

AN INVESTIGATION INTO VICTIM BLAMING, MYTHS AND ATTITUDES
TOWARDS RAPE AMONG STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

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BY

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DECLARATION

I, Ndeyapo Emma Nafuka, hereby declare 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.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to all victims of rape. Your determination, courage and strength to live a positive and fruitful life after having to endure a sinister act, as rape is admired.

I also fondly and lovingly dedicate this study to my late father Immanuel Nafuka. It's sad to have known you for only a short period, but I will always remember you. Your encouragement to seek knowledge and to be perseverant in the face of life's challenges has motivated me greatly.

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The work on the thesis has been a simultaneously challenging and rewarding venture. I offer my deepest gratitude to numerous individuals who have contributed through various means in making the journey an easier one.

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Finally, gratitude goes to the Almighty for guidance, strength and the gift of curiosity.

ABSTRACT

Rape myths serve to blame the victim, justify the perpetrator's actions, and discount the violence of rape (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). For perpetrators, these rape myths are thought to reduce the expected negative consequences of committing rape. As for society, it is clear that rape myth acceptance precedes rape and sexual aggression (Chapleau & Oswald, 2010). The primary purpose of this study was to examine the extent of support for rape myths among a sample of students at the University of Namibia and to establish whether there is any observable gender difference in this acceptance of rape myths.

A quantitative, descriptive and cross-sectional research framework was adopted. A non-probability stratified convenience sample of 151 students was employed. A 20-item Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was administered to assess overall how strongly the participants agreed with false rape stereotypes. The findings suggested that there is a tendency towards endorsing rape myths for at least some students. Male participants were found to agree slightly more than females, thus supporting the feminist premise that gender inequality perpetuates rape myths.

Participants were also asked to read an acquaintance rape scenario and they had to rate the extent to which they felt the victim or the perpetrator was responsible. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the pattern of responses of male and female respondents. Gender seemed to make no difference with regard to the degree of victim blaming on the rape scenario. However, rape

myth acceptance on the IRMA-SF scale was significantly associated with victim blaming.

Considering that the respondents of the study are students pursuing higher education and yet the majority held myths regarding rape, one wonders about the society at large. The overall findings suggest a need to provide more accurate information that will undo myths and by doing so curtail rape.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and Background

In the eighth survey of the United Nations Survey Crime and Criminal Justice System (UNCJS) which cover the year of 2000-2001, Namibia ranked third highest out of 53 countries who provided officially recorded data on rape (Hubbard, 2006). South Africa was reported to be top of the list while Canada took second place and the United States came fourth, just below Namibia. Since these statistics were gathered based on the level of reported rapes in the participating countries, Hubbard cautioned that high levels of reporting should not be interpreted as necessarily indicating high incidence of rape. On the contrary, these statistics may perhaps be attributed to the following factors: higher official sensitivity to rape, good crime recording practices, increased awareness of the crime on the part of both police and members of the public and general empowerment of women (Hubbard, 2006).

Additionally, despite the United Nations survey report, statistics derived from the Namibian Legal Assistance Centre's Gender (LAC) Research and Advocacy project reports found that the number of rape and attempted rape cases has more than doubled from independence to 2005 (Hubbard, 2007). According to Tjaronda (2006) this makes rape one of the most serious forms of crimes committed in the country. This drastic growth in rape and attempted rape cases in Namibia has created greater focus on existing legislation to deal with rape. In particular, the common law interpretation of rape that has been used since independence was criticized for

defining the concept of rape too narrowly. Also, the law punished only one form of sexual assault, and the common law on rape has been further criticized for considering only women as possible victims (Hubbard, 1991).

The Combating of Rape Act, No 8 came into force in 2000. This Act aimed to re-define the Common Law crime of rape, modify certain rules of evidence and provide minimum sentences for individuals convicted of rape offences (Schwikkard, 2009). However, even with this more recent rape legislation reform, the Namibian media continue to bombard the public with hideous stories about rape cases. Rape remains a serious social concern in Namibia. Hubbard (1991) asserts that imposing strict sentences for the rape offender is one way of combating rape but should not be seen as the only way. This implies that legal reforms alone cannot alter the stereotyped attitudes on rape that are deeply imbedded in our society.

It is speculated that the continued increase in rape cases may be due to the fact that although the Combating of Rape Act, No. 8 of 2000 was implemented to bring about needed change in the criminal law, no other changes in social policy to deal with the problem were introduced (Hubbard, 2006). For example, no rape awareness programmes were introduced to encourage greater victim reporting of rape that could possibly assist in curbing this social dilemma. According to Gölge, Fatih, Muderrisoglu and Yavuz (2004), pervasive, accepting and permissive attitudes about rape in modern society make it difficult to combat rape. In other words, rape is a social problem that cannot be dealt with only through changes in the criminal law.

Rape is both a very common and hideous crime that remains one of the most misunderstood crimes in society (Vogelman, 1990). It is, therefore, important for society to begin promoting a more scientifically based and objective perspective about rape. Fortney, Levenson, Brannon and Baker (2007), for example, suggest that there is a need for more accurate information to be disseminated to the public. Studying how rape is viewed in society should enable us to gain greater understanding of the phenomenon and help us begin to design approaches for modifying attitudes where necessary. With this background, the researcher of the current study intended to explore attitudes associated with rape and rape victim among students at the University of Namibian.

1.2 Problem Statement

Rape is a growing problem in today's society. It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the startling statistics about this crime. In rape studies internationally, it has been found generally that male students seem to be more likely to endorse rape myths and to blame the victim more than female students do (Mori, Bernat, Glen, Selle & Zarate, 1995; Kopper, 1996; Lev-Wiesel, 2004). The LAC study indicated that about one quarter of rape crimes were committed by young men below the age of 21 years (Hubbard, 2006). One can assume that these young men are being at least partly influenced by their acceptance of rape myths.

Although people who hold on to stereotypes about rape do not necessarily become rapists, there is research evidence that suggests a positive relationship between acceptance of rape myths and rape proclivity (Wiki, Patrick & Adams, 2006).

These studies appear to propose that acceptance of rape myths may even causally affect men's tendency to commit rape (Viki, Patrick & Adams, 2006). A further problem with the existence of rape myths is that rape victims themselves may hold misconceptions about rape. This may lead to victims blaming themselves for the assault, which is a major cause for concern. In this regard Barlow and Durand (2005) noted that trauma-related guilt has been linked to post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, negative self-esteem, shame, social anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Rauch and Foa (2004) mentioned that rape victims tend to experience higher rates of chronic health problems throughout their lives, including chronic headaches, menstrual irregularities, and pain in general.

The presence of distorted perceptions about rape might also result in additional negative consequences. According to Anderson (2007), rape myths are dangerous as they have the potential to have destructive consequences, not only for the rape victims, but also for their families and the communities at large. Anderson explains that rape myths promote silence, shame and pain, which lead to the blame being transferred from the perpetrator to the victim. They are also convinced that the acceptance of rape myths leads to the belief that sexual violence is part of normal behaviour, which gives perpetrators the opportunity to avoid being held accountable for their actions.

A further and very prominent problem with this is that the fear of being raped threatens women's freedom of movement, behaviour and dressing code, ultimately negatively impacting their quality of life (Vogelman, 1990). It therefore, follows that

in order for the negative consequences associated with rape to be reduced, the factors promoting the rape need to be looked into, and as pointed out by Anderson (2007), rape myths add to the committing of rape within communities.

Although a number of studies have documented the extent of rape myths among university students internationally (Kopper, 1996; Lev-Wiesel, 2004; Mori et al, & Zarate, 1995; Gölge al., 2004), no such study has been conducted in Namibia. The present study, therefore, aims to investigate attitudes towards rape and rape victims among University of Namibia students. Young educated Namibian males and females are the future leaders of the country, and social policy is likely to be developed in concert with their views and attitudes in various arenas, including attitudes towards the crime of rape. Since rape is a social problem that should be addressed by broad social policy, the perspectives of young and educated Namibians concerning the growing incidence of rape need to be better understood.

This study sets out to explore attitudes and beliefs associated with rape among Namibian university students. The researcher was of the opinion that this is a population within Namibian society where we might find thoughtful and balanced views of this crime and its causes. Among other aspects, one focus of this study is therefore to investigate the extent to which young Namibians seem to endorse rape myths.

Several studies have reported gender differences in the extent of the endorsement of rape myths. On the other hand, a few studies have reported no gender differences in

the endorsement of rape myths or victim blaming (Peltzer, Cherian & Cherian, 1998; Frese, Moya & Megias, 2004). Because of this lack of consensus in the literature, the role of gender in perceptions of rape remains unclear, which might impact on the specific intervention strategies needed to combat rape (Iconis, 2008).

Cowan and Campbell (1995) maintain that gender differences in attitudes towards rape suggest a need for gender-specific rape-education programmes targeting the specific rape myths that each gender group most strongly held. It is thus important to establish gender similarities or differences in the endorsement of rape myths in order to determine suitable intervention strategies. As such, the researcher in this study also looked at the extent to which university educated males in Namibia may have different perceptions concerning rape compared to their female counterparts.

1.3 Objectives

The primary objective of the study was threefold:

- to examine the extent of support for rape myths among a sample of students at the University of Namibia;
- to establish whether there are any observable gender differences in this acceptance of rape myths;
- to begin to develop a model for understanding ‘victim blaming’ in rape in terms of gender and acceptance of rape myths.

1.4 Research Questions

In light of the above mentioned objectives, the study lends itself to the formulation of the following research questions:

1. To what extent do students at the University of Namibia endorse or accept rape myths?
2. Is there a significant gender difference when examining the degree of endorsement or acceptance of rape myths?
3. Is there a correlation between victim blaming, rape myth and gender?

1.5 Motivation for the Study

The interest to carry out a study of this nature stems from the fast growing incidence of rape in Namibia that is reflected both in the statistics documented by Hubbard (2006) and the media in Namibia almost every day. As previously noted, the incidence of rape in Namibia has increased significantly since independence. This indicates that rape is a serious social problem that needs to be curbed. Although rape is known to be one of the most underreported crimes worldwide (Lacombe, 2007), this researcher is of the opinion that in Namibia, as in many other African countries, incidents of rape are even more under-reported.

This researcher has discussed the issue of rape informally with a number of African males over the last several years and it has been interesting to note that many men have, at one point in their life, engaged in sexual activities that could be perceived as “rape”. Myths about rape in concert with traditional cultural beliefs that encourage male aggression and female submission may be among some of the possible reasons

why rape incidents occur but go unreported. This could be because many of these rapes may be uncharacteristic of what is commonly perceived as rape, which is that rape is a sexual act, committed by strange men for sexual gratification (Edwards & Hensley, 2001). Rape myths are so common and widespread that in most cases the perpetrator, and even the victim, may not conceptualize the action as wrong.

According to Burt (1980), rape is an inevitable result of a dominant-submissive, competitive, and sex-role stereotyped society. Thus to address the problem in some fundamental way, one must be able to measure beliefs and attitudes about rape reliably and validly. As such it would be worthwhile to determine people's views regarding the occurrence of rape. It is hoped that this study will provide insight into how rape and rape victims are perceived in Namibia and thereby increase understanding of this phenomenon.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is of considerable value since as far as the researcher could determine, no similar study has been conducted in Namibia. By examining how attitudes are associated with perceptions of rape, increased understanding of community values may have result in the implications for broad social policy. Appropriate measures could be put in place in addressing distorted perceptions of rape among university students. The study can provide useful information to develop psychosocial interventions that could potentially reduce schema related to rape and rape victims. Furthermore, findings derived from the study could also more generally help enhance public awareness about the problem of rape and perceptions of rape victims. Finally,

findings would contribute to the development of scientific knowledge on rape worldwide. The study would also open doors for further research questions and be of interest to the general public.

1.7 Definition of Concepts

For any given research study, it is important to explicitly define the concepts that are being used in order to spell out the meaning that the researcher is attaching to these concepts (De vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). For this research, certain concepts or terms need to be defined so their use in the research is clarified.

- **Rape** is the act of forcing sexual intercourse or other sexual activity upon another person, without their consent and/or against their will (Santrock, 2006, p458).
- **Rape myth** is defined as an “attitude and belief that is generally false but is widely and persistently held, and that serves to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p134).
- **Victim blaming** is holding the victim responsible for what has happened to her/him. One way in which victim blaming is perpetuated is through rape myths (Frese, Moya & Megias, 2004).
- **Attitude** is a “mental and neutral state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual’s response to all objects and situations with which it is related” (Malim, 1997, p149).

