both venues who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence thought of committing suicide. Abused women were three times more likely to have thought of committing suicide than the non-abused women.

January (2005) focuses specifically on the impact of violence on women's health. Women who were physically or sexually abused by their male counterparts were more likely to report general poor health. In addition, those suffering physical or sexual abuse had more frequent symptoms such as severe pain, inability to carry out usual activities, dizziness and vaginal discharge. They were more likely to contemplate suicide if they had been physically or sexually abused by their partner than those who were never abused (26 percent versus 11 percent).

It was seen that 21 percent of the physically abused women had not disclosed their experience to anyone, while 35 percent confided in their parents, 33 percent in friends and 26 percent in siblings. Fewer women (10 percent) told the police, medical staff (4 percent), or any other formal service or authority, and 62 percent of them had never asked any formal agency for help. Only 21 percent went to the police and 22 percent visited medical facilities. The main reasons given for seeking help were that they could no longer endure the violence (48 percent

of women who sought help), had been badly injured (36 percent), or the partner had threatened or tried to kill them 14 percent (January, 2005). Unfortunately, the country where the violence occurred was not mentioned.

Carlson (2003) observes that some studies have found that battered women cope with life less effectively than non-abused women because they use fewer active problem-solving strategies and more passive strategies, such as avoidance and denial. On the contrary, as stated by Carlson (2003), a number of researchers and service providers, (names not mentioned), have found that abused women are highly resourceful and cope extremely well considering the types and extent of stress they are confronted with. One explanation for the use of passive coping strategies is that people generally cope less effectively when the amount of stress is overwhelming or perceived to be beyond their control. Abused women must contend not only with the abuse itself, but typically many other sources of stress, such as poverty, lack of sufficient resources and child-related problems, to mention a few. One example of a passive coping strategy used by abused women is rationalization of the violence. The women deny that the abuse will continue, perhaps by believing that their partner will change as promised or by assuming responsibility for the violence, thereby perceiving that they can control it in the future. The study by Carlson (2003) covered coping strategies used by female victims of domestic violence. The findings helped the current study establish some of the coping strategies used by female victims when experiencing domestic violence.

Carlson (2003) further adds examples of other coping strategies which include seeking social and spiritual support. The research conducted by Carlson (2003) also documents that abused women tend to be socially isolated and have fewer social support systems (often because of the abuser) that can be relied on for practical and emotional assistance as compared with non-abused women. Additionally, Carlson found that a quarter of the abused women she studied from Los Angeles shelters reported having no support system at all. One reason for not seeking

assistance more often from family and friends may be concerns for their safety. But even when abused women have family and friends, the embarrassment, stigma, or depression associated with abuse may interfere with their willingness or ability to actively seek or receive support. Also, the strategies used by women to cope with abuse change over time. The initial denial that abuse will continue is no longer effective if occasional abuse escalates to recurrent battering. In such cases, new strategies to manage the violence must be developed. More active problem-solving strategies may be used to try to avoid the violence or its effects. Such strategies include calling the police, trying to calm the abuser, and leaving temporarily to stay with family, friends, or in a shelter. Anecdotal reports indicated that by the time women resort to a domestic violence program or shelter, they usually would have tried a range of tactics to cope with or stop the violence, having sought help from family and friends as well as counsellors, clergy, lawyers, and other professionals. One study found that women who eventually escape an abusive relationship would have used an average of nine resources. This knowledge is relevant to this study as it helps to determine to what extent female victims seek help with coping strategies.

In addition, World Health Organisation (2005) revealed that many of the studies on women's responses to partner violence have been carried out on women using support services such as shelters or counselling. At a population level, however, little is known about women's responses to violence, or about the help they receive from informal networks (families, friends, and so on) and formal health or social services. Also, WHO reports that women speak about violence. In most countries, the interviewer was frequently the first person that the abused women had ever spoken to about their partner's physical violence. Two thirds of the women who had been physically abused by their partners in Bangladesh, and about half in Samoa and provincial Thailand, had not told anybody about the violence prior to the interview. In contrast, about 80 percent of physically abused women in Brazil and Namibia had openly shared their

negative experiences, usually with family, friends or social workers. One in five women had reportedly kept silent about their experiences. Relatively few physically abused women in any setting had told staff of formal services or people in positions of authority such as religious or traditional leaders, health personnel, police, counsellors, and staff of women's nongovernmental organizations about the violence. It seems that internationally, women who experienced severe physical violence were more likely to talk to someone than those who experienced moderate physical violence. Research in many countries has shown that informal networks such as family, friends, and neighbours usually provide the first point of contact for abused women, rather than more formal services (World Health Organisation, 2005). This is relevant to this study as guidance to investigate the types of coping strategies female victims or survivors use whenever they experience domestic violence by their male counterparts through narration interviews.

Barnish (2004), in a research that explored and differentiated some of the issues integral to men's and women's experience of domestic violence, showed that women abused by their partners or former partners are victimised more than men. They experience significantly higher rates of severe and dangerous violence like being beaten up, choked, strangled, suffocated, threatened/assaulted with a weapon, or sexually assaulted, as well as death, injury, and hospitalisation. Women are also more likely to have a longer history of violence, experience repeated victimisation in the form of stalking, threats, intimidation, assaults and fear that they or someone close to them will be harmed or killed. Additionally, Barnish (2004) shares evidence that women experience more negative impact than men as a result of abuse. The effects include emotional/psychological consequences such as fear, anger, insult, stress, depression, anxiety attacks, shame, lowered self-esteem, sleeping problems, psychosomatic symptoms and post-traumatic stress symptoms, loss of time from work, and a need to take extra security precautions. This also implies that, domestic violence not only affects women in their

homes but even at the workplace, and sometimes it becomes a lifelong problem which results in trauma.

Ai-Yaman et al. (2006) conducted an Australian study as part of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) which was coordinated by the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations (HEUNI). They assessed women's experiences of violence, particularly, partner violence and sexual assault. Several countries participated on a self-funded basis. The Australian component surveyed 6,677 women aged between 18 and 69 years by telephone interview. The Australian survey collected a wide range of information on the prevalence and severity of violence, partner and non-partner violence, childhood victimisation and women's perceptions and reactions to violence. The survey focused on violence in the previous 12 months and then over the respondent's lifetime. Details of the type of violence, type of injuries sustained, location of the most recent incident, controlling behaviour by an intimate partner, alcohol use by a partner, the respondent's perceptions of the seriousness of the most recent incident were discussed. Whether the respondent contacted a specialised agency or reported the incident to the police and the reasons for not reporting to the police, were all documented. The survey found that 57 percent of all Australian women had experienced violence in their lifetime

The Legal Assistance Centre (2012) observes that internationally, the primary cause of all forms of violence against women is patriarchy, that is, the systemic domination of women by men. It shows that, patriarchy is one of the contributing factors to gender based violence against women. This research intends to investigate how patriarchy influences men to abuse their partners.

2.3 Why violence against women occurs

Understanding why domestic violence happens against women is an integral part of this research. Politically, domestic violence is not taken seriously. The under-representation of women in power, politics, and the media, and in the legal and medical profession, and limited participation of women in organised political systems could be a contributory factor. Flood (2007) avers that gender roles and relations also shape intimate partner violence at the level of relationships and families. A key factor here is the power relations between partners, that is, whether they are egalitarian, or dominated by one partner. Another factor is marital conflict, which interacts with the power relations of the relationship or family. When conflict occurs in an asymmetrical power structure, there is a much higher risk of violence. Particularly, it determines whether female victims suffer domestic violence because of power relations that men have over them.

Flood (2007) states that physical and sexual violence against girls and women is shaped by attitudes and social norms, gendered inequalities of power, and expected and normalised social practices. There is constant pressure among boys to behave in sexually aggressive ways. On the other hand, girls are routinely objectified; a sexual double standard polices girls' sexual and intimate involvements, and they are compelled to accommodate male needs and desires.

According to Jewkes (2002) social scientists have become especially interested in the effect of poverty on the male identity, and the link between male vulnerability and violence against women. Jewkes (2002) has argued that such relations are mediated through forms of crisis of the masculine identity, which are often infused with ideas about honour and respect. An influential theory explaining the relation between poverty and intimate partner violence is that it is mediated through stress. Since poverty is inherently stressful, it has been argued that intimate partner violence may result from stress, and that poorer men have fewer resources to

reduce stress. Thus, violence against women is seen not just as an expression of male powerfulness and dominance over women, but also as rooted in male vulnerability stemming from social expectations of manhood that are unattainable because of factors such as poverty experienced by men. Hence, male identity is associated with experiences of power. Challenges to the exercise of power by men are perceived as threats to their masculine identity. An inability to meet social expectations of successful manhood can trigger a crisis of male identity. Violence against women is a means of resolving this crisis because it allows expression of power that is otherwise denied (Jewkes, 2002).

The researcher also intends to establish if alcohol abuse by men contributes to physical violence against women. Jewkes (2002) argues that, men are more likely to act violently when drunk because they feel unaccountable for their behaviour. In some settings, men have described using alcohol as a premeditated habit which enables them to beat their partners because they feel that it is socially expected of them. It seems likely that drugs that reduce inhibition, such as cocaine, will have similar relations to those of alcohol with intimate partner violence, but there has been little population-based research on this subject. Essentially, social norms and experiences of violence in the home during childhood teach children that violence is normal in certain settings. In this way, men learn to use violence and women learn to tolerate it, or at least tolerate aggressive behaviour.

Lombard (2015) observes that the family is the most violent group in society. In other words, one is more likely to get killed, injured or physically attacked in one's own home by someone closely related to them than in any other social context. Unlike men who are more likely to be victims of assault and violence by strangers, women and children are attacked, beaten, raped and killed by their family, partners, and men known to them. Hence, in second-wave feminism, the initial focus was on making women more visible, and bringing the private into the public and political spheres. 'Calling out' men's violence against women was an example of this.

However, the spheres remained unchanged, which meant challenging women's positions and limitations, simply reinforced the rigid dichotomies of public/private whereby the private domestic space was seen as beyond the remit of law and regulation especially by men. This meant that this private-public division was effectively the main barrier to personal and social equality and rights, and needed to be challenged. Supporting this claim, Frecks et al. (2014, p.157), cite a research conducted in Honduras in which "alcohol-defined settings are highly charged arenas of gender performance that permit men to act out their true masculinity of irresponsibility, excess and bad behaviour." Most of the attention of this research was to determine if alcohol is indeed one of the factors that cause violence against women.

The National Gender Policy (2010) emphasised that gender based violence refers to all forms of violence against women, girls, men and boys because of the unequal power relations between them. Causes of gender based violence include customs, traditions and beliefs, illiteracy and limited education, unequal power relations, and the low status of women. The two most common forms of GBV in Namibia are rape and domestic violence, both of which disproportionately affect Namibian women more than men.

2.4 Definition of the key concepts

2.4.1 Gender as a concept

In domestic violence, men are commonly the perpetrators, and women the victims. In society, certain behaviours are expected such as for men to be dominant and women to be submissive. Arbache, Kolev, and Filipiak (2010, p.89) define gender as "a state of being male or female which is not determined biologically, but is constructed socially and determined by the conception and roles attributed to women and men in society, in public or private life." Thus, gender can be defined as complex systems of personal and social relations through which women and men are socially created and maintained, and through which they gain access to, or are allocated status, power and material resources within society. The understanding of this

concept is relevant to the study because it highlights the fact that violence against women is an expression of power inequalities between women and men. The term gender is used throughout this study. Dahlerup (2015) documents the radical feminism, that is, why the term gender was developed, and how it came as a systematic segregation between women and men in all spheres of society. Also, on male supremacy, which implies that all that men do is valued higher in society than what women are and do, and all or most top positions are dominated by men. This concept implies that men are more dominant over women in society, hence the incidences of domestic violence against women. This research is a gender focused because it intends to analyse gender and how female victims experience and cope with the domestic violence by their male counterparts.

2.4.2 Defining Gender-Based Violence

Both “gender” and “domestic violence” presuppose violence against women. Such an outlook is given determinate expression in the life experience narrations by victims of domestic violence in this study. This study posits that such narrations mirror and interpret the victims’ experiences from the points of view of those who write about them. Hence, violence is central to this research. Khan (2000, p. 2) defined violence against women as:

A manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women.

This shows that violence is directed against a woman because of unequal power relations in gender issues. Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women which results in, or is likely to result in physical violence, in public or private life. In most cases, violence against women occurs very privately in homes. However, it has become a public concern where the government is committed to intervene accordingly. This literature is relevant in order to understand how gender aspects in terms of

power are associated with gender based violence against women. Also, how men and women are socialised in terms of culture in the society, and the link between domestic violence and masculinity and femininity is the thrust of the study. The research solely investigates physical abuse or violence suffered by women. Thus, the literature on physical violence serves as a guide to the researcher investigating the type of physical violence perpetrated on women and their coping strategies. Pilcher and Whelehan (2006, p. 173), contend that violence may be legally defined as the “unlawful use of physical force by an individual against others, or behaviour which harms others, either physically or emotionally.” On the other hand, Sweetman (2000, P. 15) argued that “physical abuse may include not only injury but also malnutrition or the withholding of physical care.” According to the Legal Assistance Centre (2012) physical abuse includes: physical assault or any use of physical force against the complainant, forcibly confining or detaining the complainant or physically depriving the complainant of access to food, water, clothing, shelter or rest. Physical violence refers to a woman being “slapped, or has something thrown at her; being pushed or shoved; hit with a fist or something else that could hurt; kicked, dragged or beaten up; choked or burnt; threatened with or had a weapon used against her” (Legal Assistance Centre, 2005, p.1). This shows that physical violence is experienced differently, thus for this research the literature guided the investigation of the type of physical violence the participants experienced through their narrations.

According to Haufiku (2015), domestic violence is a gender based problem and is sometimes called battering. It is a disturbing phenomenon because the home and family should be a place of safety and security. However, domestic violence occurs within a household, and is committed by one’s house mate. This research worked closely with the central concept of gender violence, therefore, making it important to clarify this concept and those related to it. Later in the study, local studies on gender violence are investigated. The international perspective on gender based violence has been reviewed earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless,

Regain Trust Organisation (2015, P.6) defined gender based violence in line with the UN-Resolution on the elimination of domestic violence against women. Under the leadership of the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN resolution on the elimination of domestic violence against women was elaborated in 2004. It stated that: “violence against women includes all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm to or suffering of women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” Gender theories associated with gender based violence will be discussed in the next section and these will help provide a theoretical frame for this research.

2.5 Theoretical framework that explains gender based violence against women: A sociological feminist perspective.

2.5.1 Patriarchy and domestic violence

It seems patriarchy influences domestic violence against women. As such, the researcher investigated if patriarchy is one of the factors that contribute towards domestic violence against women. Jackson and Scott (2002) note that a certain theorist found that the concept of patriarchy literally means the rule of fathers, and in its original usage, derived from Weber, it referred to a traditional form of authority vested in men as heads of the families. From observation in our community or society, patriarchy is a male project leading to the domination of women. This shows that males dominate social structures resulting in the oppression of women in the society. Patriarchy becomes the norm that all persons adhere to, consequently, disadvantaging women. In this study the researcher was interested in investigating how patriarchy perpetrates domestic violence. Patriarchy as defined by Scott-Samuel (2009, p. 1) is the “systematic domination by men of women and of other men.” Mitchell, a feminist psychologist, as quoted by Sultana (2011, p.2) uses the word patriarchy, while Walby as quoted by Sultana (2011, p.2) defines patriarchy as “a system of social structures and practices in

which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.” He perceives patriarchy as a system because this helps us reject the notion of biological determinism which says that men and women are naturally different, because of their biology or bodies and, are, therefore assigned different roles, or “the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one” (Sultana, 2011, p.2). In many instances women are socialised to be submissive towards their boyfriend or husband, resulting in their suffering from forms of violence, particularly, physical violence.

Renzetti, Edleson, and Bergen (2001) point out that the feminist perspective focuses primarily on the concepts of patriarchy, and the societal institutions that help maintain it. Feminist analyses of violence against women centre on the structure of relationships in a male-dominated (patriarchal) culture, on power, and on gender. The main factors that contribute to violence against women include the historically male-dominated social structure, and socialization practices teaching men and women gender-specific roles. Renzetti, Edleson, and Bergen (2001) add that feminist explanations of violence focus on the relationship between the cultural ideology of male dominance, and structural forces that limit women’s access to resources. Violence against women, therefore, is a result of the subordinate positions which women occupy in the social structure, and this subordination is the cultural legacy of the traditional family. In other words, violence against women is one manifestation of a system of male dominance embedded in the family, which has existed historically across many cultures.

According to Edwards-Jauch (2013, p.396), “patriarchy requires violence or the subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself. The most dangerous situation for a woman is not an unknown man in the street or even the enemy in the wartime, but a husband or lover in the isolation of their own home.” Furthermore, there are approaches that underlie discussions of domestic violence from liberal feminists. There is the socio-cultural approach, which examines the reasons that aggression against women is tolerated by our society; the psychological

approach which examines the emotional reasons why men are abusive and why women accept it; and the class analysis approach, by which men are said to beat women to retain their place in the patriarchal power structure (Edwards-Jauch, 2013). Thus patriarchy has been a major feature in many traditional societies, and it seems to be the major contributing factor to violence against women due to masculinity.

In other radical feminist accounts of patriarchy, “the control men have over women’s bodies is regarded as important” (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2006, p. 93). Hegemonic masculinities are often built upon and generate systems of power inequalities and imbalances between women and men. These systems are often referred to as patriarchy. It is this very system through this notion of hegemonic masculinities that uses violence to ensure that these power imbalances stay in place (Doneys et al., 2013). Therefore, hegemonic masculinities influence men to abuse their partners because of the imbalances of power relations.

Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) observe that, it is men’s behaviour against women that has especially been the concern of feminist researchers. Thus, conceptualised as a broad range of men’s harmful behaviour towards women, including rape, domestic violence and harassment, violence has been identified as a key mechanism in the subordination of women by men. One manifestation of the subordinating effect of violence against women is indicated by survey evidence, which shows that women are more fearful of violent crime than men, and that this fear impacts upon their freedom of movement when outside the home. This implies that the suffering of women from violence affects them to a point of not having freedom outside their homes.

2.5.2 Masculinity and domestic violence

This study also investigated if the inequality of power between men and women contributes to violence against women, that is, the overall view of people on how masculinity is associated

with domestic violence against women. Doneys et al. (2013) share this theoretical framework which dwells heavily on those who argue that masculinity is not a fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of an individual, but rather involves configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action. Therefore, this can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting. This means that there are multiple forms of masculinities, and these change across settings and time. Most men's actions are influenced by masculinity, although not always for a good cause. As a result, it (masculinity) may privilege them and disadvantage women, or vice versa. Equally, Pilcher and Whelehan (2006) assert that since the early twentieth century, feminist writers used the concept masculinity to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. Patriarchy has been a fundamentally important concept in gender studies, leading to the development of theories that aim to identify the structural bases of women's subordination to men. The masculine who maintain power, dominate other groups, and in this case, men seem to be dominating women, hence their subordination.

2.5.3 Feminism and domestic violence: Liberal, Marxist and Radical Feminism

The following varieties of feminist thoughts helped the researcher understand the connection between domestic violence and women. Edwards-Jauch (2013) poses the liberal feminist thinking that it is possible to legislate against sexual discrimination as a way of changing individual attitudes, such as, The Namibian Combating of Violence Act 4 of 2003 as a guideline for prosecution against domestic violence. Mill (2008) emphasises that liberal feminists believe that, all people are created equal and should not be denied equality of opportunities because of gender. Men are integrated into the ranks of sexism because both genders benefit from the elimination thereof. With this advocacy, the study sought to examine how imbalances of unequal opportunity and imbalances of power relations are associated with gender based violence against women.

On the other hand, Marxist feminism emphasises that capitalist class relationships are the root cause of female oppression, exploitation and discrimination. Men are socialised into exploitative relationships in relation to work, and they carry this socialisation over into the home environment and their relationships with women. Researchers such as Mill (2008) share that, “Marxist feminism,” socialist feminism generally adopts the Marx–Engels model described as an inferior position of women to class-based capitalism and its alignment with the patriarchal family in capitalistic societies. The unpaid labour of women in the home and their paid labour in a reserve labour force simultaneously serve patriarchy capitalism. Many socialist feminists, both men and women, also believe that economic and emotional dependence go hand in hand. Fearful of the loss of economic security, a husband’s power over his wife is absolute. Thus, taking into consideration this argument by Marxist feminism, the researcher investigated if women who depend on their male counterparts in terms of capitalism experience domestic violence. Similarly, Edward-Jauch (2013) explains that radical feminism stresses that patriarchal relationships are considered to have paved the way for capitalist forms of economic and gender exploitation. Men are the enemy of women; women are a sex class in that they share a common interest in freeing themselves from male oppression. Pilcher and Whelehan (2006, p.94) noted that “the critiques on radical feminist theories which “may over-emphasise patriarchy and biology.”

According to Crow (2000), Kate Millet, a radical feminist, argues that if one takes patriarchal government to be the institution whereby the half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be twofold: male shall dominate female, and elder male shall dominate younger. In society, male domination over women is exercised; however, it gets to the point where men abuse women because of patriarchal and cultural tendencies, and women are expected to respect men. Radical feminists focus on the patriarchal family as the key site of domination and oppression. They believe that

because all social institutions are intertwined, it is virtually impossible to attack sexism in any meaningful way. Women's oppression stems from male domination, so if men are the problem, neither capitalism, nor socialism, nor any other male-dominated system will solve the problem. Therefore, women must create separate institutions that are women centred and that rely on women, rather than men. Radical feminists would agree with cultural feminism in that the alternative path for women is to be different from men. A society will emerge where the female virtues of nurturance, sharing, and intuition dominate in a woman-identified world (Mill, 2008).

2.5.4 Feminist Theory and Gender Violence.

There are many different ideas within the feminist theory on domestic violence against women by their male counterparts. During this study, the researcher found out from female victims how they experience violence associated with culture, and their coping strategies. In addition, it seems some cultures and traditional-minded males influence gender violence against women. Cabrera (2010) argued from a feminist point of view that women and girls constitute the vast majority of gender based violence (GBV) victims and men the majority of perpetrators. Also, Nafuka (2012) argues that in feminist theories within the process of male socialisation, men are educated to think of women as their property. Consequentially, men's actions, values and beliefs are micro-social expressions of broader patriarchal forces, which end in gender based violence against women. Cabrera (2010) argued from the feminist point of view that women and girls constitute the vast majority of gender based violence (GBV) victims and men the majority of perpetrators. The unambiguous use of the term "violence against women" exposes more tellingly, the governments' failure to address power inequalities between men and women in both the public and private spheres. The feminist approach to domestic violence holds that almost all male or female abuse is based on the patriarchal values of our society, and that these values are sanctioned by a culture in which the male domination of women is both covertly and

overtly reinforced. Violence in domestic abuse is nothing more than a tool, often used by men to control women. Many men in our society still support the notion that it is acceptable to use physical violence towards women if their behaviour or freedom threatens the men's power or standing in the family hierarchy (Payne & Wermeling, 2009).

2.5.5 Cultural feminism and violence against women

The theory of culture is central to this research. This study intends to determine if culture contributes to domestic violence in the Namibian society. Jackson and Scott (2002) emphasised the arguments by feminist writer Bob Connell, that there is no single form of masculinity of feminists in the Western society, only different ways of being a man or a woman. However, there are culturally dominant forms of gendered beings, which he characterises as hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, based on this, the researcher sought to understand how male dominance over women contributes to domestic violence against women. Women in society are socialised to be submissive, hence, they remain in subordinate positions, and are at risk of domestic violence. Hegemonic masculinity is recognised culturally and men tend to have more privileges in terms of respect. The culture of violence theory, according to Lemkey (2001), is an idea that in large pluralistic societies, some subcultures develop norms that permit the use of physical violence to a greater degree than the dominant culture. Thus, family violence will occur more frequently in violent societies than in peaceful ones. Peer-relationships that support patriarchal dominance in the family and use of violence are exemplary of this subculture. This theory has also produced the theories that include examples from pornography, and violent images on TV, which support a "culture of violence" against women. Culturally, men dominate women in a relationship. Society in general is shaped in such a way that women are supposed to respect men; even if violence occurs, women may keep quiet because to them, it is normal (Barnish, 2004).

The Legal Assistance Centre (2012) in Namibia underscores a different theory that domestic violence has increased because of frustrations related to poverty and unemployment; coupled with alcohol abuse, in the context of a 'culture of violence' stemming from long years of colonialism and apartheid. Other scholars assert that domestic violence has not actually increased since independence, but has simply come out in the open because increased rights for women have made women feel more at ease to report cases of domestic violence. This is an indication that female victims of domestic violence are enlightened on where to report the cases for professional assistance by the authorities, particularly, at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit throughout the country.

Contrary to the above debate on culture, some contemporary literature indicates that culture and indigenous knowledge are not entirely bad. This literature views culture as capable of providing solutions to challenges on domestic violence against women. Also, the 2007 United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People reveals that some cultures are instrumental in the fight against the domestic violence is experienced by women. In this regard, the 2007 Declaration highlights the value of collective responsibility and respect for elders, ancestors and spirits. The community often embodies indigenous culture, which guides the indigenous individuals' behaviours in their daily lives. This structure often has the family as a primary unit, expanding to larger communal and social institutions, and generally governed by indigenous law and sacred teachings.

2.5.6 Violence against women: power and control

The researcher also investigated if there is correlation between poverty among men and violence against women. It is believed that poverty undermines the masculinity of men who are traditionally considered the main providers for their families. When this traditional role is destabilised, men feel threatened and powerless. Rajan and Krishnan (2001) define power as the capacity to influence others. It is also viewed as a function of the motives of both the power-

holder and the recipient. Power is a manifestation in the relationship between two people. Arguably, men acquire power in society and hence, the reproduction of that power through the institutionalization of patriarchy. A theory that deconstructs nationalism is useful for deflecting essentialist analyses of gender and power. Relations of power are not only signified in certain ways but are internal to symbolization and signification. People experience the exercise of power and the exercise of power against them, in cultural terms. There is a relationship between gender and sexuality, and the exercise of power. Power is a specific and constitutive element of the masculine identity.

Using power as a basis for understanding the practice of masculinity, Rajan and Krishnan (2001) explore what it means to be male. Rajan and Krishnan (2001) argue that, at one level, the genitals of men become the locus of male power in many countries, thus men tend to be more controlling of women, which results in violence. Aghtaie and Gangoli (2015) shared the use of violence in circumstances of threat to men's power. Thus, men may resort to violence when men's power and privileges are challenged, and other strategies have failed. Such violent actions may be available as part of men's repertoire at all times, but are mostly used in times of particular threat, such as the physical and emotional demands of women's response and resistance to the situation. Furthermore, men's violence towards women they know, personally may be linked to feelings of threat when women do not do what men expect, regarding child care, housework, paid work, sexuality, and so on.

On the other hand, Sweetman (2000) who acknowledged, the Marxist theory states that any analyses of the causes and possible cures of women's subordination has to be related to its socio-economic context and that it is not possible to give women meaningful equality while excluding the economic system. When women's socio-economic status is low, their dependence on men tends to be abused. This reflects that women living in poverty, depending

on their partners for financial survival, are more at risk of domestic violence. They seem to stay in an abusive relationship for economic survival.

2.5.7 Violence and resilience

In this study, the discussion on resilience is premised on how women overcome the experience of domestic violence to adapt to new experiences and lives. Labronici (2012) notes that resilience is when the female victim of domestic violence speaks out to reveal her subjectivity from the traumatic experience. The speaking position is a platform that enables the victim to redefine 'suffering', and thus overcome it. Moreover, the trauma narrative itself allows women to make sense of what happened and redeploys it effectively, so that it can be understood as a factor of resilience. Thus, resilience factors can be in the form of the social support network, spirituality and religion, self-esteem and sense of humour.

2.6. Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) situated in Windhoek at Katutura Intermediate State Hospital.

The Gender Based Violence Protection Unit formerly called Women and Child Protection Unit (WACPU) was established by the government of Namibia to tackle the problem of gender based violence in the country. Regain Trust Organisation (2015, p.14) describes the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) "as specialised police centres with a multi-sectorial approach, having a gender based violence preventative and survivors supporting focus. The services are provided directly at the Unit or are provided through referrals from other state providers." In addition, the Namibian Police controls the body of the GBVPU and partly staffs the Unit with its officers. The police are responsible for investigating each case and reporting the testimonies. The Social Workers of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare are tasked to offer counselling and welfare services to help seekers. Furthermore, medical doctors oversee medical examinations, collect forensic evidence and treat injuries of the survivors

(Regain Trust Organisation, 2015). This research investigated how female survivors experience domestic violence by their male counterparts. Therefore, it is necessary to define the term survivors as it will be used throughout the research. “The term ‘survivors’, represents women who were abused but are now empowered since they successfully overcame situations of abuse” (Regain Trust Organisation, 2015, P. 13).

2.7. Discussing domestic relationships from a legal perspective

It is crucial to find out who the perpetrator or abuser in the relationship between man and woman is. It is equally important to determine if domestic violence against female victims is committed by their husbands or boyfriends. The Namibian Combating of Domestic Violence Act, No. 4 of 2003, defines a domestic relationship as “when persons are or were married to each other, including a marriage according to any law, custom or religion, or are or were engaged to be married; they, being of different sexes, live or have lived together in a relationship in the nature of marriage, although they are not, or were not, married to each other.”

The Government of Namibia has the Combating of Domestic Violence act, 4 of 2003, which regulates the police duties toward domestic violence. Therefore, the said Act aims to ensure that complainants of domestic violence and witnesses are interviewed in such a way that they are able to speak freely on information given by the police officers to complainants, alleged perpetrators and family members who are present at the scene of an alleged domestic violence offence; with regard to assistance for medical treatment, the availability of shelters or other appropriate services, the availability of transport for such treatment or to such shelters; procedures to obtain protection orders and the contents of such orders; the laying of criminal charges or any other matter relevant to domestic violence, and the way and the form in which such information is to be given (the Government of Namibia’s Combating of Domestic Violence act, 4 of 2003).

The National Gender Policy (2010) indicated the government strategies for access to legal and social science by increasing the number of shelters and places of safety and ensuring that adequate support services are provided. Such services include medical, psychological, free counselling and legal support for women and children who have been subjected to violence, to enable them to recover and live normal lives. Additionally, the services support the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit cases compassionately and professionally. They also ensure that GBVPU are welcoming places for women and children, and provide functional, accessible, affordable and specialised legal services, including legal aid, to the survivors of gender based violence and sexual exploitation. Looking for service providers involved in combating gender based violence and sexual exploitation, such as the police, the judiciary, health and social workers is also a provision.

According to Coomer (2012), more people, especially women, in Namibia apply for protection orders each year. More than half of the complainants reported that they had experienced physical abuse in the most recent incidents of domestic violence, either alone or in combination with other forms of abuse. Weapon use was reported in almost one quarter of the applications, and 43 percent of the complainants had been injured in the most recent incidents. At least 97 percent of the complainants had a history of abuse by the same respondent, typically stretching back about two years - with almost 17 percent reporting a history of abuse dating back more than 10 years.

Prior to the enactment of the Combating Domestic Violence Act in 2003, there was no Namibian law aimed specifically at domestic violence. A person experiencing domestic violence had various legal options to lay an appropriate criminal charge such as assault or trespassing, seeking a High Court interdict or filing for divorce, but the new law introduced specific remedies well-tailored to the problem. One of these remedies is to apply to a

magistrate's court for a protection order directing the abuser to stop the violence (Coomer, 2012).

Hubbard (1998) asserted that most domestic violence cases are perpetrated by men against women. They occur among the rich and poor, in every ethnic group, in both rural and urban areas, and across all levels of education. The range of physical abuse includes hitting, burning, punching, beating, biting and even murder. The typical pattern is violence which starts soon after the beginning of the relationship and escalates with each episode. One of the victims left her abusive husband and went to stay at her parents' house. The husband followed her there and beat both her and her father. In another case, a female survivor who had two miscarriages because of her husband's how she sought shelter in a cave one night after a beating, saying, "I did not go to anyone's house because I was afraid of people's words."

A protection order can also be defined as a court order stating that the abuser must stop the violent behaviour against the victim, stay away from the people who are being abused, or even leave the family home altogether.

The Namibian Combating of Domestic Violence Act, No. 4 of 2003 made legal provision for any person who is in a domestic relationship and suffers from domestic violence. It states that such persons may apply for a protection order against another person in that domestic relationship who is abusing him or her. The said Act was regulated to fight against domestic violence. Hence, in the scope of this study, the researcher intended to establish if female victims apply for protection orders as one of the coping strategies.

2.8. Coping strategies during domestic violence by female survivors

Coping strategies can be defined as actions resulting in a positive outcome to, for example, reduce high arousal levels. To cope in this context is, consequently, to attempt to alter the stressor or the perception of a stressor as experienced by the female victims of domestic

violence (Overlien & Hyden, 2009). Experiencing domestic violence is considered as a stressful life occurrence. However, many abused women try to minimise their pain and suffering by developing coping strategies. Therefore, coping strategies can be used to understand how female survivors deal with domestic violence, particularly, physical violence. The researcher found out which coping strategies female survivors use to better their lives when they experience domestic violence.

Dueba et al. (2016, p.10) note that, “women’s coping strategies when faced with violence were limited. Some women described how they screamed and cried and tried to leave the house and to an open ground outside the house.” In addition, from a legal perspective a protection order was used by the female survivors when they experienced domestic violence. Hubbard and Rimmer (2007) defined a protection order as an order by the court requiring the respondent or perpetrators to stop committing domestic violence against the victims. The protection order may include other provisions to protect the complainant (person experiencing domestic violence), such as ordering the respondent not to go near the complainant, ordering the respondent to leave the joint residence or ordering the respondent (this is the person who is believed to have committed the domestic violence) to make maintenance payments. Should the respondent not comply with the protection order, an eight thousand dollar fine or two years imprisonment are due.

The law made provision that disobeying a protection order is a crime. The application procedure is a simple one as one does not need a lawyer. A social worker, clerk of court or someone from your community can help to complete the application form which is submitted to the Clerk of the Court for prosecution purposes. Both parties, the complainant and the perpetrators, will be summoned to testify, and it will be up to the court to make informed decisions of enforcing the law (Hubbard & Rimmer, 2007).

2.8.1. Forms of coping strategies of abused women

Waldrop and Resick (2004) point out that the literature examining coping strategies for women who have suffered physical abuse by a spouse or dating partner is relatively limited. However, some coping strategies such as active behavioural coping, by leaving a relationship or going away for a while, have been documented. Cognitive coping strategies include attempts at changing one's way of thinking about a situation, for example, trying to find the positive in it or staying with, or leaving, the abusive partners. In addition, the active strategies involve escaping from the abuser, where female victims make use of shelters, opening cases against perpetrators for prosecution while still in the relationship, arguing with the abuser, calling the police to rescue or talking to a friend.