1.8 Research Design and Method

In the present study, the relationships among acceptance of rape myths and victim blaming was assessed through a quantitative, non-experimental descriptive design.

Research data were gathered by means of two questionnaires. Banyard and Grayson (2000) mentioned that questionnaires are appropriate for measuring both attitudes and behaviour. Particularly, the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS-SF) was employed to assess attitude towards rape. The dependent variable 'victim blaming' was measured using a rape vignette. A questionnaire that accompanied the rape vignette scenario was employed to assess participant's view toward the rape victim and perpetrator. The Likert-type rating scales assessed participants' views regarding the incident, highlighting in particular their views on who is to blame in this incident. Findings derived from this instrument were used to attempt to explain 'victim blaming' with regard to gender and acceptance of rape myths. With regard to the analysis, in the first place descriptive analysis will be used to describe the data (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005).

Secondly, the total mean score of the total Illinois rape myth acceptance scale was calculated to determine the extent to which students endorse rape myths. The difference between the mean score for males and the mean score for females on the Rape Myth Acceptance scale was tested for significance using a t-test for independent means. With regard to the relationship between variables, the Spearman Rank order correlation was used to determine the relationship between sex and victim blaming. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was employed to assess the relationship between victim blaming, rape myth endorsement and gender.

1.9 Summary of the outline of the thesis

The chapters in the study will proceed in the following manner:

Chapter One presents the rationale and objective of the study.

Chapter Two introduces the main theoretical areas considered in the study. It explores the information on the incidence and nature of rape and further as a social problem by looking at rape myths. It also focuses on the impact of rape.

Chapter Three deals with the methodology utilized in the study where quantitative methods will be employed. The chapter describes research instruments, participants and the process of data analysis.

Chapter Four documents the findings of the study.

Chapter Five provides an analysis and interpretation of the data provided and presents main findings. Limitations, recommendations and conclusions, will also be presented.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZING RAPE AND RAPE MYTHS: A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one an overview of the study and its underlying rationale was presented. Chapter two begins by providing an historical perspective on rape. Rape is explained as it is viewed in Namibia and in an effort to understand the extent of rape in Namibia and globally, rape prevalence will be discussed. The chapter proceeds by looking at some theories that attempt to explain why rape occurs. In this respect, acquaintance rape and stranger rape are differentiated. Factors perpetuating rape and consequences of rape are outlined. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the psychological effects of rape, as well as the impact of rape myths on the victim. Finally, previous studies conducted on rape myths and victim blaming are presented.

2.2 History of Rape

Rape is not a contemporary phenomenon and it is believed to have existed for as long as the human race (Smith, 1975). However, for much of recorded history rape was not always perceived as a criminal act. For a long time, rape in many societies was kept silent, denied, minimized or even condoned (Gavey, 2005). Perhaps the height in recognition of rape as a serious social problem occurred in the 1970s, with the success of the feminist's movement (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008). The feminist movement pioneered the identification of rape as a serious social problem for women in the United State of America. This recognition later expanded to the

United Kingdom and then across many parts of the world (Gavey, 2005). Modern stereotypical attitudes about rape can be better understood by considering how rape was viewed in ancient times. This is particularly apparent in ancient laws concerning rape.

The early criminalization of rape in many societies was linked to the social disapproval of non-marital consensual sex. In most ancient states women were considered as the property of men and their value as property was measured largely by their sexual “purity” (Primorac, 1998). In this context, rape in itself was not regarded as a crime, especially not against women. Women were viewed as a chattel, an object owned by the man. Rape was viewed as an act that devalued women and threatened the patrilineal system of inheritance. The kind of criminal laws to deal with rape at the time, also known as “property laws”, were enacted primarily as a form of social control to regulate the transfer of property (Eriksson, 2010), not as laws to protect women or their rights to control their bodies.

Penalties for rape involved compensation to the appropriate man in trust, which could be the victim’s husband if married, or if she was unmarried payment could go to either her father or brother (Bergen, 1996). Similar practices were also permitted in ancient societies such as the Babylon and Assyria (Eriksson, 2010). It is interesting that during this era, rape seemed not to be perceived as a crime having psychological and physical repercussions for women. Instead it seems to have been more perceived as a violation of a man’s property.

With the expansion of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the laws prohibiting rape gradually underwent change and the notion of compensating the victim was also adopted. However, since feudalism was a class-built social construction, the laws that were employed also followed the same ideology (Schwendinger & Herman, 1983). In this regard rape victims were differentiated according to different feudal classes and compensation was relative to the class to which the woman belonged. Major developments with regard to rape laws occurred in the 12th century, when the ecclesiastic courts began to recognize the victim as an independent legal person, without reference to the victim's social rank or guardian (Schwendinger & Herman, 1983). The notion of sexual violence begins to emerge and rape begins to be defined as a crime against the person rather than against property. This was notable in the revision of the ancient laws of Rome by Gratian, who, in his collection of canon law *Decretum*, defined rape as "unlawful coitus, related to sexual corruption" (Burgess-Jackson, 1999).

The French revolution also played a critical role in recasting rape as a crime against the individual, rather than against a "guardian". This time attention was placed on the impact that rape has on the victim rather than perceiving rape as some form of theft as it had previously been viewed. This development was believed to have been popularised as a result of the increased emphasis on an ideology of self-determination. However, the notion was in many respects solely a theoretical development, which was not practised (Eriksson, 2010).

In the 17th century the notion that certain forms of rapes were less harmful prevailed for example, the legal reform did not allow for marital rape (Bennice & Resick, 2003). In 18th century England, the law treated women's accusations of rape with substantial disbelief (Gavey, 2005). During this era it was believed that women fabricated complaints of rape as a way of justifying premarital sex, pregnancy or infidelity (Eriksson, 2010). This mind-set was reflected in the language of the English jurist Sir Matthew Hale in his *History of the Pleas of the Crown* in which he states: "A most detestable crime, which ought to be severely impartially punished with death. Yet hard to be proved and harder to be defended by the party accused; tho never so innocent" (Gavey, 2005 p.17). These legal standards were supported by medical experts arguing the women are physically able to avoid rape if they desire to by using their hands, limbs and pelvis muscles (McGregor, 2005). Also courts would refer to various psychoanalytical studies on the female psyche and sexuality which concluded that generally women desire or invent forced sex and that declaration of rape results from feelings of shame and guilt (Durham, 1952).

During the 20th century rape was perceived as a crime which was primarily committed by strangers, usually by non-white men against white "respectable" women. Reports of rape that fell outside these parameters were often dismissed by the police and were viewed as allegations (Gavey, 2005). Women from lower classes, slaves and rebellious women became sexual prey, and black women were especially vulnerable (Sanday, 1996). Although rape was perceived as committed by non-white men against white women, in reality, black women were the ones who

were truly terrorized by sexual assault by white men, which was often done as a means of providing and ensuring a labour force (Primorac, 1998). By the late 20th century a notion existed that women had an “unconscious rape wish”. Women were believed to be imbued with a lurking sexuality that could be invoked in all sorts of ways. From this perspective, rape was viewed to occur because of female sexual provocation. Furthermore, rape was presented as merely another form of ‘sex’ with no recognition of its hurtful and humiliating elements (Gavey, 2005).

Before independence rape in Namibian was mainly used as a weapon of war to exerting control over the oppressed black majority. For example, rape was used as a means of psychological warfare in order to humiliate and undermine the morale of the Herero and Nama soldiers by the German colonies. After independence rapes of woman and children persist, however this time rape was used as an expression of male dominance.

Looking at rape in a historical context, one can see clearly that rape has not only been perpetuated as an extreme form of sexism, but it has also been used to reinforce other systems of oppression such as racism and classicism (Gavey, 2005). Perhaps the most progressive ideas with regard to how rape was viewed came in the 1970s along with the success of the feminist movement. For the first time in history, rape was recognized as a serious social problem (Ferro, Cermele & Saltzman, 2008). Feminism influenced a reconceptualisation of the definition of rape. State legislatures and courts in America and elsewhere expanded and redefined the crime of rape to reflect modern notions of equality and legal propriety. The feminist movement

essentially reinforced the recognition of rape as a weapon that men use against women, strongly rejecting the notion that rape occurs as a result of the uncontrollable sexual drive of oversexed men (Meyer, 2000). The feminist movement, therefore, pioneered the identification of rape as a serious social problem for women in the United States of America and around the world. With the increased awareness of rape came the development of rape crisis centres, and a growing emphasis on support and assistance for victims.

An historical analysis leaves no doubt that women have made significant progress over the years. However, there also can be no doubt that there is a considerable way to go. Many of the beliefs underlying ancient laws are still prevalent today. Rape, in many ways, is still tolerated in society, although more in some societies than others. But this tolerance is no longer without fierce contestations on multiple fronts (Gavy, 2005). This chapter turns next to begin to understand the phenomenon of rape in contemporary Namibian society today.

2.3 Definition of Rape: A Namibian Perspective

Before independence, the rape legislation known as the common law rape was in place in Namibia. Under the common law, rape was defined as unlawful sexual intercourse committed by a male against a female without her consent (Hubbard, 1991). This definition of rape was problematic and it was criticized for a number of reasons. It was argued that rape was too narrowly defined since it only considered one form of sexual assault. Under common law, rape only women were considered as possible victims. In other words, rape could be committed only if intercourse took

place with a woman who did not consent. Under this law men were not considered as possible victims of rape. Under the common law definition, the term “unlawful” excluded rape within marriage, since sexual intercourse by a married couple was considered lawful under all circumstances (Hubbard, 2006). Furthermore, the evidence system applicable to rape was determined largely by common law, with its roots in the English law of evidence. In this regard rape was distinguished from other offences because of a belief that its unique characteristics make it challenge to prove and/or reject. Among other rules were those that required the presiding officers to apply the cautionary rule to the testimony of the complainant (Schwikkard, 2009).

As a result of the concerns addressed against common law rape and in conjunction with the drastic growth in rape and attempted rape cases, government proceeded with the implementation of the Combating of Rape Act, No 8 of 2000 (Hubbard, 2006). Under the Combating of Rape Act, No 8 of 2000 rape was defined to cover a broad range of invasive sexual acts that included sexual intercourse, anal intercourse and cunnilingus or any other form of genital stimulation. Rape under the existing law is defined without reference to the sex of the victim and the perpetrator. This gender-neutral definition means that boys and men can also now be considered as victims of rape (Hubbard, 2006).

Besides broadening the definition of rape, the Combating of Rape Act, No 8 of 2000 brought about change in the legislation. It led to the abolishment of exemption of marital rape (Hubbard, 2006). The new law also provides for stiff minimum

sentences, depending on the circumstances of the rape. However, the minimum sentence does not apply to young offenders under the age of eighteen (Hubbard, 2006). With regard to the victim, the Combating of Rape Act also contains provisions designed to give more consideration to the complainant's needs. For example, it provides a procedure whereby the victim has an opportunity to express any concern to the court of any threats from the accused before bail is considered. The law also gives greater protection to the complainant's privacy; this includes a penalty given for revealing the identity of the rape victim in the press (Hubbard, 2006).

The Combating of Rape Act attempts to eliminate rules of evidence based on the myth that false charges of rape are common. The ancient rule for courts to treat the evidence of a complainant in a sexual offence case with special caution is eradicated. This implies that courts are forbidden to draw any negative conclusions simply from the fact that the rape victim did not tell anyone else about the rape, or delayed before laying the charge (Schwikkard, 2009). The Combating of Rape Act is believed to be one of most progressive rape laws in Southern Africa (Hubbard, 2006). However, despite the significant reforms in rape legislation, the media in Namibia is still dominated by horrifying stories of rape cases. This reflects that crime is a serious concern in our society. It further demonstrates the fact that rape legislation by itself cannot alter the stereotypical attitudes towards rape that are deeply imbedded in this society (Hubbard, 1991).

2.4 Prevalence of Rape

Rape and other forms of sexual violence are pervasive and major social concerns that threaten women in Namibia and worldwide. Globally rape statistics are overwhelming (Viki et al, 2006). Statistics derived from the Worldwide Sexual Assault Statistics (2001) note that one out of every three women has experienced rape or sexual assault. The United Nations Development Fund for women estimates that one out of three women will be raped in her lifetime (Planty, 2002). In the United States of America, as reported in Planty (2002), it is estimated that 72 of every 100,000 females were raped between the years 2006 and 2008. A survey in the United Kingdom found that 19.4 % of women had been victims of sexual violence (Worldwide Sexual Assault Statistics, 2001). A study by Planty (2002) shows that 74% of the sexual assault victims in the United States of America indicated that they had been assaulted by someone they knew well, 32% by friends and 21% by family members.

On the African continent research evidence estimates that one out of three women in Africa is likely to endure rape during her lifetime. South African rank the highest prevalence rates of rape in the world, with 121 rapes per 100 000 people. (Hubbard, 2006). A South African study tracked 2068 rape cases reported in 70 Gauteng police stations through the justice system from 2003 to 2007. The study found that only 4.1 percent of reported rape cases resulted in a conviction. The study also found that only 1 out of every 10 child rape cases reported to the police resulted in a conviction (Snyder, 2000). This Southern African study seems to suggest that the conviction rate for reported rapes is significantly low.

Madu and Peltzer (2001) further report that in a sample of 414 secondary students in the Limpopo Province (South Africa) a “friend” was the most commonly described perpetrator of all types of sexual abuse.

Namibia conducted its first comprehensive study of the particular crime of rape in 2005. Data from a study conducted by the Legal Assistance Centre of Namibia (Hubbard, 2006), which was drawn from various sources, shows that in 2005 alone more than 1000 rapes were reported in the country. The study points out that 99% of perpetrators were male and specifically one-fourth of rape crimes were committed by young men below the age of 21 years. It was found that more than a third of the people who had been raped were under the age of 18 (Hubbard, 2006).

Similar to the USA study by Planty (2002) and a South African study by Madu and Peltzer (2001), the LAC study found that most rape perpetrators were known to their victims. It was found that about 67% of reported rape cases involved persons known to the victim, 25% of the rapes in the sample involved family members, spouses or intimate partners and only 12% of the cases involved rape by strangers (Hubbard, 2006). This phenomenon appears to be consistent across cultures. Acquaintance rape seems to be much more common than stranger rape. In Namibia, of all reported rape crime cases, only 16% result in conviction, this means that only one out of every five people accused of rape or attempted rape in Namibia will be convicted of either rape or attempted rape (Hubbard, 2006).

In comparison, South Africa has a 7% conviction rate while England has a 6% conviction rate. Germany reports a higher conviction rate of 21% while Hungary is top with a 49% conviction rate. Hubbard (2006) explains that the low rape conviction rate in Namibia is partly caused by the Office of the Prosecutor-General that sometimes decides not to prosecute a case, usually because of insufficient evidence (Hubbard, 2007). According to Tjaronda (2006), this is because the Office of the Prosecutor-General decides when there is insufficient evidence to convict.

Johnson, Knuck and Schander (1997) explain that rape myth acceptance may play a role in the justice system by not validating the victim's experience. This supports the notion that there is an urgent need to address peoples' perceptions of rape, including prosecutors. In order to effectively combat rape, we must be able to measure beliefs and attitudes about rape reliably and validly and then share these findings with the judiciary and with prosecutors.

2.5 Theories Explaining the Occurrence of Rape

There are several theories in the literature that have attempted to explain rape. The researcher has chosen to focus on the following:

- Psychodynamic theory sees rape as the result of a conflicted relationship with parental figures.
- Social learning theories view aggressive sexual behaviour as learnt through processes such as observation, imitation and reinforcement.
- Feminist theories see rape as brought about by society's stereotypical and patriarchal values.

2.5.1 Psychodynamic Theories

Psychodynamic theories suggest that personality and behaviour is shaped by mental mechanisms operating outside of conscious awareness. These unconscious mechanisms develop during early childhood and define adult interaction and motivation (Stinson, Sales & Becker, 2008). This can sometimes lead to lack of control over antisocial tendencies, impulsivity, and lack of guilt that eventually leads to deviant behaviour (Harrower, 2005). Within this framework rape is seen as a response to family dysfunction. Thus the emphasis is placed on the early emotional relationship of the child and the mother (Brewer, 2000). For example, the expressive aggressive type of rapist is typically known to be coming from a family in which the mother was depressive and the father was violent and exhibited criminal behaviour (Lev-Wiesel, 2004).

While psychodynamic explanation holds intuitive strength, there are several problems with this theory. One of the essential assumptions of this approach is that females will have a weaker superego than males (Dwyer, 2001). In this regard we would expect more female criminals than males. However, this is not reflected in criminal statistics (Harrower, 2005). Also the emphasis that all crime emanating from unconscious conflicts in childhood does not square with the idea that some criminal behaviour involves rational planning (Dwyer, 2001).

2.5.2 Social Learning Theory

According to social learning theory, aggressive sexual behaviour, like all behaviour, is thought to be learned through social interactions. This behaviour is learned through

processes such as observation, imitation and obtaining rewards or avoiding punishments (Dwyer, 2001). This approach argues that sexual aggression is not an inherent psychopathological trait but rather a feature that has been learnt in the immediate environment. This learning involves norms which may be favourable to breaking the law or tolerance and/or justification of male aggression over female members of society.

Social learning theory states that some subcultures legitimize violence and are organized in such a way that norms favour criminal activities. For example, a recent study on the upswing of crimes of passion in Namibia found that it is widely acceptable for Namibian men to physically assault women as a means of disciplining them (Kachere, 2005).

Social learning theory also attempts an analysis of the gender difference in crime. It argues that because of the way males are socialized they are more likely to become delinquent when compared to females. Males are less strictly controlled and are brought up to be aggressive and active risk seekers and all these characteristics are prominent in criminal individuals (Harrower, 2005). In Namibia, many ethnic groups encourage young boys to be aggressive and fearless. In fact, young boys are punished further if they cry or are defeated during a fight. This kind of expectation sends out several signals to growing boys. They learn to suppress bad emotions and also that violence is a normal aspect of being male.

2.5.3 Feminist Theory

Feminist theories look at who holds and wields power in society and questions how these power relations impact women (White & Haines, 2004). They argue that within patriarchal culture men assert their power in many ways, and rape is one of them (Harrower, 1998). According to feminist theories within the process of male socialization, men are educated to think of women as their property. As a consequence, men's actions, values and beliefs are micro-social expression of broader patriarchal forces (Gavy, 2005).

The trend of men wielding more power than women in society is also observable in Namibia. Although effort is being made to increase the number of women in positions of power, it is still the case, for example, that the majority of seats are occupied by men in the National Assembly. Currently, of the 72 members of the National Assembly, only 16 (20 per cent) are females (Weidlich, 2011). This means that the problem of rape is not simply caused by individual psychopathology or weak superego as suggested by the psychodynamic theory. Rather, sexual aggression is seen as an outcome, or at least as a partial reflection, of the values and beliefs expressed by the broader society.

This standpoint theorizes that society has constructed a patriarchal system which promotes gender inequalities and male dominance. In order to maintain this hierarchical system gender stereotypes as to how men and women should conduct themselves in society were created. 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 (Harrower, 1998).

This theory further states that society's tolerance towards interpersonal violence together with the negative attitudes towards women, results in what is described as a 'rape culture' (White & Haines, 2004). In this rape culture both men and women come to view male aggression as normal, even in a sexual relationship. Within a patriarchal culture, rape is viewed as a mechanism of social control and not of sexual gratification. The fear of rape enforces a self-concept of passivity, terror, and helplessness in women. Feminist theorists assert that this feeling affects all women regardless of actual victimization and severely limits the freedom of women and makes women dependent on men's protection (McGregor, 2005).

2.6 Acquaintance Rape vs. Stranger Rape

Studies of rape have illustrated that there are many different types of rape. However, for the purposes of staying within the scope of the study, acquaintance rape will be discussed in comparison to stranger rape, since this is the most relevant distinction to the study. The study makes use of an acquaintance rape scenario, therefore acquaintance rape is discussed below in comparison to stranger rape to clarify how these two kinds of rape are significantly different.

Harrower (1998) defines stranger rape as characterized by non-consensual or forced sex with a woman who does not know the attacker. This type of rape usually involves weapons and some degree of physical violence. Ironically Harrower (1998),

states that stranger rape is usually seen as "real rape". A study done by Williams (1984) confirms that victims of rape are likely to report rape to the police if the circumstances of the rape corresponded to the "classic" rape situation. Although stranger rape is the most reported type of rape by the media and the most familiar within society, studies on the prevalence of rape have indicated that it does not occur as frequently as acquaintance rape (Madu & Peltzer, 2001; Planty 2002, Hubbard, 2006). However, the acceptance that stranger rape receives in broader society does not reduce the shame attached to rape or the trauma felt by the survivor.

Acquaintance rape, is a sexually assault committed by a person known to the victim, has been increasingly recognized as a real and relatively common problem within society (Bellows, 2007). Although this recognition is more suggested by research, most people seem to believe that acquaintance rape is less prevalent (Sampson, 2000). The type of coercion used by the date rapist is rather different from that of the stranger rapist. In acquaintance rape the perpetrator may use tactics such as verbal manipulation or getting the victim drunk or simply ignoring her resistance (Harrower, 1998).

Literatures demonstrate that the traumatic effects of acquaintance rape are not less serious than those experienced by victims of stranger rape (Frazier, Seales & Schwartz, 1997). Neddermeyer (2006) reports that the road to recovery may be easier for stranger rape than for the acquaintance/date rape victim. This is so because with acquaintance/date rape there has been such a betrayal of trust it is likely that the victim questions her own judgment, which often results in self-blame. This statement

is not brought forward to diminish or minimize the experience of stranger rape. Rather, Neddermeyer reports that the statement serves the purpose of legitimizing all experiences of rape.

Despite the fact that most legislation and jurisdictions do not recognize the distinction between stranger rape and acquaintance rape, these two types of rape elicit very different responses both from society (friends and family) and legal practitioners (Viki et al, 2004). Buddie and Miller (2001) pointed out that acquaintance rapes are prosecuted less frequently and punished less severely than stranger rape. It is hoped that survivors of rape will encounter understanding and awareness and that professionals will recognize the possible differences in the experience of stranger and acquaintance rape (Neddermeyer, 2006). Whatever type of rape, it remains an offence that may have lifelong and traumatic experience on victim and whatever myths and beliefs exist should not underplay impacts of rape on victim and their families.

2.7 Factors that Perpetuate Rape

2.7.1 Traditional and Cultural Beliefs

Perpetrators of rape cannot be distinguished from non-rapists by means of interviews and psychological tests. Also, many rapists show no impairment in general functioning or in reality testing. The 'normality' of the perpetrator of rape and the high rates of sexual aggression among the 'normal' populations such as university students groups therefore suggests that other factors may play an important role (Xenos & David-Smith, 1998).

In the Namibian society, like most African societies, many practices tend to relate to traditional beliefs. Tradition, in general, is effectively mobilized to shape certain patterns of thinking and influence the behaviour of people, and this includes the way people think about sexuality and gender. It also impacts the values people place around these notions (Sutherland, 2009). Violence displayed against women throughout the life cycle is believed to derive essentially from traditional and cultural patterns, in particular the harmful effects of certain customary practices (Krieg, 2007). The concept of harmful traditional practices was coined when describing and criticizing female genital cutting (Krieg, 2007). The concept is now extended to other practices such as rape, family violence and forced marriages. These practices help to maintain women in subordinate roles and contribute to women's lower social status. Harmful customary practices, such as rape, play an important role in explaining the prevalence of violence against women in most traditional societies and can also be imagined as justifying its occurrence (Krieg, 2007).

Also, harmful cultural practices do not only perpetuate violence, they encourage men to feel entitled to sexual access to women, to feel superior to women, or to feel that they have license as sexual aggressors (Colleen & Ferley, 2002). A study undertaken in Windhoek on sexual and reproductive autonomy revealed that most women in Namibia are not free to make their own decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. The study found that women's rights with regard to autonomy over their bodies are embedded in a complex set of social and cultural relationships which make these rights difficult to enforce (Edwards, 2005).