Waldrop and Resick (2004) argued that in some cases, requesting for help has been problematic as it is not always effective. For example, family members and friends sometimes refuse to aid the female victim in a violent situation. Furthermore, there are cases where the police have refused to arrest an abusive partner.

2.9 Gender based violence against women as a concern in Namibia

This study focuses on Gender Based Violence (GBV) as it is a serious concern in Namibia. It is, therefore, important to understand how gender based violence has been researched in past studies in Namibia. The examined literature helped this study reveal if female survivors who reported cases at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit experience the same or similar forms of physical violence. It was guided by the local Namibian studies discussed below. The Legal Assistance Centre (2012, p.157) documented that “the problem of violence against women in contemporary Namibian society is influenced by the historical imbalance of power between men and women, social structural factors such as poverty, unemployment, and related social problems, including alcoholism and drug abuse. In addition, socio-cultural attitudes contribute to violence against women.” It seems that violence against women is triggered by

different factors such as culture, poverty and alcohol to mention a few. Thus, it was worth researching the cause of violence against women through narration. This helped the researcher recommend resolutions to combat gender based violence. Khan (2000) indicates that factors which perpetuate domestic violence vary with cultural opinions, gender specific socialisation, cultural definition of appropriate sex roles, expectation of roles within relationships and values that give men propriety rights over women and girls. The author also argues that the notion of family as a private sphere that is under male control, customs of marriage (bride price/dowry), and acceptability of violence to resolve conflict are also factors which perpetuate domestic violence. In addition, economic factors also play a significant role. Such economic factors include women's economic dependence on men, limited access to cash and credit, limited access to employment in formal and informal sectors, and limited access to education and training for women (Khan, 2000).

Mogotsi et al. (2015) state that gender based violence (GBV) remains a national concern in Namibia despite legislative frameworks such as the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 2003. As much as the government is trying to fight against domestic violence, it is quite a challenge as violence especially against women usually happens privately. It only becomes public when government must intervene after it has been reported. Only then, does the nation become concerned. Nafuka (2012) shared that the trend of men wielding more power than women in society is also observable in Namibia. Both women and men are inculcated with certain attitudes, roles and perceptions. For example, females are conditioned to favour dependence; powerlessness and submission, while males are conditioned to favour aggression and dominance. It seems like gender dictates how women and men should behave in society. Male dominance affects women as it often results in violence upon disagreements.

Hartman (2016) reports that about 50,000 crimes related to gender-based violence were reported over the past three years, with the Khomas region being the capital of such crime,

according to statistics released by the head of the Namibian Police's GBV Division. Hartman (2016) further emphasised that the 50,000 figure is equivalent to about 45 GBV related crimes committed in Namibia every day for the period 2012 to 2015. A breakdown of the statistics shows that there were 22,174 (about 20 cases per day) assaults with the intention to cause grievous bodily harm, 18 054 common assault (about three a day), 2,839 rapes (about three a day), 1,138 attempted murders (about one per day) and 734 murders (about one in every two days) all related to GBV.

The Khomas region topped the list of most affected regions when it came to GBV-related assaults (followed by Oshana and Karas), and rape (followed by Otjozondjupa, with Oshikoto and Erongo tied in third place). Hardap features on the list for rape, and Omusati on that of murder. Substance abuse has been reported as a major contributing factor to GBV related crimes. According to Dennia Gayle, cited by Hartman (2016), an estimated one in three women experience physical or sexual abuse in her lifetime worldwide, and Namibia is no exception. No country is immune, and this is everyone's problem. The Namibia Demographic Survey (2013) revealed that with its small population of just over two million, Namibia has seen 33 percent of the married women being victims of GBV, with only 21 percent of them having sought help (Hartman, 2016). Behind these numbers are real women and girls, who are valuable members of our society.

The Legal Assistance Centre (2012) similarly found that women who are abused by their intimate partners usually keep it to themselves. In this (Legal Assistant Centre) study, 21 percent of the women who had experienced physical violence from intimate partners had never told anyone about it. Those who talked to someone were more likely to turn to informal sources of support, rather than formal services. The victims most frequently approached parents (35 percent), friends (33 percent) or siblings (26 percent). Nevertheless, almost 40 percent of the women who had experienced physical violence from an intimate partner had, at some stage,

approached some institution for assistance. Only 10 to 20 percent of the abused women had reported their cases to the police, while about 21 percent had approached hospitals or health centres. Social workers were approached by 8 percent of the physically abused women, while about 6 percent sought legal advice, and 6 percent approached a court for help, and only 2 percent of women had sought help from a shelter for abused women. Very few women sought help from religious leaders or counsellors. Some women from the study approached more than one agency for assistance.

Violence against women is perpetuated by certain factors that can be cultural, economic, legal or political. The Urban Trust of Namibia et al. (2013, p.62) highlighted that culture contributes to violence through “beliefs in the inherit superiority of males, the notion of the family as a private sphere, acceptability of violence as a means to resolve conflict,” while the economical contribution is through “women’s economic dependence on men.” Gender based violence is not taken seriously or prioritised due to notions of family being private and beyond the control of the state, the risk of challenging the status quo/religious laws and the limited participation of women in organised political system

10. Conclusion

The literature in this chapter informed the reader that women suffer from domestic violence such as physical violence caused by their male partners, either married or single (divorced or cohabiting). It also revealed that domestic violence is influenced by many factors such as inequality, patriarchy and masculinity. Domestic violence may result in murder, injuries, trauma or permanent disability. These causes and effects of domestic violence are useful to this study because they attempt to accommodate the various accounts that can qualify under the term “domestic violence”. Therefore, female victims experience domestic violence (physical abuse) differently. This fact is worth researching to show how female survivors experience domestic violence and to also identify their coping strategies.

The literature review indicated that, women bear the brunt of domestic violence by male partners not only in Namibia, but worldwide. Additionally, the concept of domestic violence includes such forms as gender based violence, physical violence; violence against women, patriarchy, and masculinity. These forms are important to this study because they defy a neat containment of the term “domestic violence”. Furthermore, the research used some of these ideas to critically compare the research findings, looking for similarities, differences and new discoveries. The methodology for this study is explained in the next chapter to show how the study was conducted.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The study primarily used a qualitative methodology where women's narratives on domestic violence were the central focus of the study. A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate as it provides an in-depth analysis of participant stories about interpersonal gender based violence. From the sample of the women survivors accounts, the causes and effects of domestic violence, and their coping strategies were critically examined. The qualitative research design was used as a plan to answer the study's key research questions. Thus, a qualitative narrative case study method and purposive sampling design were used throughout the research process to obtain in-depth information from the point of view of female survivors who experienced domestic, particularly, physical violence. The research site was the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit, at Katutura State Hospital in Windhoek.

According to Gillham (2001, p.10), the:

Qualitative method focuses primarily on the kind of evidence (what people tell you, what they do) that will enable you to understand the meaning of what is going on. Their great strength is that they can illuminate issues and turn up possible explanations: essentially a research for meaning as is all research.

Matthews and Ross (2010) further contend that the qualitative research method refers to methods that are primarily concerned with stories and accounts including subjective understanding, feelings, opinion and beliefs. To get in-depth information on how females experience and cope with domestic violence, the qualitative method affords the participants an opportunity to express themselves on the domestic violence they encountered by their male counterparts.

In addition, other scholars, Snape and Spencer (2003) define qualitative research as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices include field notes, in-depth interviews, conversations, photographs, recording and memos to one's self. By implication, qualitative research involve an interpretive approach to the social world. This means that qualitative researchers study subjects in their social settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena according to the meanings people bring to them. To achieve this, the research employed the case study method. It sought to understand how female victims or survivors experienced and coped with domestic violence, hence the case study method. Females who reported domestic violence at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit formed a case study for this research. A case study can be defined according to Gillham (2001, p.56) as follows:

An entity sampled purposely which investigates to answer specific research questions (that many may be fairly loose to begin with) and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers to the research questions.

It can also be defined as a single entity, often a person, department, an organisation, a situation or a country or continent wherein the subject is explored in detail and great depth information is obtained about a phenomena or social issues being investigated (Matthew & Ross, 2010).

The study's site of investigation is the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit, because it is the entity where cases of domestic or gender based violence are reported by the female victims who are the participants of this study. Similarly, Silverman (2005) further observes that a case study research is the basic idea that one case, or perhaps a small number of cases, will be studied in detail using appropriate methods, for example qualitative. While there may be more than one specific purpose, and some research questions, the general objective is to develop a

full understanding of that case as possible. Basically, for qualitative research, a smaller number of cases are advisable for a study to gain in-depth information about a phenomenon. In the same light, Creswell (2014) emphasises that case studies are the design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a programme, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bound by time and activity, and the researcher collects detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a specific period. Given the above scholarly definitions, for the purposes of this study, a case study will be defined as a method of studying social phenomenon through analysis of individual. The female victims who experienced domestic violence in particular physical violence and reported the violence at Gender Based Violence Protection Unit formed a case study of this research.

3.2 Justifying the choice of narrative interviews

The narrative interview method was used because it is a subjective method that allows the participants to narrate their life experiences and personal meaning of domestic violence. Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2013) point out that in social research, 'narrative' also refers to a variety of topics of study, methods of investigation and analysis, and theoretical orientation. Additionally, the narratives that researchers are interested in are the social patterns and function of stories, whether the 'stories' are short, or much more extensive narratives. For some researchers, the most interesting features of personal narratives lie in what the participants say about individual thoughts or feelings, whether the narratives are about events or experiences (Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2013). As such, the researcher sought narratives or stories from the women who survived domestic violence by their male counterparts. The narratives were then critically analysed to gain further insight into the study. This also means that multiple narratives can be used to represent a more diverse view on the area of interest.

Moreover, Neuman (2011) revealed that in the historical narrative, the writer organises material chronologically around a single coherent “story.” On the other hand, Marshall and Rossman (2011) observe that a life history inquiry is an in depth interview method that gathers, analyses, and interprets the stories people tell about their lives. They assume that people live “storied” lives and that telling and retelling one’s story helps one’s understanding and creates a sense of self. The story is important, but so is how the story is told. The researcher, working closely with the participant, explores a story and records it. Life histories and narrative inquiry are used across the social science disciplines and are particularly useful for giving the reader an insider’s view of a culture or era in history. As such, they represent the application of the principles of biography to the social science. A related approach is digital storytelling, in which an individual (or possibly a group) tells a story using digital content-images, sound, and perhaps videos.

Marshall and Rossman (2011, p.153) also observe that a “narrative is useful when exploring issues of social change, causality, and social identity and when studying participants’ experience of violence, trauma, or genocide.” Denzin and Lincoln (2011) discuss narratives in detail, perceiving storytelling as a lived experience as follows: some researchers study narratives as a lived experience, or social action. These researchers are interested in how people narrate their experiences. Therefore, these researchers treat an understanding of storytelling practices as essential to grasp what the narrators are communicating. In this approach, narration is the practice of constructing meaningful selves, identities, and realities. Many of these researchers use in-depth interviews as their method of gathering narrative data. Some produce detailed transcripts of their interviews to pay close attention to the narrative linguistic practices (such as word choice, repetition, hesitation, laughter, use of personal pronouns) and how storytelling is embedded in the interaction between the researcher and the narrator. Whether or not they produce detailed transcripts, these researchers are interested in how narrators make sense of personal experience in relation to cultural discourses. In this research, female victims

were given the opportunity to share their experiences of domestic violence. Through their stories or life histories of domestic violence, they got opportunities to express themselves.

The interview took place at the places where the participants felt safe since the topic is sensitive. A semi structured interview schedule was developed as a guideline for the narration interview. This allowed the participants the opportunity to express themselves, and also answer follow up questions that arise during interviews for more information or clarification. The interview was recorded with the tape recorder and transcription was done. Hence, their life histories “seek to examine and analyse the subjective experience of individuals and their constructions of the social world” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, P.151). For the researcher to obtain sufficient information from the participants, open ended flexible questionnaires were used. Babbie (2015) indicates that, open ended questions are questions for which the respondent is asked to provide his or her own answers. Most questions are semi-structured, but flexible according to how people answer. The researcher could delete, amend or add new questions depending on what the researcher would like to hear.

3.3 Population and sampling

The target population consisted of female survivors from the age of 18 years up to 50 years of age who had reported domestic violence, in particular, physical violence at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) in Windhoek. Punch (2012, p. 293) defined population as “the target group, usually large, about whom we want to develop knowledge, but which we cannot study directly; therefore, we sample from that population.” On the other hand, the research population is “the entire set of individuals to which reference will be made” (Pickard, 2007, p. 60). These age groups mentioned earlier were selected to find out which age group had suffered more from domestic violence. GBVPU was selected because female survivors report their cases there. Hence, the study’s population was confined to the female survivors of domestic violence, and was purposive sampling. The target number of interviewees was thirty

(30) female victims (survivors) whose cases had been reported at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. However, there were only eight (8) female survivors who were willing to partake in the study voluntarily.

They included three (3) single (cohabitating or divorced) women and five (5) married ones. Their cases had been in the case file from 01 December 2014 to 31 June 2016. This period was chosen because that's when domestic violence against women escalated, based on the case file records where women were murdered. Thus, the study was confined to the female victims (survivors) as the population for the case study. Neuman (2014, p.247) makes a succinct observation that "population is the abstract idea of a large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalized." The researcher decided to choose this population, the female victims who reported cases at Gender Based Violence Protection Unit, because the population could share how they experience and cope with domestic violence. Their information will be able to answer the study objectives. Sampling will be discussed next.

Sampling

For the purposes of this study, purposive sampling was used to select the participants. According to Neuman (2014, p. 246), a "sample is a small set of cases a researcher selects from a large pool and generalizes to the population." Other scholars such as Creswell and Clark (2011) note that purposeful sampling in qualitative research means that researchers intentionally select or recruit participants who have experienced the central phenomenon or the key concept being explored in the study. In this study, the female victims of domestic violence were selected as participants purposely, as the aim of this research is to allow participants to share experiences on domestic violence and also, how they coped with domestic violence. Thus, their information will be useful to find out how women go through domestic violence

and their coping mechanism. Having this information will guide the researcher to document the female victims' experiences, and the causes of the domestic violence. Moreover, Sarantakos (2013) posits that purposive sampling is a technique where the researcher purposely chooses subjects who, in their opinion, are relevant to the project. The choice of respondents is guided by the judgement of the investigator. This means that the researcher chooses the participants who are suitable for the study, in this case the subjects are the female victims who reported cases at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. Purposive sampling was suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to select the female survivors who had reported physical violence against their male counterparts at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU). With permission granted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and the Ministry of Safety and Security (see permission letter marked annexure A and B), the sample of women was selected from the case files from GBVPU. Women aged between 18 to 50 years participated in the interviews determine the most affected age group. The diverse ages allowed the researcher to compare the different experiences of the women and how they cope with domestic violence. The researcher obtained the contact details of the participants in the case files at GBVPU, and then contacted the female survivors via cell phone. Those who were willing to partake in the research were sampled thereafter. These female survivors thus comprised the study's sample.

3.4 Research instrument

Research instruments, namely, the semi-structured interview guide was chosen so that new questions could be asked as they naturally arose in the interview sessions – questions that had not previously occurred to the researcher.

An interview structure (see annexure D) was designed to guide the face to face interview with the domestic violence survivors. King and Horrocks (2010, p.35) state that, “qualitative interviews use an ‘interview guide’ that outlines the main topics the researcher would like to

cover, but is flexible regarding the phrasing of questions and the order in which they are asked, and allows participants to lead the interaction in unanticipated directions.” Provisions were made on the interview guide to accommodate follow up questions. This allowed participants to be as open and informative as possible about their experiences, and the coping strategies they used to combat domestic violence. The researcher used the following research instruments to collect data: semi-structured interviews made use of open-ended questions for the researcher to obtain in depth information. Gray (2011) posits that semi-structured interviews provide the structure with a list of issues (rather than specific questions) to be raised and one has the freedom to follow up points if necessary. A semi structured interview is mostly used in small-scale social research. The structure is provided by an interview schedule, which is a list of issues that one needs to cover. The researcher is not obliged to go through these points in order or in any way keep to a formal set for the interview. Rather, it reminds the researcher of the issues s/he wants to cover. Thus, the interview schedule reminds the researcher not just of the issues but also of potential new questions, possible follow-up questions and probes, which may automatically arise during the interview process.

3.5 Data collection

Data collection was done using one-on-one in-depth interviews with all the participants. The data collection process included the preparation of the field and conducting of interviews with participants. Firstly, to test the semi-structured interview schedule, the researcher conducted a pilot study with two (2) female survivors who had reported physical violence at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. Blaxter et al. (2010, p.138) contend that “piloting is the process whereby you try out the research techniques and methods which you have in mind, see how well they work in practice, and, if necessary, modify your plans accordingly.” Data was obtained through face to face conversational interviews, which were conducted by the researcher in English and Oshiwambo. This was done from July 2016 to August 2016.

Appointments were made with the participants at their preferred time as well as in locations or places of their choice where they felt most comfortable and safe. The interview was conducted for a period of 45 minutes to 1 hour. However, since domestic violence remains a sensitive issue, the case files were returned to the Officials immediately for confidentiality purposes at GBVPU. Conversely, some scholars observe that interviews are an “inadequate term for the range of ways in which people can give you information. This may be more informal than an interview, for example an off-the cuff spontaneous discussion” (Gillham, 2001, p.21).