Culture is respected on the grounds of a commonly understood conceptual claim to historical continuity. In this light questioning traditional and customary practices is usually very controversial because it amounts to not only questioning the present-day applicability of a practice, but also to questioning the ‘fact’ that this practice has existed ‘forever’ and therefore should be accepted forever more (Sutherland, 2009). In other words, cultures are often viewed as “static”. In reality, however, tradition and cultures are often invented and adapted as time goes on to suit the needs of the people that define them (Gavy, 2005). Many social critics assert that some cultures may actually ‘breed’ rapists by socializing them into sexually dominant and aggressive roles that are associated with stereotypical concepts of masculinity. Research with college students supports the link between stereotypical masculinity and tendencies to commit rape (Kopper, 1996). Socio-cultural influences also reinforce themes that often underlie rape, such as the cultural belief that a masculine man is expected to be sexually assertive and overcome a woman’s resistance until she ‘melts’ in his arms (Xenos & David-Smith, 1998).

2.7.2 Media

A female victim is attacked in a dark alley by a stranger wielding a weapon. He inflicts severe bodily injury in order to gain sexual access. The victim fights her attacker to the utmost, and following the rape, she is rushed to the hospital, whereupon she immediately reports the incident to the police

(Parrot & Bechhofer, 1991)

Rape in the media is stereotypically reported in this manner. Although this kind of rape scenario does exist, it bears little resemblance to the reality of most rapes. According to Shield (2008) the common media representations of this kind of rape scenario contradict all research and crime statistics. It also distorts public perceptions and feeds into the punitiveness of the criminal justice system. Selective coverage of certain rape scenarios has resulted in the media being suspected of perpetuating myths about rape (Harrower, 1998). Buddie and Miller (2001) support Harrower by stating that misidentifying the situation as non-rape can be explained by the perpetuation of rape myths in the media, in which inaccurate portrayals of rape situations, rape victims, and rapists are promoted.

The danger of such media portrayals of rape is that both victims and perpetrators often do not classify the incident as rape because it varies from what they perceive rape to be. Most rapes portrayed in the movies are also committed by strangers, and as a result people do not identify acquaintance and marital rape as “real rape”. Unless media stories portray rape as it is in reality, the public’s understanding of rape may continue to remain overly narrow (Flowe, Shaw, Nye & Jamel, 2009). In an effort to explain why the media tend to take this perspective, Cochrane (2008), comments that journalists and editors are constantly challenged to come up with unique stories, since in journalism the question is always ‘What is fundamentally new about this story?’ This according to Cochrane (2008) creates a serious problem when covering issues as serious and ingrained as rape. Given that rape is neither new nor unusual, it is difficult to make individual stories and testimonies work as news features or stories.

This leads some journalists to create catchy headlines such as “crying rape” that often blame the victim of rape. In this regard the media can be seen as acting in an instrumental fashion in reinforcing victim blame and secondary victimization. This kind of media reporting may account for the underreporting of rape to the police and the low conviction rate (Flowe et al, 2009). Furthermore, newspaper articles that frame rape victims’ behaviour in a negative manner may reinforce rape myths and fuel public misconceptions of sex crimes, which in turn may have negative consequences for victims’ self-conceptions, their experience of rape and the criminal justice system’s response to sex crimes (Cochrane, 2008). Both Cochrane (2008) and Flowe et al (2009) seem to agree there is a need for journalists and editors to be accountable regarding the possible damage their type of reporting may inadvertently cause with respect to rape victims and the public reaction at large. On the other hand, it should be noted as well that despite the biased portrayal of rape in the media, there are also some brilliant and enlightened articles written on this subject (Cochrane, 2008).

2.7.3 Myths about Rape

Studies on the beliefs about the causes of rape have emphasized the analysis of rape myths (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Burt (1980, p.217)) first defined rape myths as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists”. Iconis (2008, p.47) later defined rape myths as “a specific set of attitudes and beliefs that may contribute to on-going sexual violence by shifting blame for sexual assault from perpetrators to victims”. Rape myths are a specific component of

culturally supported attitudes that normalize rape (Cotton, Ferley & Baron, 2002). Since we live in a culture that supports excuses and encourages sexual violence and male sexual aggression, rape myths are therefore constructed as a way to preserve this system of power and control (Anderson, 2007).

Measurement of rape myths often treats rape as a uni-dimensional construct. However, research indicates that there may be various, related constructs (McMahon, 2010). Some rape constructs focus on beliefs about the act of rape itself, for example she "asked for it" or "wanted" to be raped; women secretly enjoyed the experience; or lied about it. Other rape myths are related to the degree of physical violence that is inflicted much as if "If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken seriously". Some rape myths are concerned with the supposed provocation that is attributed to the victim, for example, if a woman goes around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, then they are just asking for trouble. This rape myth is prevalent in Namibia, and the Namibian newspaper dated 27 March, 2011 provides an example of the prevalence of the rape myth. A man sent a SMS to the Namibian newspaper blaming the rape of a schoolgirl on the short skirt that she was wearing. This kind of externalisation has implications, as it shifts blame from the perpetrator to victim (Responses to recent SMSes, 2011).

According to Workman and Orr (1996) these kinds of rape myths not only criticise the victim by making an underlying assumption that by dressing in immodest clothing women are more likely to be raped, but the myths go further by suggesting that women actively lead men on by dressing immodestly, and therefore, deserve to

be raped. In their study Workman and Orr (1996) found that participants who score high in rape myth acceptance, versus those who scored low, thought the victim who wore a short skirt as compared to a moderate or long skirt behaved more suggestively.

Some rape myths seem to suggest that rape is a crime of pure passion, for example, “Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals”. This rape myth promotes the notion that rape is primarily sexually motivated (Johnson, Kuck & Schander, 1997). A qualitative study investigated the attitudes and beliefs of male social work and psychology university students about rape and rapists. The results indicated that these students perceived a rapist as an aggressive, mentally disturbed, impulsive individual. At the same time they saw rape as a planned act (Lev-Wiesel, 2004).

Some myths deal with the psychological consequences of rape, thus not only do rape myths prevail, they actually predict the outcomes of what most rape survivors are likely to experience. For instance, a victim of rape is blamed more for her victimization when she has had previous sexual experiences (Buddie & Miller, 2001). Rape is believed to be less psychologically harmful to the victim when carried out by a steady date, than a first date or a stranger (Iconis, 2008; Ben-David & Schneider, 2009). However, in reality the literature has indicated that there is no difference in the degree of psychological symptoms suffered by victims who were raped by a stranger, versus those raped by a person known to them. In addition Iconis (2008), reports that the degree of psychological damage and trauma tends to be seen as a function of the victim’s sexual experience. White, as cited in Marty, Walter,

James and Kim (1999), postulates that rape myths trivialize rape by shifting responsibility from the perpetrator to the victim. Rape victims who feel that these stereotypes will be applied to them may be unwilling to report the rape. McGregor (2005) states that woman's reasons for not reporting rape ranges from fear that the criminal justice will not believe them, especially when the perpetrator is known to the victim, and that they will be blamed for the rape.

Bearing in mind the high prevalence of rape in Namibia, particularly among the youth, one might conclude that social change is necessary (Peterson & Muchlenhard, 2004). However, rape myths can make it difficult for the populace to understand the need for social change. In considering the function of rape myths in unacknowledged rape, Peterson and Muchlenhard, (2004) conceptualize rape myths as a series of tests any rape would need to pass in order to warrant the conclusion that social change is necessary, e.g., the myth that women lie about being raped suggests that social change is unnecessary since women's reports are likely to be untrue.

The myth that women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them also suggest that there is no need for social change, since rape is not a serious trauma. By arguing against the need for social change, Peterson and Muchlenhard (2004) state that rape myths help to perpetuate rape. Knowing that rape myths exist and influence the beliefs of those individuals that adhere to them, one must introduce a method that combats these myths. The Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, which was adopted for use in this study, provides a means of measuring these attitudes (Payne, Lonsway, & Fitzgerald, 1999).

2.8. Psychological Effects of Rape

In terms of the experience of rape, most victims report experiencing both short-term and long-term psychological effects (Briere & Jordan, 2004). Although there is no typical response among rape victims, at onset most rape victims seem to experience a wide range of emotional reactions. Immediate distress may include shock, fear, anxiety, confusion, numbness, self-blame, guilt and shame (Yuan, Koss & Stone, 2006). Similar to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, rape victims may undergo Rape Trauma Syndrome. This refers to a cluster of signs and symptoms such as flashbacks, reoccurring dreams about the event, etc. (Frazier & Borgida, 1992).

Not all rape victims display their emotions outwardly. Santrock (2006) postulates that some victims internalize their suffering and appear calm and unaffected by the assault. Furthermore, rape victims may feel that their bodies were reduced to objects, their sense of self is erased and their sense of power subjugated. Some of the possible behaviours that rape victims in the acute stage exhibit include diminished alertness, disorganized thought content, paralyzing anxiety, obsession to wash, hysteria, crying and so forth (Frazier & Borgida, 1992).

Beside the immediate reaction to rape, victims may endure long term psychological consequences. Although most rape victims do not necessarily develop chronic psychological disorder, the experience of rape (whether it has occurred in childhood, adolescence or adulthood) is associated with mental health disturbance and social problems in a significant proportion of victims (Kilpatrick et al., 1985; Mezey & Taylor, 1988, as cited in Mezey, 1997). Early victimization through rape may have

particular psychological consequences that can last through life. A study done by Murphy et al, (1988) found that compared to non-rape victims, rape victims reported impaired relationships with significant others at 1-year post assault, significantly lower self-esteem at 18-months post assault, and lower satisfaction in relations with their parents at the 2-year post assault assessment. A study by Chen, Murad, and Paras (2010) found that there was a statistically significant association between rape and a lifetime diagnosis of anxiety disorder, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders, sleep disorders, and suicide attempts. Associations persisted regardless of the victim's sex or the age at which abuse occurred. However the same study did not find a statistically significant association between rape and a diagnosis of schizophrenia or somatoform disorders. Similarly Spataro et al, (2004) found a significant correlation between rape and the incidence of personality disorders, anxiety disorders and major affective disorders, but not for schizophrenia.

Rape in its history has also been associated with sexual and mood disorders (Faravelli, Giugni, Salvatori & Ricca, 2004). Faravelli et al. (2004) looked at a sample of 40 women to assess the psychopathological consequences of a single rape in adult women who have not experienced any form of sexual abuse during childhood or adolescence. A control group was made up of 32 women in the general population who underwent a severe life-threatening event without any form of sexual abuse. Compared with the non-raped women, the results indicated a significantly greater prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual disorder, eating disorder, anxiety disorder and major depression disorders among raped women.

This finding is especially important because the study seems to indicate that the psychopathological consequences of rape could be rather specific and this could warrant particular attention and interest. The study further suggests that the psychological implications of rape not only last longer but may also be more severe compared to other forms of trauma. Rauch and Foa (2004) add that psychological ramifications may be a mediator or moderator between rape and physical problems.

A study by Mullen and Fleming (1998) has suggested that women exposed to child sexual abuse may respond by heightened anxiety in sexual contact, or may develop paradoxical promiscuity. The same authors further explain that this promiscuity tends to be a highly subjective self-evaluation since women with a history of child sexual abuse are more ready to label their sexual behaviour as promiscuous compared with non-abused woman with a similar range of sexual experiences. This may reflect, therefore, not changed sexual behaviour, but changed attitudes to one's own sexuality.

Physiologically, rape victims may become pregnant, contract sexually transmitted diseases and tend to endure chronic health problems throughout their lives that include chronic headaches, irregular menstruation and pain (Yuan et al., 2006; Lončar, Medved, Jovanović & Hotujac, 2006). Sexual dysfunction is fairly common after rape. Most rape victims report diminished sexual enjoyment, caused by re-experiencing symptoms and flashbacks, rather than decreased frequency of the sexual act (Nadelson et al., 1982, as cited in Mezey 1997). Mezey (1997) put forth the hypothesis that sexual problems appear to be more of a problem for victims of

acquaintance rape because of the implicit betrayal of trust which is then assumed to be manifest in all subsequent intimate relationships.

Sarkar and Rina (2005) report that women sexually assaulted in childhood are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted in adulthood. In a study that employed a matched case-control design, information about general practitioner use over a 7-year period was drawn from the Danish Civil Registration System by Elklit and Shevlin (2005) with the objective of examining the relationship between attendance at a centre for rape victims and frequency of contact with general practitioners. It was found that there was a sustained increase in health care use for those who had used the centre for rape victims compared to the control group. The results suggest that rape has significant physiological consequences for women.

2.8 Psychological Effect of rape myths

When rape victims are exposed to victim-blaming behaviours or attitudes, the experience may feel like a “second rape”. This phenomenon is known as “secondary victimization” (Schulz, 1999). In many instances, these behaviours manifest when society explicitly holds victims responsible for the assault, doubt the authenticity of victims’ stories, or minimize the seriousness of the crime. In other instances, secondary victimization occurs when rape victims are denied any needed or desired services (Schultz, 1999). Rape victims often translate negative reactions into self-blame. For example, Miller, Markman and Handley (2007) explored relationships between sexual assault, self-blame and sexual re-victimization (SRV).

Participants of the study consisted of 144 undergraduate females who were sexually assaulted before age 14. Each participant was instructed to complete the SRV 4.2 months after the assault and the Post-traumatic Cognitions Inventory. Participants were also interviewed about their sexual assault experiences and a survey was completed on legal perceptions of heterosexual interaction resulting in intercourse. The study found that the extent of self-blame women experience following a sexual assault can influence subsequent victimization. Women who have perceptions that the law permits men to engage in non-consensual sex are more likely to blame themselves for their assault or that they failed to prevent their assaults.

Previous literature has reported that negative reactions from others regarding the victim's assault are strongly correlated to long-term psychological distress such as PTSD, anxiety disorder and delayed recovery (Ullman, 2004; Rauch & Foa; 2004; Briere & Jordan, 2004). The social support literature suggests that negative social reactions are more powerful than positive or neutral reactions in influencing others. Unfortunately, positive social reactions are not as influential as negative social reactions; this is consistent with the general tendency for negative information to have a greater impact on social judgments than positive information (Brown & Testa, 2008; Rauch & Foa; 2004).

Ullman (2000) found that about 87% of rape victims who had experienced a violent rape by a stranger are likely to seek professional help while those raped by an acquaintance were likely to seek help from informal sources. The findings support

other studies by demonstrating that negative social reactions are more powerful than positive or neutral reactions in influencing others.

Brown and Testa (2008) also found that the type of rape (whether stranger or date rape) and the gender of the participant did not moderate the effects of negative social reactions. Regardless of the type of rape or participant gender, participants were found to be consistently and strongly influenced by negative social reactions. In addition, the study found that the victim of acquaintance rape was blamed more and the perpetrator was blamed less. Victims of acquaintance rape also received less emotional support than victims of stranger rape. Perhaps this finding could explain why victims of acquaintance rape are reluctant to seek professional intervention. Ullman (2006) explored whether the impact of social reactions on victim adjustment differs according to the support provided. As hypothesized, her findings reveal that emotional support from friends played a more positive role in improved recovery than emotional support from other support sources. This study suggests that emotional support from significant others is vital for recovery from rape.

2.9 Previous Studies on Rape Myths and Victim-Blaming

A substantial amount of research has focused extensively on trying to understand attitudes associated with rape and responsibility attributed to victims. Previous research has indicated fairly wide acceptance of rape myths (Burt, 1980). Numerous studies have shown that men and women differ dramatically in their perceptions of and attitudes toward rape, rapists, and rape victims (Kopper, 1996; Lev-Wiesel, 2004; Mori et al., 1995; Gölge et al., 2004; Frese et al, 2004; Chapleau, Oswald &

Russell, 2007). Kopper (1996) investigated undergraduate students' attitudes towards rape. In her study she recruited 534 undergraduate students and tested their attitudes on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale, using a seven point Likert type scale. Her findings generally showed a more negative attitude from men towards rape victims. The overall finding by Kopper (1996) was that males sanctioned rape myths, believing that women are responsible for the assault. The researcher states that rape myths are probably held to justify the perpetrator's action and minimize the seriousness of the occurrence.

In a more recent study by Kalosky (2005) acceptance of rape myths was examined as a predictor for perceived seriousness of rape and perception of responsibility by the victim. Kalosky hypothesized that men will be more supportive of rape myths than women. She further inferred that participants will attribute responsibility differently to an attractive victim than to an unattractive victim. In her study she recruited 218 undergraduate students and the 21-item Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was used to assess overall how strongly the participants agreed with these rape stereotypes. An acquaintance rape vignette was used describing the victim as either attractive or unattractive with all else held constant. Participants were required to rate the extent to which they felt the victim was responsible, the perceived psychological damage to the victim, and their support for the victim to report the crime.

Consistent with her hypothesis, women in this study obtained a lower mean rape myth acceptance score than men. Also, the findings indicated that male participants blamed the victim more when she was described as unattractive, whereas female

participants blamed the attractive victim more. Both males and females supported the victim in reporting the incident. Kalosky (2005) notes that this may reflect social desirability since reporting sexual assault is the socially acceptable response. But its implication is highly limited or impaired by social norms and myths. (How can you report your father for rape).

The study concluded that people perceive rape situations differently when physical attractiveness is manipulated and also showed that there are gender biases to perceptions of rape. Kalosky (2005) further concluded that it is of importance to understand the underlying perceptions of rape in order to establish a basis for macro-level attitudes, such as the seriousness of rape on college campuses. No previous studies have found females more accepting of rape myths than males (Johnson, Kuck & Schander, 1997).

Findings derived from these studies suggest that one of the possible factors underlying rape may be the general male populations' continued acceptance of rape myths. Domalewski (2009) proposed that this result may reflect defensive attributions, or the idea that individuals tend to blame victims who are dissimilar to themselves. This is also supported by Buddie and Miller (2001) who suggest that this could be because most rape victims are women, men feel different from this particular group of victims and are thus more likely to endorse rape myths than are women. Burt (1980) has found that belief in rape myths are highly correlated with other attitudinal variables, indicating that there is a relationship between the acceptance of rape myths and attitudes such as gender role stereotyping. As

previously mentioned, one's gender appears to be a characteristic that influences support for rape myths and victim-blaming. Another factor that influences one's attitude towards rape and rape victims is one's gender role orientation (i.e. masculinity/femininity).

Rosenthal, Heesacker, and Neimeyer (1995) found that people who uphold traditional gender role beliefs are more likely to accept certain myths that blame the woman, excuse the male, and justify acquaintance rape compared to those who are less supportive of traditional gender role beliefs. Rosenthal et al. (1995) further tested whether individuals possessing traditional sex role attitudes could have their rape related attitudes influenced by an educational intervention. This study's findings were twofold. First, participants who received the intervention exhibited significantly fewer rape supportive post-test attitudes on the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (Burt, 1980). Second, participants who heard the presentation provided fewer rape supportive vignette responses than those who did not. Specifically, participants saw the victim as significantly less responsible.

In his literature review Iconis (2008) concluded that individuals who engage in sexually aggressive behaviour, particularly rape, subscribe to belief systems that are markedly different from those who refrain from sexually aggressive behaviour. Also, Iconis' findings suggest that factors such as victim-blame, sex role expectations, misinformation, and communication/relationship skills contribute to an individual's potential to subscribe to rape supportive attitudes.

Other studies have focused on the victim's experience. Specifically, researchers have been interested in factors that influence victim-blaming. Bell, Kuriloff and Lottes (1994) tested students' level of victim blame, using four vignettes on 132 male and 168 female college students. In the context where the perpetrator and victim are acquainted with each other, Bell et al. (1994) found that students blame the female victim for the rape. Frese et al. (2004) used a sample of 182 psychology undergraduates and participants were asked to provide four judgments about each rape situation: victim responsibility, perpetrator responsibility, intensity of trauma, and likelihood to report the crime to the police. Their findings reveal that people with high rape myth acceptance attribute more responsibility to the victim, estimate victim trauma as less severe, and would be less likely to recommend the victim to report the rape to the police than those people with low rape myth acceptance (Frese et al., 2004).

In a cross-cultural study conducted by Mori et al (1995) between Asian and Caucasian participants, the overall results indicated that victim-blame was not a result of the race of the victim, but rather a result of the cultural background of the respondent. Asians were more likely to endorse rape myths and blame rape victims for their plight compared to their Caucasian counterparts. A Southern African study by Peltzer et al, (1998) found that black students held more conservative attitudes towards rape than white students. Contrary to studies done by Kopper, (1996); Lev-Wiesel, (2004); Mori et al., (1995); Gölge et al., (2004); Chapleau et al., (2007). Peltzer et al., (1998) and Frese et al (2004) find no gender difference on acceptance of rape myths. The above studies clearly suggest that apart from all the preceding

factors referred to, one's cultural background and preconceptions also influence one's attitude and perception towards rape and rape victims. Cultural values inform societal norms and values. From a cultural perspective, rape can be viewed as a manifestation of the general acceptance of violence, sexist attitudes and values, as well as gender inequality, which serves as a mechanism to subordinate women (Koss & Harvey, 1991).

2.10 Summary

Rape is a phenomenon that has strong historical origins and is closely tied with contemporary cultural values and beliefs in any given society. This chapter orientated the reader briefly to the historical evolution in our understanding of rape. It provided as well an overview of rape as it is presently defined and viewed in Namibia. From prevalence statistics that were summarized, it is apparent that rape is a serious social problem in Namibia as in the world generally. Although there are numerous theories that attempt to explain rape, the psychodynamic, social learning and feminist perspectives were highlighted as distinct theoretical approaches. The chapter also focused on the critical distinction between acquaintance and stranger rape. Rape is believed to be fuelled by various social factors. Some of these factors were discussed and the relationship with 'rape myths' as a continuing social influence for acceptance of rape was emphasized. Finally, literature that points out how rape has multiple and serious impact on victims was considered. Rape myths seem to be most prevalent in the context of what is now commonly referred to as acquaintance rape. Prevalence statistics indicate that this is the most common form of rape and the literature suggests that it is also the most misunderstood form of rape. In the next chapter the methodology for the current study will be described wherein relationships are explored between endorsement of rape myths and the degree to which participates blame the victim in an acquaintance rape scenario.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, the researcher provided an overview into the contextual literature on rape and related rape myths. The chapter also provided an historical overview of rape and outlined some theories pertaining to rape. Factors that perpetuate rape and possible consequences of rape were pointed out. This current chapter sets out to shed light on the motives, aims and hypotheses of the study. It describes the research methodology and outlines the research design and methods of data collection and analyses. Finally, a description is given of the participants involved in the study and ethical considerations are explained.

3.2 Aims and Objectives of the Current Study

Firstly, this study sets out to explore attitudes associated with rape among young individuals within Namibian society whom we might expect to have among the most thoughtful and balanced views of this crime and its causes. This is done by assessing the support for rape myths among a sample of students at the University of Namibia. Secondly, the study seeks to explore whether there are any observable gender differences in the acceptance of rape myths. In addition, information resulting from the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance scale and a rape vignette will be used to attempt to explain 'victim blaming' with regard to gender and acceptance of rape myths.

Specific aims of the study were as follows:

- to determine the extent to which university of Namibia students endorse rape myths by assessing their attitudes towards rape.
- to assess whether some rape myths are more prominent than others.
- to assess the correlation between individual rape myths.
- to assess whether there are significant gender differences with regard to the acceptance of rape myths.
- to describe students' responses with regards to a rape vignette by determining their level of support towards the victim and perpetrator.
- to describe the relationship between gender of the participants and victim-blaming.
- to describe the relationship between endorsement of rape myths and victim-blaming.

3.3 Methodological Framework

The study employs a quantitative framework. The foundation of quantitative research is built on the assumption that there is an objective world which can be uncovered by careful measurement (Tindall, 2002). The aim of quantitative research, as opposed to qualitative, is to attempt to describe and account for regularities in social behaviour, rather than seeking out and interpreting the meaning that people bring to their own actions (Payne & Payne, 2004).