For this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with all the participants. Thus, semi-structured interviews were used as a research method to collect data to get detailed information on how female survivors experienced domestic violence. The rights of individuals to informed consent were explained to ensure that the interviews were understood and that participation was voluntary and confidential. Participants were informed that the interviews would be recorded, eventually transcribed and analysed. Permission was sought from the participants to use a tape recorder. The thesis will be published for the University of Namibia as well as the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. The estimated duration of each interview proceedings was also mentioned at the beginning of the interviews. This was however not a limitation. In addition, the researcher informed the participants of the importance of their participation in the study.

Matthews and Ross (2010) note that the semi-structured interview is supposed to follow a common set of topics or questions for each interview, may introduce the topics or questions for each interview, may introduce the topic or questions in different ways or orders as appropriate for each interview, allow the participant to answer the questions or discuss the topic in their own way using their own words in depth, through follow up questions. Semi-structured interviews consist of questions as guidelines of the interviews and follow up questions are considered. Additionally, semi-structured interviews are often recorded and then transcribed to

capture the information verbatim as they are narrated. The participants were asked to relate their experiences of domestic violence and their coping strategies to curb domestic violence. Open ended questions were used to get detailed information from the participants. Creswell and Clark (2011, p.414) also add that open ended questions “are used in qualitative research to collect data. These are questions in which the researcher does not use predetermined categories or scales to collect the data.” The open-ended questions allow participants express themselves relatively freely.

The researcher also experienced some challenges using the narrative interviews, namely, authenticity and reluctance on the part of participants. Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2007) discuss the weakness of narrative interviews noting that participants might pose as someone who knows nothing or very little about the story being told. Every participant will work on a ‘hypothesis’ about what the interviewer wants to hear and what they probably already know. Informants generally assume that the interviewer does not know something about the story and that they do not talk about what they know because they take it for granted. From observation, some participants would pause during the interview to reflect on and remember the traumatic events. To overcome this weakness, the researcher allowed the participants ample time to remember what really happened. Probing was done more using follow up questions to gain in-depth information. It was also done by explaining the importance of the participants’ nonverbal expressions as these helped validate the data. The findings will be used in amending the law to help other women who are experiencing domestic violence or families affected by domestic violence. In cases where the participants were traumatised during the interview, the researcher handled the interview with care, sympathising with them. Also, the researcher allowed them time to express themselves. Thereafter, the participants were professionally referred to the Social Workers based at the Gender Based Violence Protection Units, situated at the Katutura State Hospital, in Windhoek for counselling.

3.6 Data analysis

The researcher analysed data by taking into consideration the general patterns, trends of similarities and difference in the women's narratives. Also, the researcher looked for unique or new information that is not reflected in the current literature or that is specific to this Namibian case to make sense of the data collected. Importantly, the themes and theoretical concepts were captured and expressed by the various aspects that the participants indicated. Bradley, Curry, and Devers (2007) defined themes as recurrent unifying concepts or statements about the subject of inquiry. The purpose is to characterise the experience of the individual participants using general insights from the whole of the data. The analysis was done by means of themes and concepts. Themes are an idea or point that is central to a story, which can often be summed in a single word. The concept is basically the reasoning behind an idea, strategy or proposal with emphasis placed on the benefits brought up by that idea. Thus, the theme is important because it helps in the interpretation and analysis of data. Concepts are important for qualitative analysis to interpret the content of the findings based on what the participants narrated.

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014) state that data will be the source dictating how you will analyse your data or decide what is best for your study process to develop and identify sociological concepts, themes and patterns of similarity and difference in terms of meaning. The researcher will also develop headings or categories which will shape the main sections of the thesis. Based on this, the data interpretations will be analysed by developing and noting emergent themes derived from what participants will say, seeking out patterns of similarities or differences in meanings, and themes or opinions among the participant women. Lastly, the researcher analysed related and similar responses, and those that were different. The data obtained from the interviewees in tape recordings were transcribed for analysis purposes. The data was presented in a descriptive summary form.

Transcription “means after you have collected your data (usually in the form of an audio-recording); the first stage of analysis is to transcribe the audio into a word-processor document. This is an essential step in the analysis” (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p.387). Therefore, the researcher transcribed the information collected immediately after the fieldwork. On the other hand, data analysis “involves coding the data, dividing the text into small units (phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), assigning a label to each unit and then grouping the codes into themes to make meanings of the main factors of the findings (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Blaxter et al. (2010) further contend that researchers have different assumptions and principles of analysis about verification, accessibility and so on. It is therefore important that the analysis is as focused as possible: key or primary questions are of utmost importance for analysis. Also, some questions do not deserve analysis at the same level, while others may be eliminated, as they simply set the background for discussion. Thus, the researcher could only focus on important themes that are appropriate for the analyses, in response to the objectives. Despite the above-mentioned, Burton (2000, p.177) defines data analysis “as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collecting data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data; builds grounded theory.”

3.7 Limitations of the study

The researcher experienced some challenges to successfully undertake the research as planned. Since it was a sensitive topic, some female survivors contacted via cell phone indicated no interest to partake in the study, although the purpose of the study had been explained. This was respected by the researcher. The researcher also came across some female survivors who indicated that they had moved out of Windhoek. As a result, some contact details recorded in the case files were not reachable. Even so, some female survivors had forgiven their partners with whom they lived together, so they indicated no interest to take part as they could not

remember the violence they experienced. In some cases, the phones were answered by the husband or boyfriend, which made it difficult for the researcher to talk to them regarding the research. Addressing some of these challenges, the researcher introduced herself as a student from the University of Namibia, conducting a research on how women experience and cope with domestic violence.

Then the researcher presented the permission letters obtained from the University of Namibia and Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare permitting her to undertake the research. This motivated the participants to partake in the study. Another limitation is that the results of the study cannot be generalised to the whole Namibian population of women because it only focused on a selected sample of women who reported cases to the Namibia Police's Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. Unreported cases are not part of this research. Also, the research is only based on physical violence cases reported; it excludes the population of women who reported emotional, economical and sexual abuse. Finally, the study is limited to participants, who speak English and Oshiwambo because these are the two languages in which the researcher is proficient, The study is also limited to women only and therefore, men survivors of domestic violence are not captured. The study was also limited in the sense, that the research cannot be said to speak for all GBV victims in Namibia, and is not therefore nationally representative.

3.8 Ethical consideration of this study

The researcher dealt with a sensitive topic of domestic violence. Therefore, research ethics were highlighted to ensure the safety and protection of the participants. The participants also gave consent to partake in the study (see the consent form marked annexure C). Matthews and Ross (2010, p.75) define informed consent as an “ongoing agreement by a person to receive treatment, undergo procedures or participate in research, after risks, benefits and alternatives have been adequately explained to them.”

The participants were assured about confidentiality and were asked to use pseudo names meaning the names in the study have been changed to avoid legal implications. To ensure anonymity and that they were not going to be identified. By implication, “confidentiality and protection of individuals are central to guidelines on research ethics, and you need to consider how you can be clear about the nature of the agreement you have entered with research subjects or contacts” (Blaxter et al., 2010, p.164). On the same note, Neuman (2014, p. 155) concurs saying that “confidentiality is the ethical protection for those who studied by holding research data in confidence or keeping them secret from public.” Therefore, “anonymity means the ethical protection that participants remain nameless; their identity is protected from disclosure and remains unknown” (Neuman, 2014, p. 154). Thus, the participation of any subject selected for the research will be solely and totally voluntary and the researcher will not coerce participants who demonstrate resistance to participate in the research. Neuman (2014, p.150) also asserts that “voluntary consent is an ethical principle that people should never participate in research unless they explicitly and freely agree to participate.” The voice recordings will be installed with a password once validation and analysis of data collected is completed. Extra permission was requested from the participants to make use of the voice recordings. Fortunately, all participants who voluntarily took part in the study were all willing to be recorded.

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter three focused on the research methodology. It described the research design and research methods that were used as well as strategies and measures to ensure trustworthiness since a qualitative approach was used in this study. The methods used were relevant because the purpose of the study was to explore the women’s experiences and coping strategies towards domestic violence in Windhoek. The study was done by collecting data through interviews. The data obtained was analysed using themes, concepts, similarities and differences of the

research findings. The population under study was represented by eight (8) female victims whose cases had been reported at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit. Female victims (participants) were purposely selected.

In the next chapter, the data analyses is presented in detail showing how female survivors narrated their experiences and coping strategies.

CHAPTER 4

Experiences of gender based violence in Windhoek: Findings and analysis

4.1 Introducing the Windhoek research results

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented based on the emergent final theoretical and research categories and the themes identified from the narrative interviews. Analysis of data is presented based on the findings derived from the women's narratives on their experiences with domestic and relationship violence and their coping strategies. The narrative biographical information of each participant is also given. This chapter, therefore, presents the stories of how women experienced violence by their male counterparts (in relationships and general marital/partnership relationships). The root causes of violence are analysed in chapter 5. The coping strategies of domestic violence by women are presented in chapter 6. The conclusion and policy recommendations will be presented in chapter 7.

4.2 How partner-relations with the men were first established, and how the women perceived them.

Domestic violence is violence conducted within a domestic relationship, for example, between spouses, intimate partners or family members. Therefore, the explanation of what the women said about the beginnings of the relationships, and how the relationships broke down into abuse and violence, will be documented as a point of departure. Some participants' experiences were different, and others similar, regarding domestic violence. Below is a summary of each participant's biography and a short account of their respective relationships. As such, the theoretical codes that emerged from the interviews were established. The theoretical codes are outlined and defined next:

(a) We had a good relationship at the beginning

Maria is a single lady aged 26, who is currently not living with her boyfriend. She met him at her uncle's funeral in 2011. They then became good friends, and later started dating. She dated him for five (5) years and they have a child together. Her boyfriend is employed, but she is not, and he is the breadwinner. In most instances, relationships start on a good note, and Maria thought she was fortunate to have a healthy relationship. She said her relationship was good:

Everything was so nice and you know how relationship is first time, so everything was perfect that first year, the second year was fine. We had a good relationship, yes we never had a fight or anything like that. We were just like in a happy relationship.

As participants narrated their experiences differently, it was apparent that at the beginning, relationships are good, and some women enjoy their moments. Likewise, Anna is married and is aged 46. She is Kavango speaking. When they met she was working at Paradise Shop. She got married at the Magistrate's Court in Windhoek. She met her husband in Rundu Sauyema. Anna had a happy relationship as her husband treated her well. This is revealed when she said that:

We meet at Rundu Sauyema, that times he was not working. When we met, I was working at Paradise Shop and that work we were helping each other, he was also selling, he is a carpenter, he was selling tables, beds and cardboards, was helping each other to bring food in the house and our relationship was very good. He was treating me very nicely that time, he was not working. He was just selling his stuff but he was giving me money. Me, I buy food for my kids and clothes and even for my mother also. Yes he was giving also money to my mother, the marriage was very happy.

Their marriage was good as the husband treated his wife with respect, and also took good care of his family.

Melody got married in 2010 and is 30 years old. She is Oshiwambo speaking. She met her husband at school. They dated for 5 years, then got married. She mentioned that: "We met at

school. We dated for 5 years and we got married. We were understanding each other, there was no complaint". The above narration reveals that relationships are healthy at the beginning and the husband or boyfriend treats their partners very well, and women really feel loved by their partners.

Jennifer, aged 39 years, was married in church in 2011. She is employed. She has children with her husband. She is separated and has moved out of the common house due to domestic violence. She is Oshiwambo speaking. She met her husband through a friend in Luderitz and they started dating immediately. She had a long distance relationship with her husband as they were not living in the same town. However, they used to visit each other. She expressed that:

I met him through a friend, we met in Luderitz where I am staying and he came for work in 2004. We started dating immediately, it was only a matter of distance affair. He was staying in Windhoek and I was staying in Luderitz and we usually go visiting each other, give each other chances. The one goes this month, the other one goes the next month to the other one to visit the other one. The relationship was quite fine, he seems like a good guy, protective and responsible. He was like taking care or how can I put it? Like responsible is like he really looked like someone who can look after his family. In real fact his real family is his real family, blood family and not the one with who he got married to.

Although relationships are healthy enjoyable at the beginning, it seems they are not always genuine. Jennifer expressed how her husband pretended to be a caring, protective and responsible man at the beginning of their relationship, but later on he started misbehaving. Based on this, it was noted that many female victims of domestic violence suffered later in their relationships when the true colours of their partners were revealed.

Nangula Ya Cloete, is Oshiwambo speaking and currently employed. She is a married woman and is 49 years old. She got married in 1995 at the Magistrate's Court in Windhoek. Eventually, she got married in church in 1998 in Owamboland. She has two children by her husband. She

met her husband in Klein Windhoek. They never dated; her husband was ready for marriage. Her relationship with her husband is a healthy one. They did not date for a long time as her husband proposed soon after. She affirmed that:

We met in Windhoek. I remember we met in Klein Windhoek because I was staying there. We never dated. He proposed to meet my parents for marriage. Our relationship was good. He asked where I come from. He would like to marry me. He sent someone at our house to go tell my parents that he would like to marry me.

The first impression is always good and this is an indication that the relationship is enjoyed by both partners in its early stages. In this case, the couple was ready for marriage although they did not know each other very well.

4.3 Problems in relationships and general marital/partnership problems

Firstly, the researcher introduced the preliminary sections to show how women's relations with the men were first established, and how the women narrated these relationships. This means that the analysis focused on how participants narrated their experiences and how they coped with domestic violence in their lifetime. Problems occurred later in their relationship, resulting in domestic violence. The next section will discuss more on how women perceive their relationships with their partners.

4.3.1 Women explaining when the relationships started to break down, and how it happened

(a) How relationship started to breakdown

Martha, gave a brief biography of herself. She is 24 years old; a single lady, who lives with her boyfriend. She has been in a relationship with other men other than the current one. She is a Kavango speaker and has lived with her current boyfriend for a long time, approximately, nine years. They met in 2009 when she was in grade 12. She said that their relationship has

been a healthy one from the beginning when they started dating, but it become violent after her boyfriend started seeing another lady. She narrated:

No, it was good from the beginning, maybe 4 years, 5 it was fine. Then after, he started hanging out with friends that goes out like drinking with girls and like that. Then he also started having that behaviour of cheating. So from there, we started having misunderstandings.

Relationships are portrayed as healthy from the beginning and enjoyable to the couples. However, it is evident enough from Martha's comment that the relationships breakdown in most cases because of men exercising their privilege of having extra-affairs while in the relationship. This seems not acceptable to women, and as a result it ends up in a misunderstanding that leads to violence against women and the relationship breaks down.

Similarly, Nangula Ya Cloete, is Oshiwambo speaking, is married and had the opportunity to partake in the study. She indicated how her relationship began to break down after her husband started seeing other women. Nangula Ya Cloete did not appreciate it and lead to marital problems and misunderstandings. She expressed:

We got married on the 12 October 1995 at Magistrate Court in Windhoek. Our marriage was good. We understood each other. On the 12 October 1998, we got married at Etegameni Church in Owamboland. Our relationship was good but in 2003, we did not understand each other after my husband started seeing other ladies because in their Kwanyama culture if you marry other tribe, to be regarded as man enough, he has to have extra marital affairs as a sigh for being a boss and man of the house.

This is a clear indication that men are influenced by culture to have extra affairs. However, this is reported to be one of the contributing factors to relationships breaking down. On the same note, Melody is 30 years of age, a married woman, and points out that extra marital affairs destroy relationships or marriages.

Yes because I found out that he was having another woman outside. That is why we were not understanding each other and then from there, he started to try to beat me. First he did beat me and then the second one I told him that no he must not touch my body otherwise I will go to report. And then on the next day I stand up and go to Ministry of Gender and I went to report him, is where the people from Gender they call both of us to go there and then we sat and they talked to us. Since we were there, we never fight or argue again.

Apart from Nangula Ya Cloete and Martha's narrations, Maria, a single lady aged 26 shared how her relationship with her boyfriend became sour. She said:

Yes the bad time when we started we were not living together you know and then later on I started living at his place and then I lost my job so that time he was the breadwinner. So after losing my job that is when the whole drama thing started you know. He started like he changed quickly you know when I started living with him, and if I want to do this is a problem, if I go here you know those types of things. And then later on that is when the fight started. He started being abusive.

This narration proves that women who lose their jobs while in a relationship are most likely to have their relationships eventually breaking down as a consequence of abuse by their male counterparts.

Monalisa, aged 37 years, is a married woman. She is one of the participants who shared how her relationship became sour because of alcohol abuse by her partner and his constantly being away from the relationship at nights with friends and other women. She expressed:

I met him at the church in the choir and that time the relationship was good. He was also young, I was 20 and he was 21 and all the things were good the first time. Then we got the first child 2000 and after first child we stayed and then we married 2007 we married and after the marriage the friends come in my husband's life then he drinks and everything was upside down now.

This expressed that in some instances man lose control due to alcohol which at times results in abusing their partners.

Jella, 38 years of age, a single lady, had a jealous boyfriend who accused her of having affairs with other men. Although the allegation was not true, she was abused physically by her boyfriend, and she suffered because of sheer jealousy.

In the beginning it was well and it was well. After finishing my school it was also well and after that maybe to two years after finishing my school it is there the problems came in. He was jealous at me that I am having other boyfriends and he was quarrelling and beating me that time I was not having any kids. When he was continues doing bad everyday then I decided, that time we were staying together. Then I decided to leave him at his room and I decided to come at our place but we were not divorced.