Quantitative research seeks explanation and makes predictions, establishes, confirms or validates relationships and develops generalizations that may contribute to theory

(Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Quantitative research follows a very structured research approach. This means that the research objective, design, sampling of study subjects and the questions to be asked of participants are predetermined (Kumar, 2005). Quantitative research tends to rely on deductive logical reasoning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

According to Davies (2007) quantitative researchers apply deductive reasoning by generating research hypotheses or generating research questions from which logical conclusions can be drawn. However, since theories or research hypotheses are abstract, for these to provide a reasonable explanation of a certain phenomenon, constructs must be empirically measurable. For a theory to be testable one has to generate research hypotheses or questions from such a theory in order to collect evidence which would either support or disprove such hypotheses (Mouton, 1996). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) argue that research cannot solely be grounded in a specific thinking paradigm. This implies that quantitative research is not exclusively deductive, nor is qualitative research exclusively inductive. He affirms that researchers of all persuasions naturally use both types of reasoning in a continual cyclical fashion.

When applying quantitative research it has become standard practice to draw samples of cases rather than attempting to gather data from the whole population. However, once data is collected from a particular sample, findings are generalized to the target population. This notion is referred to as inductive generalization (Mouton, 1996). With regards to data analysis, quantitative research maintains an objective approach

by conducting predetermined statistical procedures and employing objective criteria to evaluate the outcome of those procedures (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Because quantitative research is rigid in this sense, the quantitative researcher automatically undertakes an outsider's perspective by observing behaviour in an objective manner (Welman et al, 2005).

According to Matveev (2002), since quantitative research mostly uses standardized research tools, the likelihood of achieving high levels of reliability is great, consequently quantitative research minimizes subjectivity of judgement. According to others such as Gilbert (2008), advantages of quantitative study is that quantitative data is relatively precise and lacks ambiguity. Another advantage is that quantitative data allows for summarization and analysis using statistical tools. According to Welman et al. (2005), the inflexible nature of quantitative study limits or prevents any form of bias in presenting the results.

Payne and Payne (2004) mention that although quantitative research operates with less detail compared to qualitative methods, it operates with a wider scope and enables more generalized levels of explanation. Denscombe (2010) postulates that one advantage of using quantitative methods is that quantitative data lend themselves to various forms of statistical calculation. This can be useful when detecting patterns of activity that allow researchers to forecast the likelihood of future events.

3.4 Research Methods

A non-experimental, cross-sectional descriptive approach was employed in this study. Social researchers who utilize this type of research design are mainly concerned with describing the phenomenon under investigation or to document its characteristics as accurately and clearly as possible. Attempts are not made to either manipulate or to determine the causal relationship between variables (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). The study aims to describe the relationship between rape myths endorsement and victim-blaming without seeking to confirm causal relationship between the variables. Lapan and Quartaroli (2009) point out the significance of employing a non-experimental descriptive study. It allows the researcher to investigate some attributes or important variables in society that cannot otherwise be manipulated such as gender, socioeconomic status or other personal characteristics or traits.

A survey method of data gathering was selected as an appropriate method for this type of descriptive study. Questionnaires are especially appropriate for collecting information that may be of a sensitive nature such as attitude towards rape, as they offer an advantage of reducing contamination. An added advantage according to Gilbert (2008), is that questionnaires can be completed quickly and involve large samples. One inherent difficulty with the approach as noted by Bless and Higson (1995) is that it does not allow one to easily examine change over time, thus making it difficult to demonstrate causality.

3.5 Participants

Probability stratified convenience sampling was employed to select participants in this study. A sample of (N=152) students at the University of Namibia were grouped into six strata according to their faculties: economics and management science, law, science, education, humanities and social science, and medicine and health science. The desired number of persons was selected proportionally within each of the different strata. This entailed drawing each sample according to the number of persons in that stratum. For example, a larger sample was drawn from larger strata and conversely a smaller sample was drawn from smaller strata (De Vos et al, 2005).

Investigating whether there is a difference in attitude towards rape among the different student faculties is beyond the scope of the present study. In this regard, stratified sampling was primarily utilized as a means to improve representativeness of the sample and to reduce sampling error. Selections within the different strata occurred randomly, convenience sampling thus allowed the researcher to work with participants who were readily available and willing to participate in the study (Dun, 2009).

3.6 Measurement

i) Socio-Demographic Questionnaires

The demographic questionnaire (see Appendix B) was used to capture the basic descriptive information of participants. It was used in the study to determine whether participants' gender and age are salient factors in explaining rape-related myths. Furthermore, participants had to indicate the faculty they belong too, and as

previously mentioned this was done solely as a means of complying with the requirement of the stratified sampling technique.

ii) The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS)

The IRMAS was designed by Payne, Lonsway, and Fitzgerald (1999) to assess the extent to which a person adheres to rape myths (see Appendix A). It was derived from Burt's (1980) rape myth acceptance scale. The original tool includes 45 items or statements related to rape myths, such as "If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape". The response is provided with a scale of possible responses rated on a 7-point Likert-type rating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A participant's rape myth acceptance score was the added sum of their responses to various items to obtain a total IRMAS score. A high score indicated strong acceptance of rape myths while a low score indicates low degree or non-acceptance of rape myths (Foubert & Marriott, 1997). Beside the total score the original IRMAS can also yield seven subscale scores that reflect acceptance of specific myths. The IRMAS expanded on previous scales for measuring rape myths by addressing aspects that had been overlooked, such as the victim's role in encouraging rape and perpetrator's motivation.

To demonstrate reliability and validity, the Cronbach's alpha for the original Scale was measured to be 0.88 and the item-to-item total correlation of each of the 45 items with the total scale, excluding the particular item, ranged from 0.27 to 0.62 (Curtiss, 2007). However, for the present study the IRMA full scale or subscale scores were not used. Instead, individual rape myths were taken from the IRMA and

combined to make a shorter 20 item scale. The items of the IRMAS- short form (SF) were each rated on a seven-point Likert scale, namely ‘strongly agree, agree, slightly agree neutral, disagree, slightly disagree and strongly disagree’. The highest value that a participant can score in the current study is 140 and the lowest is 20. An additional item was deliberately included to assess the extent to which participants thought rape should be prevented in society. Scores on item 6 in the IRMAS- SF that reads “most rapists are not caught by the police” was reversed so that higher scores indicate more acceptances. IRMAS- SF has been commonly used to assess attitudes towards rape by a number of researchers with the similar population as the current study (Kalosky, 2005; Chapleau et al, 2008; Rebeiz & Herb, 2010; Baugher, Elhai, Monroe & Gray, 2010). Furthermore, the instrument was also used in an African context by Viki, et al (2006) and Boakye (2009). Peterson and Muehlenhard (2004) revealed that items on the IRMAS were identified through an extensive literature review, discussion with experts, and pretesting with student samples. They further state that evidence collected by Payne et al. (1999) demonstrated that the IRMAS is a stable and theoretically sound instrument.

iii) Rape Scenario

Victim-blaming was measured using a rape vignette scenario. This scenario was taken from a study conducted at the University of New Hampshire. The study aimed to understanding college students’ perceptions of rape myths, acquaintance rape and reporting (Kalosky, 2005) for the rape vignette (see Appendix B). In the current study the rape vignette was accompanied by a questionnaire that assessed participants’ views towards the rape victim and perpetrator. After reading the brief

rape vignette, participants were asked to complete Likert-type rating scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The questionnaire aimed to assess participants' views regarding the incident, highlighting in particular their views of who is to be blamed in this incident. The first question was concerned with victim blaming "Jennifer is responsible for what happened". Similarly, the second question was concerned with perpetrator blaming "John is responsible for what happened". Questions 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 assess victim-blaming. The higher the score on these variables the higher the victim-blaming attributed to the victim. On the contrary questions 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 assessed perpetrator blaming. High scores on these items indicate perpetrator blaming. Findings derived from this instrument are used to attempt to explain 'victim blaming' and its relationship to gender and acceptance of rape myths. The highest value that a participant can score on both the victim-blaming and perpetrator-blaming scale is 35 and the lowest is 5.

3.7 Procedures

Participants were approached by the researcher while sitting at various leisure places on campus or while queuing for registration. Prior to completing questionnaires participants were asked to indicate the faculty they belonged to. As previously mentioned, this was necessary for stratified sampling. Participants were informed about the voluntary nature of the study. Informed consent was gained upon participation. Participants were given the research instruments to complete at their own peace. Keeping in mind that the research is of a sensitive nature, the researcher attempted to increase the participants' chance of being as honest as possible by keeping a distance while the participants were completing the questionnaire. Upon

completion, the questionnaires were collected and the participants were thanked for their involvement

3.8 Data Analysis

All quantitative data gathered for this study were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package. In keeping with standard procedure the reliability sub-programme was employed to measure the psychometric properties of the IRMAS. Descriptive analyses were employed to summarize and describe the information gathered. Particularly relevant to the research questions independent-samples t-test analysis was executed on the total rape myth score for the participants. Also significant to the study, Spearman Rank Order and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were performed to determine significant correlations between various variables.

3.9 Ethical Concerns

The researcher aimed to build a body of knowledge and gain insights into students' perspectives on rape and rape victims. As a result the sample of this study was selected from a population of students from the University of Namibia. Participants were informed about the aims and objectives of the study prior to completion of the questionnaire. It was further explained to them that by expressing their beliefs, they would assist the researcher in gaining an understanding and building knowledge on the subject at hand. No other benefits were promised to the participants. At the same time participants were made aware of their freedom to withdraw from the study without any consequences. A consent form was developed and provided to the potential participant at the University of Namibia.

Information collected was treated in the most professional manner by keeping participants anonymous and ensuring them that data was gathered solely for the purpose of the study. This, according to Neuman (2009), serves two purposes; firstly by familiarizing him or herself with ethical concerns, the researcher is able to build sound ethical practice into the study's design and be alert to potential ethical concerns that may arise. Lastly ethical awareness will assist the researcher to understand the research process. Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) assert that researchers should ensure their study conforms to ethical principles.

3.10 Summary

Among other reasons the aim to conduct a study of this nature among university students was based on the high incidence of rape in Namibia which is well established. Furthermore, the relationship between rape myths endorsement and victim blaming as well as attitudes towards rape have received little if any research attention in Namibia. In this chapter the research methodology employed was explained. A description of the student participants, procedures and methods of collecting and analyzing data was outlined. The next chapter presents results which emerged from the study and then discussion of these results will be presented in the fifth and final chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The instruments used to collect the data were described in the previous chapter. In this the researcher chapter outlines the results that were obtained through the study. Firstly, demographic data for the sample are presented. Secondly, psychometric properties for the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS-SF) and the results that were obtained using this instrument are presented. Results of the victim- and perpetrator- blaming subscales derived from the rape vignette is presented. Finally, results of analysis of the relationship between various variables are presented.

4.2 Demographic Data

The sample consisted of 152 students. As indicated in Figure 1, the sample consisted of 83 (54%) female participants and 69 (46%) male participants.

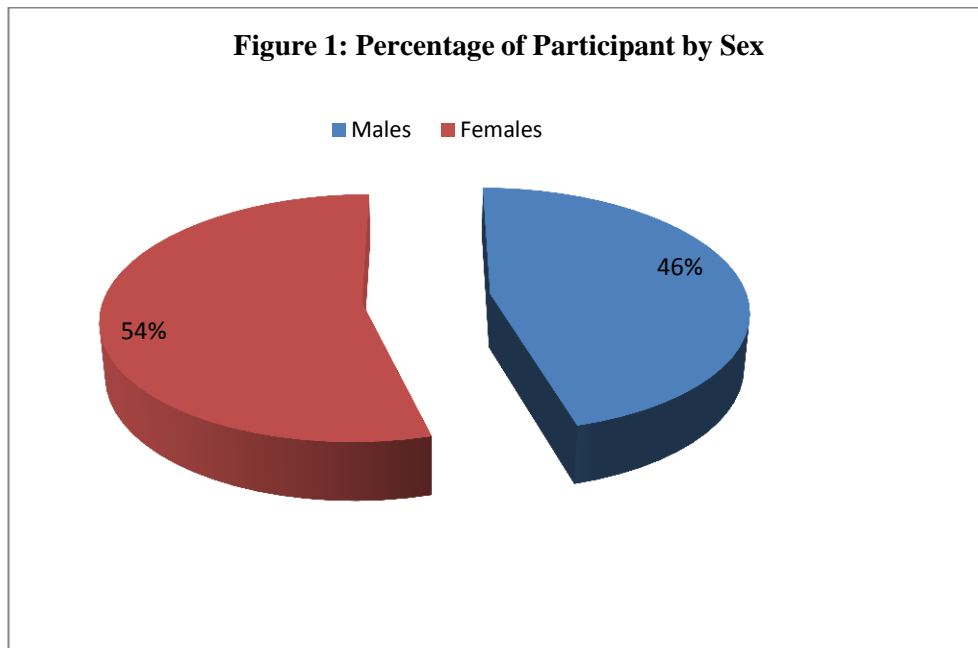
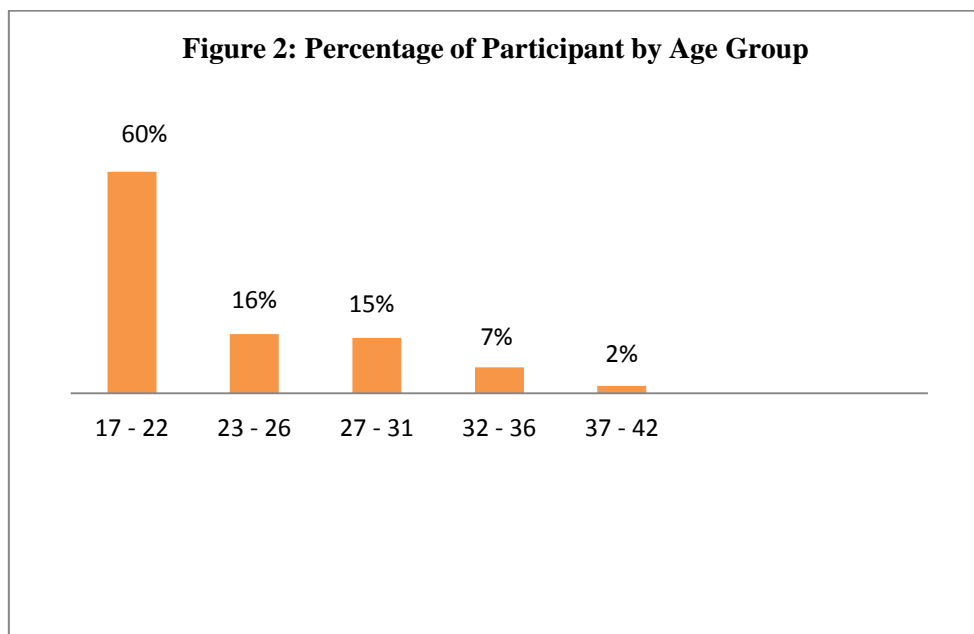
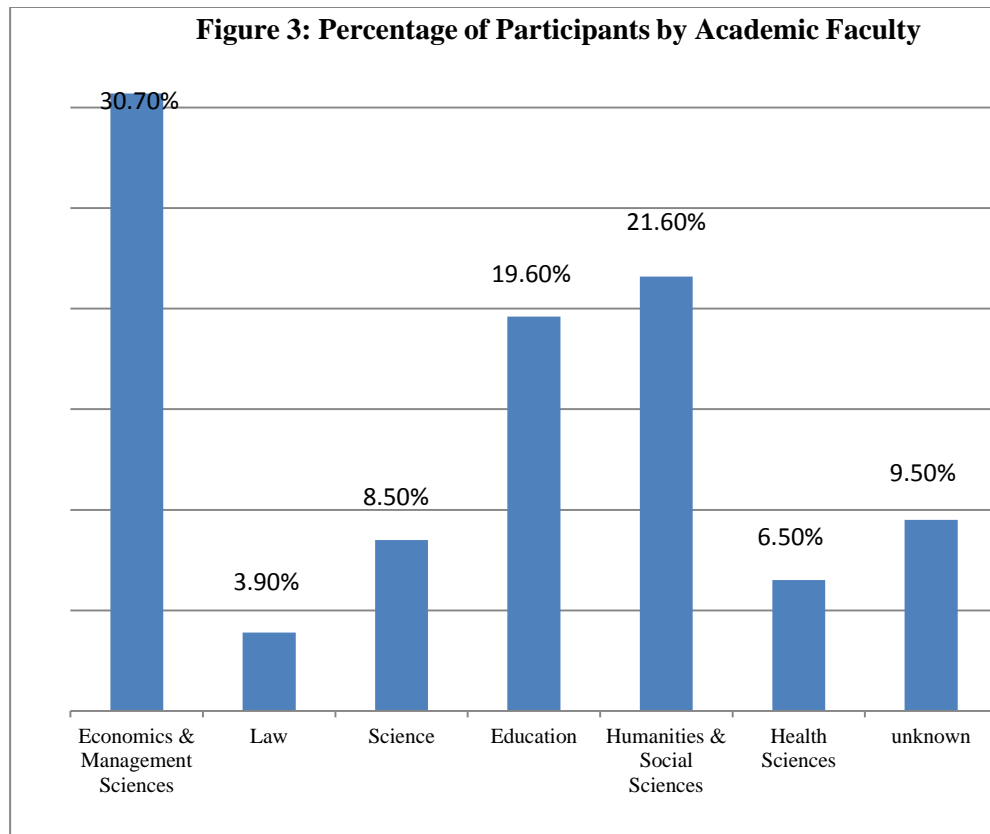


Figure 2 shows the characteristics of the participants by age groups. A majority of the participants were in the age category 17-22 years (n = 91, 60%).



Participants for the study were from various academic disciplines on the main campus of the University of Namibia. The majority of the participants were from the

Faculty of Economic and Management Science (n = 47; 30.7%) whereas the smallest proportion was from the Faculty of Law (n = 6; 3.9%). The faculty distribution for the sample appears in Figure 3.



4.3 Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale-Short-Form

Specific aim no.1

The first particular aim of the study was to describe the extent to which university students endorse rape myths by assessing their attitudes towards rape, using the IRMAS-SF.

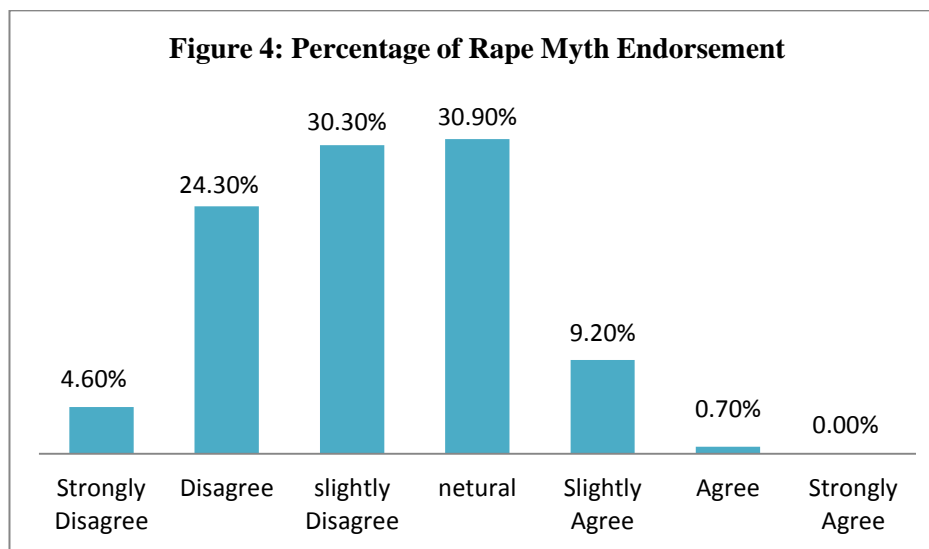
4.3.1 Assessment of Rape Myths

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire IRMAS-SF in the current study was 0.85. Inter-item correlation coefficients ranged from 0.24 to 0.60. The participant with the highest total rape myth score was 111 and the participant with the lowest score was 21.

In calculating the total score on the IRMAS a mean score of 63 ($SD = 21.13$) was obtained. With regard to the statement that assessed the extent to which participants thought that rape should be prevented in society, results indicated that most of the participants generally (77%) agreed with the statement. However, twenty-three percent of the respondents seem to think that society should not invest in attempting to curb rape. As far as strong endorsement of this statement (i.e., strongly agree), more female participants (43%) agreed with the statement that rape in society should be prevented compared to the male respondents (23%). Item 21 on the rape myth scale was excluded from further analysis on the IRMAS-SF because it does not assess rape myth.

Total response on individual categories on the IRMAS as viewed in Figure 4 indicates that 30.9% of the participants were neutral in their acceptance of rape myths. With regard to participants who have expressed some certainty in their response, 30.3% slightly disagreed while 24.3% of the participants disagreed with the rape myths. Only 4.6% of participants expressed strong view of disagreeing with the rape myths. On the acceptance categories it is noted that 9.2% of the participants slightly endorse rape myths while 0.7% agree with the rape myths. None of the

participants strongly agreed with the rape myths. These results indicate that the majority of participants (59.2%) disagreed to some extent with rape myths.



Specific aim no.2

Looking at individual rape myths, the second specific aim of the study was to assess whether some rape myths are more widely held than others.

Table 1 illustrate mean and standard deviation as ranked from the highest to the lowest, the results suggest generally that most rape myths were not endorsed to any great degree. However, there is a clearly distinctive endorsement of rape myth item 10 “Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals”. This rape myth yielded the highest mean of 4.43 (SD = 2.19) and it was endorsed by more than half of the participants 52%. Upon examining the results more closely, cross sex analysis revealed that both male (59.3) and female (49.4%) students were equally supportive of this rape myth with only about 10% difference.

Other high scores were obtained on the following rape myths: item 2 (M = 3.86, SD=3.86; although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a "turn-on"), item 3 (M= 3.71, SD=2.25; If a woman is willing to make out with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex), item 1 (M = 3.67, SD=2.28; If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control) and item 18 (M = 3.61, SD=1.20; Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman but sometimes they get too sexually carried away).

These rape myths were not endorsed, but where there was a close split between the percentage of respondents who generally agreed or disagreed. This indicates that there is a tendency towards endorsing these rape myths at least by some students. The lowest scores were yielded on the following rape myths: items 12 (M = 2.00, SD=1.79; If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape), 19 (M = 2.01, SD=1.97; If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken seriously) and item 4 (M = 2.23, SD=1.91; Many women secretly desire to be raped).

In the next section, the researcher provides a presentation of mean and standard deviation of individual rape myths.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Individual Rape Myths

No.	Item	Mean	SD
10	Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals.	4.43	2.19
2	Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a "turn-on".	3.86	2.25
3	If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex.	3.71	2.23
1	If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.	3.67	2.28
18	Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.	3.61	1.20
15	A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape	3.39	1.87
20	In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends	3.36	2.20
6	Most rapists are not caught by the police.	3.28	2.01
9	Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.	3.26	2.06
11	When a woman goes around wearing low-cut tops or short skirts, they're just asking for trouble.	3.20	2.24
14	Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them	3.19	2.04
7	If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.	3.14	2.27
5	Many so called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds afterwards".	3.13	2.13
13	Rape almost never happens in a women's own home.	3.06	2.15
8	Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.	2.98	2.19
16	If a woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date she is implying that she wants to have sex.	2.68	2.09
17	When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was unclear.	2.67	2.02
4	Many women secretly desire to be raped.	2.23	1.91
19	If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken seriously.	2.01	1.97
20	If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it rape.	2.00	1.79

Specific aim 3

The third specific aim of the study was to assess the correlation between individual rape myths, so a Spearman's Rank order (ρ) was employed to determine this. Spearman's Rank order is used to calculate the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables (Pallant, 2005).

The correlation matrix (see Table 2), demonstrates that ninety combinations of these variables produced significant correlations. These results indicate that there tends to be a strong association between endorsements of various rape myths. In particular, the strongest correlations were found on the following rape myths: item16 and 17 ($r=.517$); item 13 and 19 ($r=.510$); item15 and 19 ($r=.492$); item 17 and 19 ($r=.474$), item1 and 11 ($r=.431$); item 9 and 15 ($r=.431$); item 12 and item 17 ($r=.423$); item 12 and item 19 ($r=.420$); item 17 and item 20 ($r=.412$); item 11 and 13 ($r=.410$); item 13 and 17 ($r=.408$) and item 14 and 20 ($r=.400$). Corrections were significant at 0.01 level 2-tailed.

See the next page for individual correlation of rape myths.

4.4 Gender Differences in Endorsement of Rape Myths

Specific aim no. 4

The fourth specific aim of the study was to assess whether there is a significant gender difference with regard to the acceptance of rape myths. An independent-samples t-test is typically used when the researcher wants to compare the mean scores on the some continuous variable, for two different groups of subjects (Pallant, 2010).