It is evident that jealousy may lead to domestic violence against women.

(b) Our relationship has never been good

Jella, (38 years), living on her own without a boyfriend, indicated that they met in 1999 when she was in grade 11. She said that when they met the relationship was good at first, but after finishing her education, problems started to surface. Initially, they lived together, but when things turned sour in the relationship she decided to move out. She describes the problems that occurred:

He was jealous at me that I am having other boyfriends and he was quarrelling and beating me. That time I was not having any kids. When he continued doing bad things every day, I decided, that time we were staying together. Then I decided to leave him at his room and I decided to come at our place, but we were not divorced.

4.4 Conclusion

In short, this chapter focused on how relationships were first established, with the good part of the relationships narrated, and how they started to breakdown. The research found out that although relationships start on a good note, they do not always end well. Extra marital affairs, jealousy, alcohol, to mention a few, have been reported to be the contributing factors to messy or violent break ups. The next chapter will discuss the causes of domestic violence against women.

CHAPTER 5

Windhoek participants and the causes of domestic violence

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, actual relationships and the different forms of violence will be discussed using the female victims' narrated stories as they lived through them. Their experiences and the causes of physical violence will then be examined to reach a solid conclusion. It is at this juncture that this study breaks new ground by utilising the concept of agency to show how different women interpret and narrate physical violence.

5.2 Domestic violence in Namibia

5.2.1 How women reported what might be the causes of violence against them

5.2.1.1 Patriarchy and violence against women

A socio-cultural approach, which examines the reasons that aggression against women are tolerated by our society and a psychological approach which examines the emotional reasons why men are abusive and why women accept it. A class analysis approach, by which men are said to beat women to retain their place in the patriarchal power structure (Edwards-Jauch, 2013). In short, these that women are supposed to conduct themselves in a submissive way, and men in a dominant way. At this juncture, it is important to note that the study does not perceive culture as a homogenous entity, but acknowledges its diversity and that views on patriarchy and violence differ from society to society. The concepts are analysed as follows:

(a) I think it is a man's world

As evident in Edwards-Jauch's (2013) mentioned before patriarchy is a major contributory factor to domestic violence. Jennifer reported:

Yes I think it is a men's world because the man can do whatever he wants even though you went to the police officers with evidence, still they will not even take note that this woman must be protected or like that. It is like you have to go back to that place where you are staying with the person who is abusive towards you. If it had not been a man's world, then I would not have lost my baby or maybe I could not have lost my, let me say my marriage even maybe because they have got their own right.

Patriarchy influences men to behave in a dominant way. Jennifer's account explains how she lost her unborn baby when she was physically abused by her husband. As a result, she thinks this is a man's world and women should just accept their dominance in the society.

Pilcher and Whelehan (2006) point out that since the early twentieth century, feminist writers have used the patriarchy concepts to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. Patriarchy has been fundamentally an important concept in gender studies, leading to the development of many theories that aim to identify the basis of women's subordination to men. Equally, Pilcher and Whelehan (2006) argue that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. The study investigated the causes of domestic violence against women. One of the reasons given by Jennifer, a 39 years old and married woman, as to why her husband and her step children physically abused her, was that the husband had extra marital affairs. This resulted in and eventually culminating into violence in the family. Her husband used his family against her as a strategy to get her out:

What I think is because there is someone else, I think he is dating. He is seeing someone and then now he does not know how to (incomplete) because he tried to chase me out of the house several times, verbally. After marriage, and even he uses his family kids against me so that I can move out of the house and even his own kids, grown up kids from another mother. He tried to use those kids against me so that I can just move out of the house because I cannot stand any more of the stress and all the pressure at home because it affects my health.

The above account shows that patriarchal tendencies influence men to abuse women. In Jennifer's case, she described how her husband physically abused her, with his family. This is an indication that women suffer in their relationships, not just from their partners but other family members as well. Such relationships make women more vulnerable to domestic violence.

Another participant, Nangula Ya Cloete says that her husband had extra marital affairs, which really hurt her. In her own words she said:

One day we went to the north for a visit with Namibia Contract Buses. Upon our return to Oshikango, my husband says he is going to visit at Omafo village where his girlfriend is. He told me to let him know when the bus gets full. So that the bus can go pick him up. When we went there to pick him up, his girlfriend was giving him hugs and kisses in front of me. That makes me angry. I also overheard him telephonically asking his girlfriend if she arrived safely at home. He did this to emotionally abuse me.

The above encounter reveals that other women have affairs with married man, thus causing domestic violence not only between the couple in question, but also between the women involved. Nangula Ya Cloete was very unhappy when she found out about the affairs and saw her husband mistreat her by hugging and kissing another lady in front of her. This disappointed her.

Notably, violence is central to this research. Khan (2000) defined violence against women as a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to over domination and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women. Therefore, culturally it is acceptable for a man to have more than one woman, for example in the Oshiwambo culture. Melody's, interview showed how extra affairs destroyed her relationship with her boyfriend, to a point where he even beat her up. Melody from Oshiwambo culture affirmed:

Yes because I found out that he was having another woman outside. That is why we were not understanding each other and then from there, he started to try to beat me. First he did beat me and then the second one I told him that he must not touch my body otherwise I will go to report. And then on the next day I stand up and go to Ministry of Gender [meaning the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit] and I went to report him, this is when the people from Gender called both of us to go there and then we sat and they talked to us. Since we have been there, we have never fought or argued again.

This encounter clarifies the patterns of patriarchy in the Oshiwambo society. For example, it seems that the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit is utilised by the female survivors of domestic violence to enlist help. This Unit's capacity to help can be exploited in domestic violence intervention among men and women.

(b) It is not their world

This concept refers to how some participants felt that society is not about being a men's world where they can just act as they please. In the same way, some women who participated in the study refused to see themselves without rights and as victims, hence rejecting the view that the world they lived in was owned by men alone. Cabrera (2010) argues from a feminist point of view that women and girls constitute the vast majority of gender based violence (GBV) victims and men the majority of perpetrators. However, Martha, one of the participants, argues that this is not a men's world. Thus, she prefers reporting abuse cases to the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit whenever she encounters problems. This is her comment:

No, it is not their world, this one. We are all created by God, we are human beings so no one is having a right to do any bad things to the other one that is why there is Women and Child Abuse that is why there is the police. When there is a problem we must report it.

Traditionally, women are dominated by men in a patriarchal society. Men are more privileged than women. However, there are also women who stand on their own feet and do not tolerate

any form of domestic violence against them. The comments were made by Monalisa, a married woman, who confidently refuses to accept the status quo. This is what she says:

It is not a men's world, it is for all. We all can enjoy the world my dear, enjoy the world. Not only the man, men and women we all are creations, we can enjoy our lives my dear by men and by women also, not the men say what and it must be done like that, no. The lady must also say something about that.

Following the same thought, one of the participants, Martha, refutes earlier comments that this is a man's world where men can do whatever they want with women. Jella a 38 year old, single lady said the following:

I do not think so, everyone is free in this Namibia, everyone has to be free by himself, not to depend on someone else or someone is treating you not well. This Namibia is free, everyone is supposed to be free.

It is acknowledged that in a free Namibia, women also have the right to live free from domestic abuse. Therefore, women must stand up for their rights and make use of necessary facilities for assistance.

5.2.2 The impact of traditional culture and thinking on gender violence

Renzetti, Edleson, and Bergen (2001) argue that the feminist perspective focuses primarily on the concepts of patriarchy and societal institutions that help maintain it. Feminist analyses of violence against women is centred on the structure of relationships in a male-dominated (patriarchal) culture, on power, and on gender. Jennifer from the Oshiwambo speaking community revealed how culture contributes to violence against women. For instance, women are expected to respect men, which means answering a man back is prohibited. Also, men play a big role in decision making. Should a woman not comply, it leads to physical violence. Jennifer said:

Yes, I think in my case it plays also a bigger role because there was a time when my husband even told me that yes like, what did he say if I can remember now, I must not

talk back or I must not say whenever he want to talks something in the house or maybe tell him “let us talk” or something like that and then he will tell me “no, I am the one who have or I am the one. You have to wait until I say what or I say something” something like that. A male is the one who has to say and decides who decides.

Culture is very strong and it influences how men and women should conduct themselves in a societally acceptable manner. Barnish (2004) indicated that the feminist and socio-structural theories originate from cross-cultural ethnographic studies, which demonstrate that violence against women is more endemic in cultures and sub-cultures in which men dominate in decision-making and assign fixed, subservient gender roles to women. Couples from different cultures tend to have differences on how they treat each other. Martha, a single lady from Kavango culture got impregnated by an Oshiwambo speaking man. Her partner could not treat her well as his parents were not happy with the fact that she is from Kavango. They would have preferred their son to be in a relationship with someone from his culture. Martha comments:

Like for example especially if a woman and a man they are not the same tribe, the elders always tell the man “no why must you marry that tribe” but the person already impregnated the woman, already gave two kids. That parents of that man is telling the man “no do not stay with that woman, it is not your tribe. She is a Kavango, you are a Wambo, why must you stay with that woman who is a Kavango, get another one.” He was not treating me good, it is because of the parents. When we started the relationship it was very fine. But then after I moved into his house and giving me two kids the family comes in and asks “what tribe is that woman that you are having two kids with?” “No the woman is a Kavango”, “no you decided that you want to stay with the woman” so all those small, small advice from the parents of their tradition destroyed the guy’s mind and started to have women now of their own tribe.

The fact that, Martha had a relationship with a man from another tribe was not acceptable to her in-laws. That was one of the contributing factors that destroyed her relationship. This makes it clear that, some parents prefer their sons to date women from their cultural group. Essentially, women dating men from other cultural groups are more likely to be discriminated

by their in-laws. Hence, differences in culture or traditions may result in an unstable relationship, destroying it in due course.

In most cultures in Namibian context, men tend to dominate women. Should women not obey men, they are more likely to be victims of domestic violence. Tong (2014, p.55) points out that “the radical-libertarian feminist Kate Millett insisted that the roots of women’s oppression are buried deep in society’s patriarchal gender system.” For example, Jella, from the Herero culture, not yet married and but in a relationship, informed the researcher how culture contributes to domestic violence. This is her comment:

The culture is contributing because the culture from long ago whatever, they say that the men are the bosses of the family or how can I say? Just like that, is our culture but the respect must be there.

It appears that culturally men expect women to respect them, and failing to do so, domestic violence is used as a means to discipline them.

Spencer and Oatey (2012) define culture as a complex subject which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Also, culture distinguishes the members of one group of people from another. It is a set of attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for everyone, and communicated from one generation to another generation to show how the members of a culture should conduct themselves in the society. Culture consists of the derivation of experience more or less organised, learnt or created by the individual of a population, including their meanings and interpretations transmitted from past generation. Every society has a culture that it follows. However, men often receive more privileges and are supposed to be respected by women, and if this fails, it puts women more at risk of being physically abused. Jackson and Scott (2002) noted some of the arguments by the feminist, Connell that, there is no single form of masculinity or femininity in Western society, only

different ways of being a man or a woman. With regards to the quotation by Jackson and Scott (2002) above, some of the participants' stories reveal that culturally dominant forms of gender are a contributing factor to physical violence. The focus here is the misuse of culture and tradition in hurting, abusing and dehumanising women.

Monalisa, a married woman, a coloured by ethnicity, explained that culturally, it is important for her to respect her husband and if she does not respect him, he will beat her up as a way of disciplining her. She said:

Yes, it is the culture my dear. The culture also says I must respect your man and if I do not respect the man then the man must beat me and I must only wash the clothes and I must iron the clothes and I must only clean the house and ii must check after the children and the man is going out and enjoying with the other people. And you are alone here with your stress and everything and the tradition my dear.

Culturally men dominate women and treat them as subordinates in relationships. Society expects women to be submissive and respect the men. Even when their rights are violated, women are expected to keep quiet, as they take it as normal (Barnish, 2004). Hence, Monalisa's story is one of the efforts to unravel the silence that allows the daily violation of women.

Another participant, Maria, not married yet, from the Herero culture pointed out that violence is influenced by how the perpetrators were raised. Those from broken and violent families are more likely to abuse their partners. Maria noted:

Culture, you know like some men maybe I do not know, some men maybe beating, it also comes from the way maybe they were raised or something, I do not know. Like I know, like in our culture the way the men are being raised and the way the women are being raised, we are not at the same level. So men, they think that they are so important or they think that they can do anything just because from where they came from, their village you know that kind of life. That life is also (incomplete) they think, that if they say this is a woman she must either stay quiet, if you say something then you do not

respect him. If you do this or if you do not cook for him in time or whatever then you do not, you know those types of things, some men they also take it serious.

The contention here is that most of the women participants in this study show that some traditional customs and cultural beliefs have deprived women of their basic human rights and dignity. They portray on the one hand the patriarchal dominance and on the other, women's submission and susceptibility to violence and abuse.

5.1.2 Hegemonic masculinity and violence

(a) *Boyfriend/husband just does not want me to talk about it*

During the interviews, some participants pointed out that, they at times would like to talk openly about violence against them, but their partners silence them. Jackson and Scott (2002) posit that some theorists found the concept of patriarchy useful as a means of emphasising that male dominance was both a system and pervasive. Patriarchy literally means the rule of fathers, and its original usage, referred to a traditional form of authority vested in men as heads of the families. This intuitively shows that men are very dominant to such a point that they abuse women and try by all means to ensure that the women suffer in silence. Martha, a single woman confirmed this as follows:

For me it was the beating with the hands, sometimes he can grab me in the neck so when I want to tell my family about it he is telling me "yes you want your family so that they can know that I am not good with you." But he knows he is not good with me, he just does not want me to talk about it. He does not want that until one day I decided no man I am just going to the police and report this. There was even some times that I called the City Police to come. During the day he is fighting with me then I called the City Police, the City Police came and gave him a warning then they told us no it is better to go to Women and Child Abuse.

Martha's encounter bears testimony to the nature of violence that women have to endure. She is painfully aware of her vulnerability in a system that is male dominated.

5.2.3 Alcohol and violence

Alcohol is one of the primary causes of domestic violence against women by their male counterparts. Most participants interviewed confirmed that their partners are more violent when they are under the influence of alcohol. Frecks et al. (2014) refer to an extensive research conducted in Nicaragua's northern neighbouring country of Honduras which found that alcohol-defined settings are highly charged arenas of gender performance that permit men to act out their true masculinity of irresponsibility, excess and bad behaviour. Following the same line of thought with Frecks et al. (2014), Jella, one of the participants, reveals how alcohol contributed to her boyfriend's suspicions that she was seeing other boyfriends. In her story, she narrated:

It is what I said, he just go out and drink alcohol. When he come at home, he just say "I was not here at home and you were not here at home, you were with other boyfriend and what" and while the kids are there and they are listening quarrelling and was we just start go out of the home and go to my mother's place to sleep there.

Alcohol consumption by Jella's boyfriend contributed to the accusation that she had another boyfriend. This accusation led to quarrels between the two till she had to leave the house to go and sleep at her mother's house.

In the same way, Nangula Ya Cloete believes that alcohol is a major contributing factor to domestic violence. However, her case is slightly different. She said that although her husband does not drink alcohol, whenever he went to the sheeben, when he came back home, he would quarrel with her. Nangula Ya Cloete noted:

No, tradition does not cause violence. Alcohol encourages violence against women. Men like to be at the Bar, but they are supposed to be at home to be with their families. Like my husband, when he comes home from shebeen, he would want to quarrel with me. Although he does not drink alcohol. Government has worked, but our people (nation) do not want to obey. Nowadays it is the alcohol causing violence against

women. If alcohol can be minimised, violence against women might also be minimised. And we might be able to understand each other in the house.

Nangula Ya Cloete, aged 49 years, a married, and Oshiwambo speaking woman blamed alcohol for the escalation of violence. She demonstrates a keen awareness of the women's struggles against violence. Nevertheless, her story creates a wrong impression that all men get violent when drunk, which is not the case.

In the same vein, Jewkes (2002) avers that men are more likely to act violently when drunk because they believe that in that state, they will not be held accountable for their behaviour. In some settings, men have described using alcohol in a premeditated manner to enable them to beat their partner because they feel that this is expected of them. One might point out that this is one of the patriarchally-derived concepts to keep women subordinate. Martha and Monalisa's stories also described how they endured violent relationships due to alcohol abuse. Their partners became more violent when under the influence of alcohol.

Worse is the relationship that I am in now than the one that I had. Because of cheating too much, having girls, drinking too much. (Martha, single)

His friends and he was drinking too much and stay with bad friends and swearing me and give me bad words and all that stuff. (Monalisa, married)

Alcohol is reported to be one of the contributing factors to domestic violence. What this means is that at times men lose control when they drink alcohol and this leads to domestic violence against women.

5.2.4 Economical survival and domestic violence

(a) Depending on a man

Women's financial dependence on men is one of the causes of violence against women. When men are breadwinners in the relationships, they tend to abuse their partners. Maria aged 28, is a single lady who has been in a relationship with her boyfriend for five years. Her boyfriend

was the breadwinner in their relationship. She strongly believed that this contributed to the domestic violence in their relationship. Maria's argument is that at times women are forced to stay in an abusive relationship for economic survival. Maria's comment reads:

No, you know like I do not know about the other tribes, but with our tribe our men they just have that, how can I say anything like now? They are so proud like they are men, whatever they say or you just have to do whatever they want you to do. So that is how it is in our culture. Most of our guys, they are just like that, so you cannot do anything especially when you are depending on a man, it is not easy.

It is clear from Maria's comment that women are affected by their socio-economic status which renders them powerless. This is contrary to Sweetman's (2000) observations that it is not always women living in low socio-economic situations who sacrifice to stay in relationships for financial survival, (to be supported by their partners financially). Jennifer, a 39 year old married woman, is employed and earns a low salary. She explains how she left a violent marriage, when she stood up for herself and started her business:

I think it makes me better and stronger because when my husband was like abusive towards me, when he was not even like supporting us during the time I was in my marriage, I tried to stand up for myself because I work for a very small salary and I tried to make some business in the house.

Although men can be violent against their partners, not all women are able endure the violence. Jennifer stood up for herself and started to make a living through business as a way of not depending on her husband financially. This allowed her to escape the abusive relationship and enabled her to move on.

Most women suffer domestic violence by their loved ones. This study will concentrate on the female victims' narratives that represent their experiences of domestic violence. Pilcher and Whelehan (2004) validly observed that: it is men's behaviour against women that has especially been the concern of feminist researchers. Conceptualised as a broad range of men's harmful

behaviour towards women, including rape, domestic violence and harassment, violence has been identified as a key mechanism in the subordination of women by men. One manifestation of the subordinating effect of violence against women is indicated by survey evidence which shows that women are more fearful about violent crime than men, and that this fear impacts upon their freedom of movement when outside the home. This will allow the researcher to investigate if the participants are indeed fearful.

In light of Pilcher and Whelehan's quotation above, this study documented the participants' experiences of violence and the findings were then analysed. The findings showed that women are fearful as they are hushed to silence by their perpetrators (unsafe secret). Jella who is aged 38 year old single lady, who is Herero is speaking narrated how she suffered from physical abuse from her boyfriend. She explained how she was threatened by her boyfriend because he did not want her to go public. She said:

He is never threatening me with anything but it is just the way he talks to me, you know what threatening is "I am going to beat you" or "stop that nonsense" I was how can I say? He just beat, nothing else, just beating me with fist and insulting me.

Another physical violence case is Anna's, a married woman, aged 46 years from the Kavango culture. She described how her husband beat her because she had lent a broom to their neighbour who was a man. So, her husband suspected that she was cheating with the neighbour. During the interview, she narrated how she was abused and had to be hospitalised at Katutura State Hospital:

Yes he beat me one time only, only one time. He beat me because of the broom that I give to the neighbour. And then he was beating me with, he wanted to stab me with a knife and then I touched the knife, the knife came like this on the arm.

This reinforces the fact that women are silenced and frustrated to the extent that those who seek to develop liberating strategies are undermined. Anna is in fact a victim of violence in a system

that is controlled and dominated by men. Hence, Anna's story illustrates how men are keen to silence women by regulating their women's behaviour in all aspects of life.

5.2.5 Physical abuse and psychological abuse as experienced

This study solely concentrates on the physical violence that the participants experienced. Some women who are victims of domestic violence stressed how they suffered physical violence while in a relationship or in a marriage. Haufiku (2015) defines physical violence as any use of physical force against the complainant, such as beating or kicking, detaining to let the complainant go to work, depriving the complainant of access to food, water, clothing, shelter or rest, such as locking the complainant out of the home. This affirms Haufiku's (2015) view that physical violence indeed does exist among women. Monalisa described the type of physical violence she suffered by her boyfriend by saying: *Yes my dear, every time he is making like that with my hair, pull out my hair. He will beat me.*

Jackson and Scott (2002) contend that physical violence or economic violence backs up a dominant cultural pattern (for example, beating up, perverts), or ideologies that justify the holders of physical power (law and order). The connection between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence is close, though not simple. Another participant, Maria, also described her experience of domestic violence when her boyfriend beat her.

She said: *You know he first slapped me, he was like beating me on my face and he pushed me.*

It appears that physical violence is not just about assault and beating but also pushing the victims. Physical abuse can be more than that. Sweetman (2000) argues that physical abuse may include not only injury but also malnutrition or the withholding of physical care. In agreement with Sweetman, it has been proven that women suffered different forms of physical abuse by their loved ones. Jennifer, a married woman, during a qualitative interview revealed the horrible physical violence she went through: She explained:

And then he was like, because the house does not belong to me, the house is his, he did not want me to use the electricity in the house, he did not want me to cook even, even though the pots or the pans were mine. And when I made fire outside of the house around his yard, then it is when he blast out the fire, he make the fire dead, throwing water over the fire.

The above narration delineates physical violence. It reveals that men use different forms of violence to disempower women. Some perpetrators threaten women and insult them, while others, talk in an aggressive manner, demeaning their female partners and increasing their vulnerability.

It is unfortunate that domestic violence happens very privately, mostly in homes. This explains why and how female victims suffer and at times get injured. The culture of violence, according to Lemkey (2001), is an idea that in large, pluralistic societies, some subcultures develop norms that permit the use of physical violence to a greater degree than the dominant culture. Thus, family violence will occur more frequently in violent societies than in peaceful ones. Peer-relationships that support patriarchal dominance in the family and use of violence to support it are exemplary of this subculture. Jennifer's story affirms this. She narrated how her husband abused her physically at home, at times in their bedroom. This meant that she was isolated and could not get help from other people when her husband beat her. She explained in her own words:

He beats me, with his fists on my face and even kicked me around my body. My lips were broken inside and what can I say? I think even when he tried to grab me here on the chest is where he scratched me on my breast and here on the arm and at the back and here on my leg. No it is in our bedroom. Any time even during the morning when he wake up, when you are preparing to go to work and during the day and in the evening.

5.3 Conclusion

It is discovered that women suffer more from physical abuse inflicted by their male counterparts, as influenced by many factors such culture, patriarchy, alcohol and so forth. This puts female victims more at risk of domestic violence. However, the participants did not just suffer from physical violence but also psychological abuse. Having discussed the chapter above regarding causes of domestic violence, the following chapter will discuss the coping mechanisms female victims used to protect themselves from physical violence.

CHAPTER 6

Survival strategies of domestic violence

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an analysis of the women's coping strategies. The participants shared the different coping strategies they used when they experienced domestic violence. This chapter's central focus is to analyse these strategies and determine their effectiveness. Thus, coping strategies from personal points of view will first be interpreted, followed by how the participants made use of the law to survive domestic violence. Coping mechanisms can also be described as survival skills. They are strategies that people use to deal with stress, pain, and natural changes that are experienced in life. Some examples are seeking support from friends and family and not communicating with the partner, to mention a few.

Researchers, such as Gumede (2014) discussed women's coping mechanisms of domestic violence. Survivors of domestic violence seek social support and take responsibility in planning how to solve the problems they are experiencing. Some of them seek help to relieve their stress, while others try coping without telling anyone about it. Substance abuse is another coping strategy used by some victims, especially those who keep it to themselves. Victims of domestic violence need support from their families or peers, and they also require professional help so that they start feeling comfortable about sharing their experience without fear of being judged by others.

6.1 Finding support network for abused women

(a) We only trust our parents

This concept means that some participants prefer to seek help from elders (parents) after they have been violated. Waldrop and Resick (2004) highlighted the cognitive and active coping strategies that women who have suffered physical abuse by their partner use. Cognitive coping

strategies are those in which some women stay with, while others leave, their abusive partners. The active strategies are those where women seek help legally; opening cases against the perpetrators for prosecution, and seeking professional help from and in places where they are protected. The women use these active strategies while still married or in a relationship, for example, arguing with the abuser, calling the police, talking to a friend, to mention a few. Seeking help from family members is one of the strategies that female victims found useful whenever they found themselves victims of domestic violence. Martha, 24 years, a single lady from Kavango culture indicated that when she experiences domestic violence from her boyfriend, she prefers seeking help from her mother. She said:

I only talk to my mother over the phone but before I used to talk to my grandfather who was here in Windhoek. He is a young man but I called him grandfather, he is my grandmother's brother so whenever we are having that incident I go to him and call him so he can come and talk to the guy. So when he comes, he talks to the guy, then the guy like listens to him as an elder. He is tough but now it is no more, he passed on. It is now only my mother since he passed on only my mother. When we are having a problem I only call my mother.

During the research, it was evident that seeking help from elders whenever participants experience domestic violence helps. This is because perpetrators seem to listen to their elders when told to stop physically abusing their partners. Also, Monalisa, a married woman, finds it helpful sharing her domestic violence issues with her mother-in-law or her older sister. She said: *My mother-in-law, I talk to my mother-in-law and I talk to also my older sister my problems.* This is in line with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People which recognises culture as beneficial in fighting domestic violence against women. This is evident in some of the participants' narrations which show that responsibility and respect for elders, as well as consulting elder are helpful to overcome the phenomenon of

domestic violence. Culture can thus guide indigenous individuals' behaviours in their everyday lives.

Waldrop and Resick (2004) argue that in some instances, female victims' requests for help have been futile as family members and friends are not always supportive. Monalisa, a married woman sought for help from her pastor however, the service provided was not effective. She pointed out:

And I talk also to pastors about the story and the people tell me I must do that and I must do what and I must go and report him and those things. But no, it does not help my dear even if you go and report at the people. Sometimes I report at my mother also and my mother says I am married, I must report to the mother in law and all that stuff my dear, now I am sick and tired.

This is contrary to the above mentioned evidence by Melody, who is also a married woman. According to Waldrop and Resick (2004), it is not always the case that family members are supportive of combating domestic violence against women. The help rendered has been insufficient; she said:

The thing is like both of us we do not have parents and nowadays, we only trust our parents, not your sister or your brother because if you have a problem and then you tell sister or brother or brother in-law and what, it is like you create more problems. We only decide that whenever we have a problem we are only going to a social worker.

As narrated, not all participants find it useful to seek help from their family members, due to lack of trust. Melody prefers approaching the authorities such as social workers for assistance.

(b) Keeping quiet

'Keeping quiet' was one of the personal coping strategies of domestic violence that some of the participants chose. Silence in this context can be defined as not telling anybody about the violence suffered. A study conducted by the Legal Assistance Centre (2012) on how women cope with domestic violence, discovered that many victims suffer in silence and never seek

help. Some of them wait for years, or until the violence has escalated to dangerous severity, before seeking assistance from anyone. Women remain silent due to the cultural perception that problems which occur within families should remain private. Others remain silent due to the fear of retribution or because of financial dependence on the abuser. In addition, participants prefer to keep the issue of domestic violence a private affair. Carlson (2003) shows that some studies have found that battered women cope less effectively than non-abused women since abused women use fewer active problem-solving strategies and more passive strategies, such as avoidance and denial. Maria, a 26 year old single lady indicated that when she has problems, she does not share. She said:

You know if I have a problem to be honest, I am very, very private, I do not share my things with anybody, I prefer keeping it to myself that is how bad I am. Because I do not like people to know that okay she is in this type of problem or she is in that. Most of the things I was just keeping it to myself because I did not want people to know what is going on or what I am going through. So, I never told anyone about it, the only person that found out and was keeping on asking it was my mom after finding out what he did to me when I ended up in a hospital. And I never also told her anything after that time she was like asking me trying me to say something because I think she had a feeling that something that was happening here so she wanted me to talk but I never talked.

Maria suffered severe domestic violence such that she had to be hospitalised on some of the occasions. Regardless of how tough the situation was, she always chose to keep it to herself.

This is a clear indication that Maria chose to keep the violence she suffered to herself as she did not like other people to know what she was going through. This made her suffer in silence and remain in denial about this problem.

(C) It makes me better and stronger

“Making me better and stronger” means that some female victims believed they had learnt a lesson from the physical abuse they suffered, and that moving on made them strong women. Dueba et al. (2016) observed that women’s coping strategies when faced with violence were limited. Some women described how they screamed and cried, and tried to leave the house to go to an open ground outside the house. One of the survivors, Jennifer claimed that the domestic violence she went through taught her to be independent, to earn extra money. She elaborated:

I think it makes me better and stronger because when my husband was like abusive towards me, when he was not even like supporting us during the time I was in my marriage, I tried to stand up for myself because I work for a very small salary and I tried to make some business in the house. And then he was like because the house does not belong to me the house is his, he did not want me to use the electricity in the house, he did not want me to cook even, even though the pots or the pans were mine. And when I made fire outside of the house around his yard then it is when he blast out the fire, he make the fire dead, throw water over the fire and then he will say that I am destroying. Yes extinguish the fire and then he will say I am killing his plans around the house. So actually he just made me a stronger person because I went out of his place, out of his house, out of his life. And when I went out to tell you the truth, I went to go and look for my place even though there is no electricity, there is no water but still I managed up to now.

After Jennifer suffered a lot of domestic violence by her husband, she moved out of the house and worked hard to sustain herself. This allowed her to better her life, and move on without depending on her husband.

(d) Spiritual counselling or support

Carlson (2003) states that examples of other coping strategies include seeking social and spiritual support. Spiritual counselling or support involve seeking help from the pastor, reading the bible and praying as some of the coping mechanisms chosen by some of the female victims

who participated in this study Carlson (2003), further states that abused women tend to be socially isolated and have fewer social support systems (often because of the abuser) that can be relied on for practical and emotional assistance as compared to non-abused women.

Resilience is a characteristic found in most survivors of domestic violence. Labronici (2012) notes that resilience is when the female victim of domestic violence is allowed to talk, to bring out her subjectivity from the traumatic experience, which makes it possible to change the meaning of suffering, and thus overcome it. Moreover, the trauma narrative itself allows women to make sense of what happened so that it can be understood as a factor of resilience. Thus, resilience factors can be in the form of the social support network, spirituality and religion, self-esteem and sense of humour. Nangula Ya Cloete, a 49 year old married woman stated:

I have people who send me spiritual counselling. I write it in the note book. After reading the verse, it helps. I also listen to channel 7. It makes me happy, to a point where one will think I am drunk. Why should I allow someone to abuse me while he found me working and virgin at the age of 28 years old. Social Worker provides good services as they do not take sides, they are objective.

Nangula Ya Cloete said she sought spiritual support through counselling and reading bible verses helped her reduce the pain of domestic violence. That is how she coped.

(f) Pastor

Monalisa, a 37 year old married woman expressed the same coping strategies of approaching the pastor with whom she shared her domestic violence concerns.

And I talk also to pastors about the story and the people tell me I must do that and I must do what and I must go and report him and those things. But no, it does not help my dear even if you go and report at the people. Sometimes I report at my mother also and my mother says I am married, I must report to the mother in law and all that stuff my dear, now I am sick and tired.

For Monalisa, seeking help spiritually proved to be a very helpful personal coping strateg

(g) Running out

Running away from domestic violence moments is one of the personal coping strategies that save the lives of the female victims. Jella, a 38 year old single woman indicated:

I am just running out to prevent the fighting. Running out for that night just for thirty minutes or to twenty minutes then he left the room because he stayed at my house and then he left. Then after that we are going back to my kids and we locked for ourselves inside. And after that he stays for two month maybe or after that he is coming back again.

Running away from moments of abuse helped Jella cope with the domestic violence she suffered. After the fight ended, she found it safe to lock herself in the room.

6.2 Gender laws and coping strategies in Namibia.

Although domestic violence occurs privately in homes, it requires the state to intervene publicly in terms of the preventative laws to fight against the phenomenon of domestic violence against women. The Namibian Combating of Domestic Violence Act, No. 4 of 2003, is legislated as a guideline to intervene with domestic violence against women and men. This study is confined more to domestic violence against women who reported physical violence. The law enforcement system has been acknowledged as helpful by some female victims who took part in the study. They argue that the law has made efforts to address domestic violence concerns.

(a) Law is really helping

Women make use of the law as a coping strategy to fight against domestic violence whenever they find themselves victims by reporting the abusive men to the police. The following varieties of feminism give more insights on domestic violence against women. Edwards-Jauch (2013) posits that the liberal feminism view states that it is possible to legislate (pass laws) against

sexual discrimination as a way of changing individual attitudes. A good example is The Namibian law of Combating Violence Act 4 of 2003. The participants acknowledged that the law is really helping to fight against domestic violence. This is shown by examining how the participants cope with domestic violence. Martha, a single lady pointed out:

Because like my boyfriend he was a very stubborn guy. When you tell him this he will tell you “no you are a woman, you cannot tell me this and that. You know in my tradition we do not do this.” He is too much into tradition and too much into friends. But since I started reporting him, I think he is really scared of the police and he is scared to be locked up in jail. The law is really helping and he has really changed. They react promptly; as soon as you report they refer you to the Women and Child Abuse meaning [Gender Based Violence Protection Unit]. If there is no difference one may open a case against the perpetrator.

The law is seen as helpful since Martha uses it to cope with domestic violence by reporting her boyfriend at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit where the law is enforced. Another victim, Anna, a married woman finds the law also helpful in responding to domestic violence against women. She comments from her experience:

The law of Namibia is very good, it is good because it stops men to beat the women, stop to beat also the kids, stop to making suffer the children of the women, yes. The law of Namibia seems very good now, it is very good. It is just helping us a lot when women have problems.

The law is said to be helpful, as it helped Anna cope with domestic violence. Her husband stopped beating her and the children.

The Namibian law has been reported as helpful by most participants in fighting against domestic violence that women suffer. Although the study only concentrates on female victims of domestic violence, it is important to note that, the law is not just restricted to women but it does also protect men as well.

The Legal Assistance Centre (2012) shared another theory showing that domestic violence has increased because of frustrations related to poverty and unemployment, coupled with alcohol abuse, in the context of a ‘culture of violence’ stemming from long years of colonialism and apartheid. Although this study showed that women who depend on men are more likely to be abused, Jella, a single lady stood up for herself and got employed as a domestic worker. Also, she is grateful of the vulnerable grant she is getting from the government. With this little money she can survive without depending on her boyfriend. She acknowledges that:

It helps me a lot, it will help me a lot because I am not waiting for someone to give me, and do you understand me? To depend on someone, I am depending by myself or I am working as a domestic worker and the government helps me with the little and my parents help me the little. I am not depending on him again.

The N\$ 250.00 grant that she receives from the government for her child helps her to be financially independent. It also allowed her to move out of the house she lived in with her boyfriend.

Maria, another participant who is single said that the law is really helping to fight against domestic violence. According to Maria, the cases of domestic violence reported through the media have decreased, especially murder cases against women. This is evidenced through the local newspapers, she reads every day. She observes that there are fewer reports on murder cases than previously reported. She said:

The other answer is maybe they are helping because from the way like if you have to remember those years when this violence started, there was a year that a lot of women and the kids were dying too much but now I can see now it is reducing a bit, I do not know how it happened but I think the government is doing something about it that is why it stopped. Even here you know now or maybe I do not know but I am buying newspaper every day but I think it is reducing now so I think the government is also doing something to help it.

It is not like it used to be. Every day those years you used to hear a kid has been killed, a kid has been raped especially raping case, a man killing, and you know these types of things. I think the government is doing like you also you are the government , I remember the day when you started calling me, you keep on trying, it makes me feel like you really care, you really want to help. If it was other people maybe they will be like stopped already and forget about the whole thing. So I remember my boyfriend was like telling me “I think that person is really serious or maybe I felt like maybe you feel like there is a threat coming somewhere”, so also I feel like this is really tried, it is really counting, that is why I really promised myself like this person does really care and she wants to help that is why I came here you know, yes.

Maria's, observation is that reports in local newspapers on domestic violence that result in murder have decreased. She is, therefore, under the impression that the government is really trying its best to fight against the phenomenon of domestic violence from the public sphere.

The National gender policy (2010) indicates that the government has improved strategies for access to legal and social services by increasing the number of shelters and places of safety and ensuring that adequate support services are provided. Such places include medical, psychological, legal support and free counselling for women and children who have been subjected to violence, in order to enable them recover and live a normal life. Furthermore, the government supports the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit cases by ensuring that the GBVPU are welcoming places for women and children. They also provide functional, accessible, affordable and specialised legal services, including legal aid, to survivors of gender based violence and sexual exploitation. Again, they provide training for service providers involved in combating gender based violence and sexual exploitation. Such service providers include the police, the judiciary, and health and social workers. Different participants, married and single, explained how the Government and authorities are determined to reduce violence against women.

Anna, who is married expressed appreciation towards the government's efforts to fight against the phenomenon of domestic violence against women, by providing human resources such as police officers. She indicated:

Enough, they have a lot of way. The law she is getting from the school when the police go to study how to be a police, they know the law how to talk with people, yes they know and then that is helping a lot. It is helping a lot.

Melody who is married, also explained how the government is helpful by educating the nation on how to fight domestic violence through the media. Melody said that:

Because like even the people who was not knowing now these because always there are people talking in the radio, in the newspaper that if you are having abuse you must go to report where, so they are trying their best.

It appears the government has become more concerned about domestic violence against women. Preventative awareness has been strengthened as a strategy to educate the community on how to deal with domestic violence, prevent it, and where to report it. Hence, the awareness illuminates how and where victims of domestic violence can seek help.

Despite the above mentioned efforts, there are challenges that the government is facing in its bid to fight against domestic violence. Culture is one of the factors mentioned by Jella as the main obstacle to successfully fight against the phenomenon. Jella, a single woman observes that:

The government is doing enough, the government is trying a lot but a human being is a human being. Everyone is coming at her home or with her culture and her bad things but the government is trying, doing its best.

Even though the government is trying to improve the service delivered to the victims of domestic violence there are factors, such as African cultures in the context of the Namibian society, which hinder progress. It is very common in most cultures, for the man to behave in a

dominant way and for women to be submissive. For this reason, it is very difficult for men to have a paradigm shift and adjust to the change of treating their women in a non-dominant way.

Another participant, Monalisa a married woman strongly noted that the government is willing to help, but the people should bring the issue of domestic violence to their attention for professional interventions. She noted:

If you come at the place and tell them the story they can help you, if you come out with your story they can help you. If you do not come out with your story, they cannot not help you my dear. You must come at your government and tell them about your story, how is the story and what, what. If you do not come at the place and tell them, they do not know about your story.

Monalisa expressed that, if the victims of domestic violence, bring domestic violence issues to the attention of the government, it will intervene. It is difficult for the government to help when the victims are not speaking out for help.

Jella also noted that the government has done its part by notifying the nation through adverts to report cases of domestic violence. Martha a single lady, described:

What I think, what they are doing enough is that they are also advertising outside the violence that people should not keep quiet in the houses when they have got problems, they should talk out, they should report about it. Even if someone is seeing someone outside, that is being abused he must talk about it, that they are doing but they must put more effort not because there are some women that are threatened by their man that if they talk about it, I will kill you or if you talk about it, I will do this.

Martha expressed that the government through community sensitising education requested the community to report any abuse they might come across or suspect as some victims are threatened to keep quiet about the violence. This is the only way that the law can help to rescue victims of domestic violence.

The following are the resources the state has in place to fight against domestic violence.

(d) Professional services and social workers

Regain Trust Organisation (2015, P. 14) indicates that the Social Workers of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MGECW) stationed at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit (GBVPU) are tasked to offer counselling and welfare services to help those who seek them. The evidence below is supported by the literature from the Regain Trust Organisation. The social workers at GBVPU that are appointed to deal with domestic violence are helpful and assist clients who suffer from it. This has been proven by the following cases: Martha, a single lady who acknowledged that she sought counselling services from professionals such as the Social Workers at Gender Based Violence Protection Unit:

Yes we do. The service was very good, they even gave us a chance to go and sit down at home and decide what you want because they cannot just come between us while you want to decide something out of anger so the service was fine for me. I do not see any problem for that.

Martha describes the Social Workers as helpful through counselling, which allowed them ample opportunity with her boyfriend to go and resolve their issues at home. This helped since they decided to reconcile. Besides the above-mentioned, Anna indicated that the Social Worker at GBVPU provided effective counselling to her and her husband which really worked. She said:

The social worker was talking with us nicely to us to stop beating, for my husband to stop getting angry in the house and treating my daughter badly and stop beating me also. She was talking with us a lot of things and other things I forgot.

6.3 Inadequate legal protection

(a) I was very hurt, and I did not want to go back again to that place; I was so hurt

Other victims expressed themselves differently, thus contradicting the above-mentioned views. Some participants were disgruntled and expressed disappointment with the law. On this note,

the law enforcement system has been criticised by female survivors of violence as it is found to be unhelpful and insensitive. Cabrera (2010) argued from a feminist point of view that women and girls constitute the vast majority of gender based violence (GBV) victims and men, the majority of perpetrators. The unambiguous use of the term “violence against women” exposes more tellingly the governments’ failure to address power inequalities between men and women in both the public and private spheres.

Maria, one of the female survivors who reported a case of violence by her husband to the Police was not impressed with the services rendered: She said:

The problem with the police, they do not react quickly, because I also know some people, family members also that passed away from domestic violence and that case was being reported several times but they never took actions on that. I have a cousin that passed away, she reported the boyfriend, I do not know maybe it was two times or I do not know I cannot remember and then she even told the police that the guy was coming to her place to do this and that and that but they never reacted until that person died.

The law is also criticised for failing to respond to the victims or survivors of domestic violence. The service rendered is very slow, despite the case being reported timely. A protection or restraining order to stop the perpetrators from coming near the victim or survivors is another method that can be used. Monalisa reported the following:

You to say we are done with the Protection Order and I do not know what is going on, if the man cannot come at my house and what, what. And they must tell me “we take the man out of your house and what” but I think law is if you go and report that time, it is helping. But afterwards you can wait until the man come and kill you maybe. They say “you are married, I cannot help you, and you can go to the social worker.” If you go to the social worker the people are not calling you back and tell you about the man must go out and you must stay far away from the man” but I do not know what the law is waiting. They must wait you maybe after 3 days in the Court and we must talk in the Court then the man must hear and the lady must also hear that time.

A similar critique of the service at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit has been made. Melody, a married woman, complained that the service rendered by the Social Workers is slow. She stated:

Yes they are helping but the people who are working there, they are very slow, and they are very, very slow Social workers, especially social workers. What I want to say is only that they are very slow, they must have a heart to help the people because the people who are going there to report, they are having big problems. So they do not need to go report when they are already heartbroken and then they find the heart broken again there. So the people who are working there, at least they must improve to have a heart for people, to know how to work with the people who are having problems at least. Like for me I can remember very well, I went there by 09:00 and then I waited until 14:00.

Jennifer, a married woman, pointed out that the government is unfair when treating the survivors or victims and the perpetrators. It seems her problem was never resolved through government intervention; she was very hurt. She said:

I was very hurt and I did not want to go back again to that place, I was so hurt. And the second incident was there when I went to the police office for this matter when I was physically abused. Okay they called my husband in and they told him that this thing must not happen again but when I go there I went there three times before they send me to the Court. And still at the Court, what they asked me, they were supposed to solve the problem there that if the husband does not want me then he has to put in the divorce because he was the one asking me for the marriage. And he must be asked or he has to put in that divorce because you are chasing me out so that you can stay like that and afterwards we are still married but you are at your side and I am on my side, each one with his family. I do not think it is helpful, it really not.

(b) We are not doing enough because today you hear a man killing a woman

The Namibian Combating of Domestic Violence Act, No. 4 of 2003 has made legal provision for any person who is in a domestic relationship. It states that a person suffering from domestic violence may apply for a protection order against another person in that domestic relationship,

who is abusing him or her. The said Act was legislated and regulated to fight against domestic violence. Although Namibia has good laws in place, the service provided is not sufficient to the clients. Below, some participants who took part in the study express dissatisfaction. Maria, a single woman, indicated that even if the law prosecutes the perpetrators and punishes them accordingly, when they are out on bail and back in the society, they are most likely to abuse women with whom they get involved in a relationship. It appears the law is not strong enough to stop the perpetrators from committing violence against female victims or survivors.

I think one side we are not doing enough because today you hear a man killing a woman or a child, being arrested today, tomorrow he is out on bail you know. That person is dead and the other person is out, how will it feel? Not only how will it feel but what will happen next? Violence, abusive is just in the (incomplete) some people they are just like that. He is out of jail, go to the other relationship, do the same thing, go to jail, stay for a month, out. You, this thing is just like that. So, I think the government must change on how they will have to deal with these people because this domestic violence is happening everyday but people (incomplete) you do not know how painful it is to see someone, you relative being dead from someone and that person is out of jail, it is not good.

(C) Negativity of the Protection orders

Although protection orders aim to protect victims of domestic violence, they are not always effective. Hubbard and Rimmer (2007, p. 10) defines a protection order as “an order by the court requiring the respondent to stop committing domestic violence. The protection order may include other provisions to protect the complainant (person experiencing domestic violence), such as ordering the respondent not to go near the complainant, ordering the respondent to leave the joint residence or ordering the respondent (this is the person who is believed to have committed the domestic violence) to make maintenance payments.” The following participants’ comments are therefore, an indication that although a protection order may be

issued, it does not always help to protect the victims from domestic violence. Monalisa criticises it as follows:

She, applied for a protection order against her husband, but it was not clear whether the protection order had been issued or not. She was uncertain about the services provided to her as she comments:

Yes. They did not report to me and say “we give the man Protection Order and what, what.” He does not say anything and I am also confused now if the people gave him the Protection Order or what or did the people call or what. They must also call me and say Monalisa you get what, what, what and you know.

Similarly, Maria expressed disappointment at the officials’ failure to advise her where to apply for the protection order. She gave up as she was confused, and she expressed disappointment as follows:

No, no, no. I wanted to go there but I did not yet. No, when I went there I thought I was supposed to go there because I wanted that protection order so he does not come to my place anymore or call me or whatever. And then when I told them about that case, him breaking my house and what and what they said no we should go to the police station and make a case because I wanted that protection order, I just did not know where to go.

6. Conclusion

The study documents the findings of survival strategies used by female survivors who suffered domestic violence. Although, some findings revealed inadequate legal protection, the findings support much of what the literature revealed. The next chapter will discuss the conclusion as well as policy recommendations.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion and policy recommendation

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the conclusion, the main findings and recommendations based on the information obtained from the participants and relevant literature. Married and single female victims of domestic violence participated in this study, and they narrated how they experienced and coped with domestic violence by their male counterparts. The main findings and recommendations are presented below:

7.2 Recommendations:

Based on the aforesaid, it is recommended that men should be educated to be reliable to their partners and to respect women regardless of their culture. It is time for men to realise that women should not be abused, and their rights should not be violated. Also, men should be accommodative enough to allow women to express themselves and participate in decision-making. They should know that, beating their partners is not a solution, but communicating with them and respecting each other's opinions is. Archaic traditions are no longer acceptable, or should be revised, since gender equality is one of the key elements to development. To alcohol as a contributing factor to domestic violence against women, it is recommended that the Government amends the suspension sentence laws for the perpetrators so that they stop drinking alcohol for a period of time while under rehabilitation services. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare should avail more social workers to attend to the victims of domestic violence timely, as some cases may need urgent attention. Based on this, it is recommended that the state grant be increased. The government should also continue assisting women with income generating projects so that they can be financially independent. Lastly, collaboration among all stakeholders that deal with gender based violence should be strengthened.

7.3 Personal views about violent relationships and hopes for the future.

Power and control in abusive relationships refers to the manner that abusers or perpetrators gain and maintain control over victims (survivors) to fulfil their devious and abusive purposes. This abuse can take various forms which are induced alternatively or concurrently, these includes physical abuse and many more. Thus, violence in relationships thrives on the existence of a dominant party and weaker party. Most women are exposed to physical violence as they stay in marriages or in relationships and endure the treatment to safeguard the future of their children. Shocking of all is that some women get beaten, injured, or murdered by their partners or former partners. Relationship violence against women is thus, a gender based crime of control. It is caused by gender inequality, patriarchy, culture (whereby women are expected to be submissive to their male counterparts). In most cases, violence in relationships is committed in the privacy of homes, and only becomes public when the situation becomes uncontrollable. When the situation attains public attention, it is then reported to the relevant authorities for state intervention. Gender based violence is cuts across ethnicity, race, class, religion, education level and international borders.

In addition, both women and children in violent relationships are affected. Women are most likely to suffer from high blood pressure, depression, to mention a few. Children suffer because they are the core witnesses of the escalating violence between their parents. They are most likely to be abusive individuals in society and as they grow up can either become docile victims of abuse because of the self-blame they carry from their upbringing or become violent and abusive in adulthood. The violence children are exposed to have implications on their development and mental health as they tend to turn to deconstructive forms of relief like drugs and alcohol.

Considering the above, it is time for action to end violent relationships, especially against domestic violence. Therefore, the researcher hopes that in the future, the government and non-governmental organisations will continue to stand united to increase awareness on the scope of the problem of violent relationships or gender based violence in order to strengthen the prevention efforts. Prevention should start early in life, by educating and working with young boys and girls to promote respectful relationships and gender equality. It is also hoped that the services provided to the survivors are improved and survivors attended to timely, and there's provision of counselling and referral of the survivors to relevant service providers. Multi-disciplinary professions such as Social Workers, Psychologists, Medical Doctors, and Nurses at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit will ensure that survivors receive superior customer services. The unit should also be improved to a better friendly environment, accommodating victims of all gender types. Compulsory marital classes should be offered for one year to couples who would like to tie the knot before marriage. Most importantly, religious classes should be incorporated into the curriculum from early childhood development. Such classes will help the children learn through religion, to respect one another.

7.4 Concluding the main findings of the research

The research had a research objective, **obtain in-depth insights into women's knowledge of how and why domestic violence occurs.** In response to this objective based on the findings; the main causes of domestic violence against women were culture (patriarchy), power and control, and the influence of alcohol. The issue of extra marital affairs as a contributing factor to domestic violence has also been proven through the narrative stories. It seems that culturally, it is normal for a man to have extra marital affairs, but if women have extra marital affairs, it leads to physical abuse and confrontation. Another thinking that emerged from the narratives is that women are not supposed to challenge men's ideas as it is culturally unacceptable. Tradition was also one of the factors that contributed to domestic violence, as women are

supposed to be submissive. This concurs with Kate Millet's (1970), arguments that if one takes patriarchal government to be the institution whereby half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy would appear to be twofold: male shall dominate female, and elder male shall dominate younger. In societies where male dominate it gets to the extent where men abuse women, Radical feminists focus on the patriarchal family as the key site of domination and oppression (Crow, 2000). It is important to note that cultural practices such as deferring to and respecting elders are not entirely bad, since some participants narrated that talking to elders after experiencing domestic violence is helpful.

The research had another research objective; to **find out the survival and coping strategies by the women who experience domestic violence**. Below are some of the survival or coping strategies shared by some participants: it is acknowledged that gender law is a helpful remedy for domestic violence against women. The Social Workers at the GBVPU provide good service by attending to the victims (survivors). Some participants indicated that the government is really helping, as it sensitises the community to domestic violence through the media. It has also availed the needed non-human resources, and human resources, even though they are not sufficient yet. Most importantly, it was seen that the state grant provided to orphans and vulnerable children by the Ministry of Gender is helping those who were depending on their partners for financial assistance to leave abusive relationships and survive on the grant, as well as on their low income. Contrarily, some participants expressed disappointment in the services rendered by the government to curb domestic violence. Some of the criticism of the Gender Based Violence Protection Units was that the services provided are very minimal and slow. A client would visit the GBVPU at 09H00, but could only be attended to at 14H00. Also, Police Officers do not always respond to such incidences in a timely manner. Some participants were not happy about how they were treated when applying for protection orders, as they were

unsuccessful, and the information they were given was inadequate. As a result, some victims gave up seeking help through official legal channels. Finally, the study had a research objective: **to investigate and analyse how female survivors experienced domestic violence.** Some participants narrated that they experience domestic violence in private spheres such as homes where their male partners beat them, threaten them attempt to stab them with knives, push and scratch them. Some participants were grabbed by the neck by their male counterparts and suffered discrimination by different tribes. This concurs with the feminist approach to domestic violence which holds that almost all male or female abuse is linked to the patriarchal values of our society, and that these values are sanctioned by a culture in which the male domination of women is both covertly and overtly reinforced. Violence in domestic abuse is nothing more than a tool, often used by men to control women. Many men in our society still support the notion that it is acceptable to use physical violence on women if their behaviour or freedom threatens the men's power or stands in the family hierarchy (Payne & Wermeling, 2009).

References

- Aghtaie, N., & Gangoli, G. (2015). *Understanding gender based violence: National and international context*. London, Great Britain: Routledge.
- Ai-Yaman, F., Van Heoland, M., & Wallis, M. (2006). *Family violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*. Retrieved from www.aihw.gov.au/
- Andrews, M., Squire, C., & Tamboukou, M. (2013). *Doing narrative research* (2nd ed.). Washington DC: Sage Publication.
- Arbache, J.S., Kolev, A., & Filipiak, E. (Eds.). (2010). *Gender disparities in Africa's labour Market*. Washington DC: Library of Congress.
- Babbie, E. (2015). *The basics of social research* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Cengage Learning Publisher.
- Barnish, M. (2004). *Domestic violence: A literature review*. London, Great Britain. Unpublished. Retrieved from www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Malcolm, T. (2010). *How to research* (4th ed.). New York, NY: The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Bradley, E., Curry, L., & Devers, K. (2007). Qualitative data analysis for health services research: Developing taxonomies, themes, and theory. *Health Service Research, 42*, 1758–1772.
- Burton, D. (2000). *Research training for social scientists: A handbook for postgraduate researcher*. London, Great-Britain: SAGE Publications.
- Cabrera, M. P. (2010). *Intersecting violence: A review of feminist theories and debates on violence against women and poverty in Latin America*. London. Great Britain. Retrieved from www.cawn.org/
- Carlson, E. B. (2003). *Violence against women: Synthesis of research for service providers*. Unpublished PHD thesis, University at Albany, State University of New York. Retrieved from <http://www.ayamm.org/english/violence/>
- Coomer, R. (2012, August 07). *The violent way things are. Insight magazine-article*. Retrieved from <http://www.insight.com.na/article/>
- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Washington DC: SAGE Publication, Inc.

- Creswell, T.W., & Clark, V.L.P. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). United States of America: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Crow, A.B. (2000). *Radical Feminism, A documentary reader*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Dahlerup, D. (2015). *The development of women's studies/gender studies in Scandinavian social science*. Stockholm University.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, S.Y. (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Department of Gender and Research. (2010-2020). *National gender policy*. Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare. Windhoek: Namibia.
- Deuba, K., Mainali, A., Alvesson, H. M., & Karki, K. D. (2016). *Experience of intimate partner violence among young pregnant women in urban slums of Kathmandu Valley, Nepal: Qualitative study*. Retrieved from <http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/>.
- Doneys, P., Mitra, S., Nazmul, A.K., & Mohiuddin, H. (2013). *The male entity of the self never dies; it just leaps like a tiger: Masculinity and gender based violence in Bangladesh*. Unpublished, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNX. Retrieved www.partners4prevention.org/
- Du Plooy-Cilliers, F., Davis, C., & Bezuidenhout, R. (Eds.). (2014). *Research matters*. Cape Town, South Africa: Juta & Company Ltd.
- Edwards-Jauch, L. (2013). *Theorising and sexuality: Feminist theory*. Course Reader. Department of Sociology: University of Namibia.
- Ellsberg, M., Heise, L., & Pena, R. (2001). Researching domestic violence against women. *Methodological and ethical considerations*, 32 (1), 1-16. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org/>
- Flood, M. (2007). *Why violence against women and girls happens and how to prevent it*. Unpublished PHD thesis, La Trobe University in Melbourne. Retrieved <http://www.awe.asn.au/drupal/sites/>
- Frecks, G., Ypeij, A., & Konig, S. R. (2014). *Gender and conflict: Embodiments, discourses and symbolic practices*. London, Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Garcia-Merono, C., Jansen, H. A. F. M., Ellsberg, M., & Watts, C. (2005). *WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*. Switzerland: WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data.

- Gillham, B. (2001). *Case study research methods*. London, Great Britain: TJ International Ltd.
- Government of the Republic of Namibia. 2003. *Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4*. (2003). Windhoek: Namibia.
- Gray, T. (2011). *How to do your case study: A guide for students and researchers*. London, Great Britain: SAGE Publications.
- Gumede, S. A. (2014). *An investigation into the coping mechanisms of survivors of domestic violence*. Mini thesis, Department of Psychology in University of Zululand, KwaDlangezwa.
- Hartman, A. (2016, March 15th). *50 000 gender crimes reported in three years*. The Namibian, p.1-2.
- Haufiku, J. (2015). *Exploring the effects of traumatic events on the psychosocial functioning of Police Officers at Wanahenda Police Station in Windhoek, Namibia*. Master Degree, Mini-thesis, Department of Social Work, University of Namibia.
- Hayati, E. N., Eriksson, M., Hakimi, M., Hogberb, U., & Emmelin, M. (2013). *Elastic band strategy of coping with domestic violence in rural Indonesia*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/>
- Hubbard, D. (1998). *Domestic violence in Namibia*. Legal Assistance Centre. Retrieved from www.lac.org.na/
- Hubbard, D., & Rimmer, A. (2007). *Guide to the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003*. Windhoek, Namibia: Legal Assistance Centre.
- Jackson, S., & Scott, S. (2002). *Gender: Sociological reader*. London, Great Britain: Routledge Student Readers.
- January, E. (2005). *Who multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*. Windhoek, Namibia: World Health Organisation. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/gender/violence/en/>
- Jewkes, R. (2002). Violence against women. *Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention*, (359), 1423-29. Retrieved from www.thelancet.com/
- Jovchelovitch, S., & Bauer, W. M. (2000). *Narrative interviewing*. London: LSE research online. Retrieved from <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/2633>
- Khan, A. R. (2015). Domestic violence against women in Bangladesh: *A Review of the literature and gaps to fill in by future intervention*. 18, (3). National Institute of

- Development Administration, Thailand. Retrived from [jhss-khazar.org/wp-content/uploads 2015/](http://jhss-khazar.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/)
- Khan, M. (2000). *Domestic violence against women and girls*. UNICEF, Innocenti research centre. Florence: Italy. <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest6e.pdf/>
- King, N., & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in qualitative research*. London, Great-Britan: SAGE Publication LTD.
- Labronici, L. M. (2002). *Resilience in women victims of domestic violence: A phenomenological view*. Unpublished PHD article, Federal University of Parana. Parana, Brazil. Retrieved from www.scielo.br/pdf/
- Legal Assistance Centre. (2005). *Gender research advocacy project, Namibia Violence and Sexual Abuse Service Directory*. Windhoek, Namibia.
- Legal Assistance Centre. (2012). *Seeking safety domestic violence in Namibia and the Combating of Domestic Violence Act 4 of 2003*. Windhoek, Namibia: Department Of Gender Research and Advocacy Project.
- Lemkey, E. (2001). *Loue, Sana Intimate partner Violence: Societal, Medical, Legal and Individual Responses*. New York, NY: Kluwer, Medical/Plenium Publisher.
- Lombard, N. (2015). Gendered violence: a cause and a consequence of inequality. Retrieved from <http://enege.eu/sites/default/files/14-Nancy-Lombard.pdf>
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, B.R. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Sage Publication Inc.
- Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2010). *Research methods: A practical guide for the social sciences*. London, Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.
- Mill, J.S. (2008). *The sociology of gender: theoretical perspectives and feminist framework*. Retrieved from www.learningace.com
- Millet, K. 1970. *Sexual politics*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Mogotsi, I., Van Rooy, G., Haihambo, K.C., Kazapua, Z., Shirungu, M., Indongo, N., Likuwa, K., ... Kakujaha-Matundu, O. (2015). *Gender based violence in Namibia: A response driven approach. Social Science Division: Multidisciplinary Research Centre*. University of Namibia.
- Nafuka, N.E. (2012). *An investigation into victim blaming, myths and attitudes towards rape among students at the University of Namibia*. Unpublished Master thesis, University of Namibia.

- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). London, Great Britain: Ally & Bacon.
- Neuman, W.L. (2011). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Education Inc.
- Overlien, C., & Hyden, M. (2009). A Global journal of child research. *Children's action when experiencing domestic violence*, (16), 479-496. London, Great Britain: SAGE Publications. Retrieved from <http://www.uk.sagepub.com/>
- Payne, D., & Wermeling, L. (2002). Multicultural, gender and minority studies. Domestic violence and the female victim: *The reason women stay*, 3, 1-2009.
- Pickard, A. J. (2007). *Research methods in information*. London, Great-Britain: Facet
- Pilcher, J., & Whelehan, I. (2006). *50 key concepts in gender studies*. London, Great Britain: Sage Publications Inc.
- Punch, F.K. (2012). *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London, Great Britain: SAGE Publications.
- Radford, L., & Hester, M. (2006). *Mothering through domestic violence*. London, Great-Britain: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Rajan, S., & Krishnan, V. R. (2002). Impact of gender on influence, power and authoritarianism. *Women in management view*, 17 (5), 197-206. Retrieved from <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/>
- Regain Trust Organisation. (2015). *The voice of survivors: Arguments for a new approach against gender based violence*. Windhoek, Namibia: Regain Trust Organisation.
- Renzetti, M.C., Edleson, L.J., & Bergen, K. R. (2001). *Violence against women*. London, Great-Britain: SAGE publications.
- Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2012). *Qualitative research practice: A guide science students and research*. London, Great Britain: SAGE Publications.
- Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social research* (4th ed.). Cape Town, South Africa: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Scott-Samuel, A. (2009). Health policy and public health. Patriarchy, *masculinities and health inequalities*, 23 (2), 159-160. Retrieved from <http://pcwww.liv.ac.uk/~alexss/patriarchy.pdf/>
- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook* (2nd ed.). London, Great Britain: Sage Publications.

- Snape, D., & Spencer, L. (2003). *The foundations of qualitative research*. London, Great Britain: Sage Publications.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). *What is culture? A compilation of quotations. GlobalPAD core concepts*. Available at Global open house. Retrieved from <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/>
- Sultana, A. (2011). *Patriarchy and women's subordination: A theoretical analysis*. Unpublished PHD, Department of Political Science, University of Dhaka. Retrieved from <http://www.bdresearch.org/>
- Sweetman, C. (2000). *Gender and lifecycles*. London, Great Britain: Oxfam.
- Taylor, S. (1998, March 20). *Coping strategies*. Retrieved from <http://www.macses.ucsf.edu/research/psychosocial/coping.php/>
- The 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People: A Manual for National Human Rights Institutions*. Geneva: Swatziland.
- The Urban Trust of Namibia, ALAN, NALAO ANFD NANGOF TRUST. (2013). *Building safe and caring communities: violence prevention initiative in Namibia*. Windhoek, Namibia: The Urban Trust of Namibia.
- Tjitemisa, K. (2015, February 12th). *Men should be vocal on gender based violence*. Retrieved from <http://.newera.com.na/2015/02/12/men-vical-gbv/>
- Tong, R. (2014). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (4th ed.). University of North Carolina: Westview Press.
- Waldrop, A.E., & Resick, P. A. (2004). Coping Among Adult Female Victims of Domestic Violence: *Journal of Family Violence*, 19(5). Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/>
- World Health Organisation. (2005). *Summary report WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses*.

Annexure

Annexure A



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF GENDER EQUALITY AND CHILD WELFARE

Tel: +264 61 283 3111
Fax: +264 61 238 941/221 304
E-mail: genderequality@mgecw.gov.na

Private Bag 13359
Windhoek
Namibia

Our Ref.: ...**14/2/1**.....
Your Ref.:
Enquiries: ...**Ms. H. Andjamba**...

23 May 2016

Ms. Ella Shigwedha
MA-Student
University of Namibia
WINDHOEK

Dear Ms. Shigwedha

**RE: REQUEST PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT GENDER BASED
VIOLENCE PROTECTION UNIT, WINDHOEK**

Your letter dated 06 May 2016 on the above mentioned subject hereby refers.

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare is hereby granting permission to undertake the research on the above-mentioned subject. You will be working closely with the Social Workers at the Gender Based Violence Protection Unit in Windhoek.

Upon completion, you are requested to provide a copy of the project results, as the findings will be beneficial to the Ministry.

Yours sincerely

Ms. Juliet U. Mupurua
ACTING PERMANENT SECRETARY



All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary.



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



Department of Police

MINISTRY OF SAFETY AND SECURITY

Tel. No: (+264 61) 209 3111
Fax. No: (+264 61) 220 621

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL
Namibian Police
Private Bag 12024
Ausspannplatz
WINDHOEK
Namibia

Enquiries: Lt. Gen. Ndeitunga/Comm. Du Toit

Our Ref.: 8/3/1
Your Ref.:

06 July 2016

Ms Ella Shigwedha
University of Namibia
Private Bag 13301
Windhoek

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A DISSERTATION ON WOMEN EXPERIENCE AND COPING STRATEGIES TOWARDS DOMESTIC: A CASES OF FEMALE VICTIMS IN WINDHOEK: MS ELLA SHIGWEDHA: UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA.

1. Your letter dated 06 May 2016 is hereby acknowledged with thanks.
2. Gender based violence is a national tragedy that has an overwhelming brunt on children, individuals, families as well as community at large. The Namibian Police Force is very grateful and appreciating to your initiative to exploring as to how Namibian women experience and coping strategies toward Domestic Violence in Namibia.
3. This office would like to inform and advising you to address your needs to Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare, as they are the custodian of Social Worker who deals with the survivors and they may be able to assist you, as requested.
4. Furthermore, if you find out that there is a necessity for you to interview the investigating officers who deals with cases related to domestic violence, we would like to welcome you to interview them, provided that you make necessary arrangement prior to such visit.

Yours sincerely,


.....: LIEUTENANT-GENERAL
S. H. NDEITUNGA, OMS
INSPECTOR-GENERAL: NAMIBIAN POLICE

Annexure C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

CONSENT FORM

TITLE: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES AND COPING STRATEGIES TOWARD DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ANALYSIS OF CASES FROM FEMALE SURVIVORS IN WINDHOEK

This research is undertaken for academic (research) reasons. My name is Ella Shigwedha, a student of the University of Namibia (UNAM). I am doing a Master's Degree in Gender and Development Studies, within the Faculty of Humanity and Social Sciences, Department of Sociology. Being a student of Gender and Development Studies, I am keen to find out how female survivors experience and cope with domestic violence. The findings are used as guidance by policy makers and other stakeholders in their efforts to address the scourge of domestic violence, and how they can assist female Namibians affected by the problem. The information you are providing will be kept confidential. This interview is voluntary. Kindly sign below if you are willing to partake in the research interview. Please, do not write your real identity, you are allowed to use alternative names for confidentiality purpose.

I _____, Date_____ hereby giving consent to partake in the research. I do understand the content of the research.

Thanks very much for your participation.

Annexure D

Semi-structured interview guide

Date:

Title: women's experience and coping strategies toward domestic violence: cases of female victims in Windhoek.

1. What name do you prefer? You do not need to tell me your real name; you can just tell me the name you prefer for confidentiality purpose.
2. What age are you?
3. Marital status
 - 3.1 Are you married, single or cohabitating?
 - 3.2 Where you ever previously married?
4. When did you first meet your current partner or (if not in a relationship) previous partner?
5. When did you get married, or for how long are you in your present relationship?
6. Can you tell me how your experiences of violence from your partner first began? Was it quite soon after your relationship started?
7. Do you have any idea why your relationship began to be violent? Was there any particular cause or causes that might have started it?
8. What was the worst incident you remember? Can you explain why it happened and tell me something about it?
9. How do/did you manage to deal with the temper and violence from your partner? Were you ever able to manage or calm down the situation – was that possible?

10. Would you describe yourself as successful or not often successful in stopping your partner hurting you?
11. What type of physical violence did you experienced?
12. Who do you most often turn to outside of your relationship when things are bad? Do you have close friends or family members you turn to? How do they help you?
13. How helpful is the law toward domestic violence? Do the Police respond timely when the case is reported? How helpful is the protection order?
14. What are your coping strategies towards domestic violence? Do you regard it as normal? Do you report to the Police?
15. When you experience physical violence, do you seek counselling services from Professionals such as Social Workers at Gender Based Violence Protection Unit?
16. Have you opened a case against your boyfriend/husband? Did you move out of the house as a coping strategy?
17. Do you think that this is a man's world and men can do what they want with women?
18. Do you think that tradition in any way encourages violence against women?
19. Do you think the government and the authorities are doing enough to reduce violence against women? If not, what do you think they can do?

[End of interview]

Thanks very much for your time and participation!!!