In this regard independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the total rape myth score for males and females. The result reflect a significant difference in scores for males ($M=68.15$, $SD=20.78$) and female ($M=59.53$, $SD= 20.73$; $t(150) = 2.55$; $p = .012$).

4.5 Response on the Rape Vignette

Specific aim no. 5

The fifth specific aim of the study was to describe students' responses on the rape vignette by determining their level of blame towards the victim and perpetrator. This descriptive information is presented below.

4.5.1 Victim Blaming

All odd items on the rape vignette were combined to give a total victim-blaming score. The mean score on this scale was 3.07 ($SD = 1.42$). The highest score obtain was 33 and the lowest was 5. Results of the total victim-blaming scores indicate that 21.7% ($n = 33$) of the participants were neutral. In other words, this group seems

uncertain whether the victim should be held accountable for what happened to her. On the disapproval side (i.e. not blaming the victim) 21.7% (n = 33) slightly disagree, 23.7% (n = 36) disagree and 15.8% (n = 24); strongly disagree with the victim blaming statements. On the approval side (i.e. blaming the victim); 12.5% (n = 19) slightly agree 4.6% (n= 7) agree and none of the participants strongly agree with the victim-blaming statements.

Viewing the descriptive analyses on the total mean on the victim-blaming scale, results generally indicate that most students take a stand that Jennifer is not responsible for what happened. However, upon closer analysis on individual items on victim-blaming the statement item 5 “Jennifer may have desired the intercourse with John even though she resisted” received the largest mean score 3.72 (SD = 3.03). The other high mean score are found in item 3 M=3.22, SD=2.14; Jennifer’s resistance wasn’t clear enough to John”; item 7 M=3.07, SD=2.10; Jennifer would have a weak case against John if she reported (see Table 3).

4.5.2 Perpetrator Blaming

The perpetrator blaming scale was made up by combining all the even items on the rape vignette. The mean score on this subscale was 4.90 (SD 1.23). The participant with the highest perpetrator score was 35 and the participant with the lowest score was 11. Results on the perpetrator blaming scale show that 18.4% (n= 28) of the participants were neutral. They appear ambivalent about their response. On the approval side (i.e. not blaming the perpetrator), 10.5% (n= 16) slightly disagree and only; 0.7% (n= 1) disagree with the perpetrator blaming statements. Results yield

that none of the participants strongly blamed the perpetrator. On the disapproval side (i.e. blaming the perpetrator), 25% (n= 38) slightly agree whilst 31.6% (n= 48) agree and 13.8% (n= 21) strongly disagree with perpetrator blaming statements. Total mean score on individual items on the perpetrator scale show that the majority of the participants blamed the perpetrator (see table 4). Item 4 M=5.49, SD=2.02; John should have accepted Jennifer's resistance, item 2 M=5.25, SD=2.01; John is responsible for what happened and item 8 M=5.16, SD=2.05; Jennifer's rights were clearly violated.

Table 3

Mean and Standard deviation of items on the Victim Blaming Scale

No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	Jennifer is responsible for what happened	2,84	2,14
3	Jennifer's resistance wasn't clear enough to John.	3,22	2,14
5	Jennifer may have desired the intercourse with John even though she resisted.	3,72	3,03
7	Jennifer would have a weak case against John if she reported	3,07	2,10
9	Jennifer should just forget this happened.	2,59	1,88

Table 4

Mean and Standard Deviation of items on the Perpetrator Blaming Scale

No.	Item	Mean	SD
2	John is responsible for what happened.	5,25	2,01
4	John should have accepted Jennifer's resistance	5,49	2,02
6	Jennifer would be quite justified in reporting John's actions.	4,66	2,01
8	Jennifer's rights were clearly violated	5,16	2,05
10	John should receive some form of punishment	4,98	2,13

4.6 Results of the Relationships

Specific aim no.6

The sixth specific aim of the study was to describe the relationship between participant's sex and victim-blaming.

A Spearman Rank order correlation was calculated in order to determine whether there was a relationship between sex and victim-blaming in the rape vignette. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference ($r = -.108$, $n = 152$, $p = .185$, 2-tailed) in the pattern of responses of male and female respondents. Based on the above results, it can be safely concluded that gender seemed to make no difference with regards to degree of victim-blaming in the rape scenario.

Specific aim no. 7

The seventh specific aim of the study was to describe the relationship between rape myths and victim-blaming.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is a measure of the correlation between two variables (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to measure the relationship between rape myths endorsement as assessed by (IRMAS-SF) and victim-blaming as measured by the rape vignette. It was found that rape myth endorsement was highly positively associated with victim-blaming ($r = .526$, $n=152$, $p<.001$, 2-tailed). These results suggest that participants who endorse rape myths also tend to blame the victim.

A statistically significant negative correlation was found between rape myth endorsement and perpetrator blaming ($r = -.331$, $n=152$, $p<0.001$, 2-tailed), indicating that participants who endorse rape myths do not only blame the victim but they tend to support the perpetrator.

See the next page for table 5, that demonstrate Pearson correlation between Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale and victim blaming.

Table 5

Pearson Correlation: IRMAS and Victim Blaming

		Total IRMAS	Victim- Blaming	Perpetrator- Blaming
IRMAS	Pearson Correlation	1	.526**	-.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	152	152	152

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).

4.7 Summary

Keeping in mind the specific aims of the study, the results obtained from the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMAS-SF) and the rape vignette were reported. It was found that rape myths were not endorsed to any significant degree. The results of the present study showed clearly that men were significantly more accepting of rape myths than women. Finally, the study did not find any gender difference with regards to the degree of victim-blaming on the rape scenario. The next chapter aims to discuss these findings more comprehensively in relation to both theory and previous research on rape myth acceptance.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The main focus of this thesis was to examine attitudes towards rape. To my knowledge, this is the first study to quantitatively investigate attitudes toward rape, perceptions of rape myths and victim-blaming among a sample of Namibian university students. Relevant and fairly extensive literature regarding rape myths was examined and served as background for the current study. Previous chapters highlighted the methodology that was employed and the results that were obtained. In the present chapter the results will be discussed, especially in terms of what they might imply or what conclusions could be derived. Though this was essentially a descriptive study of attitudes towards rape, an attempt is made to explain or account for the findings from several different theoretical perspectives. Limitations of the study will be highlighted and, as a conclusion to the Chapter, some recommendations for future studies will be put forward.

5.2 Demographic Data

The sample for the current study had somewhat more females (54%) than males (45%). The sex difference may be attributed to the generally larger female population at the University of Namibia compared to males. The majority of the participants were in the age category 17 to 23 years. This is undoubtedly explained by the fact that the majority of students at the University of Namibia are young adults in this age range. Also, the questionnaires were collected during normal working

hours, thus making it more likely that full-time students were recruited since part-time students, who may be expected to be older, were not at the university during that time.

5.3 Illinois Rape Myths Acceptance Scale-Short Form

The current study found a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .85 for the IRMAS. This is slightly lower than the alpha coefficient .87 reported for the original instrument (Curtiss, 2007). Other studies that have employed the IRMAS-SF yielded the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: .0.73, .85, .85, .77 respectively (Frese et al., 2004; Chapleau et al., 2008; Boakye, 2009; Rebeiz & Harb, 2010; Viki et al., 2006). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient obtained for the current study indicates that the IRMAS-SF is an acceptably reliable measure within the Namibian context.

Regarding the item that assessed the extent to which participants thought rape should be prevented in society, seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants reflected that society should devote time to combating rape. This finding is potentially promising and encouraging and suggests that rape is considered as an important social challenge. However, this also means that a sizeable proportion of (24%) participants seem to suggest that rape is not a serious social concern.

The first goal of the study was to investigate the extent to which university students endorse rape myths. Students were chosen as a sample since the intent was to investigate relatively well-educated, young Namibians who might logically be expected to be more progressive, open-minded and balanced in their thinking about

social issues, including the serious problems of rape and violence directed towards women. Endorsement of rape myths is regarded in the psychological literature as one indicator of more traditional, stereotyped views of men and women and as a possible contributing factor in the perpetuation of rape in modern societies (Burt, 1980). One might expect, therefore, that youth undertaking post-secondary education in Namibia might be less influenced by traditionalist views and, therefore, reflect the attitudes of a more 'modern' Namibia, hopefully a Namibia that is becoming increasingly less tolerant of rape and the victimization of women. The results were slightly disappointing in this respect as there was some clear evidence of rape myth endorsement.

A key finding of the study is that the students who were sampled did not strongly endorse rape myths. Results on the IRMAS-SF showed some evidence of patriarchal beliefs and rape myth acceptance, although not to any extreme degree. This could be seen as encouraging but it deserves some further elaboration. It was derived from the finding that most respondents straddled the mid-point of the rating scales used to assess views regarding rape. In other words, there were very few extreme responses provided that might suggest unequivocal or complete acceptance of particular rape myths (i.e. strongly agree responses). At the same time, however, the opposite is also true in that there were very few extreme responses which suggested unequivocal or complete rejection of particular rape myths. The question could be posed as to whether any degree of endorsement of rape myths is at all acceptable. This is difficult to answer without a comparative framework. The current study obtained a mean value of 63 on the IRMAS ($SD = 21.13$).

We can compare this mean score with that obtained in a study reported by Kalosky (2005), where a mean value of 40.94 (SD= 13.63) was obtained with university students in the United States of America. On the other hand, a Spanish study by Frese et al., 2004, reported a higher mean value of 100.86 (SD=10.1). These results suggest that Namibian students endorse rape myth to a greater extent than American students. However, they endorsed rape myths less the Spanish students. Another interesting aspect of the findings, however, is that SD obtained in the current study (21.13) is larger than other studies, suggesting a higher degree of variation of views among Namibian students.

From making these comparisons it can be deducted that although university students may not be endorsing rape myths especially firmly or extremely, in relative terms their endorsement of these myths is much stronger than what we find, for example, in societies like the United States of America. However, Spanish students seem to be endorsing rape myths to a considerably greater degree than Namibian students. What could account for these differences is clearly a potential focus for future studies but several social and/or cultural factors could be influencing this attitudinal gap in views about rape.

This finding seems to support the social learning theory that largely suggests that behaviour including how attitude are formed is learnt from the environment. Namibian students who are expected to be more exposed to traditional views about gender might have adopted stereotypical attitudes towards rape. This may explain why they endorse rape myths to a greater extent than the American students. Burt

(1980) found that beliefs in rape myths are highly correlated with attitudinal variables such as gender role stereotyping, distrust of the other gender, and acceptance of interpersonal violence.

Given that most students did not endorse rape myths to any significant degree, it was interesting to observe that the rape myth that “Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals” was endorsed quite strongly. This would suggest that despite decades of research evidence that rape is a crime of power and control (Ben-David & Schneider, 2005), students in Namibia still seem to regard rape as motivated by sexual desire. If lack of awareness is at the root of the greater endorsement of rape myths in Namibia, then promoting factual awareness of rape, and the motives and methods of men who rape, should become a social policy priority in Namibia.

The following rape myths received high mean values: “Although most women wouldn’t admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a “turn-on”, “If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control”, “If a woman is willing to make out with a guy, then it’s no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex,” and “Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman but sometimes they get too sexually carried away”. These results suggest that although students did not endorse most of the rape myths to any significant degree, there was a tendency towards endorsing some particular rape myths, at least by some students.

A commonality among these rape myths is that they all seem to be culturally influenced. Moreover they all tend to blame the victim, while in turn excusing the perpetrator by describing his actions as provoked and impulsive, as seen most clearly, for example, in statements such as: “If a woman is willing to “make out” with a guy, then it’s no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex” and “Men don’t usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away”. The rape myths that yield low mean values all seem to be related to violence e.g. “If the rapist doesn’t have a weapon, you really can’t call it rape” and “If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn’t be taken seriously”. This finding seems to suggest that students do not think that violence needs to be involved for a non-consensual sexual act to qualify as rape.

With regard to sex differences in perception of rape myths, consistent with previous research, Gölge et al., (2004); Chapleau et al., (2008), and Hockett et al., (2009), gender was found to be a salient factor, with males endorsing rape myths to a considerably greater degree than females. It is important to understand underlying perceptions of rape myths in order to establish a basis for macro-level attitudes, such as the difference in gender endorsement of rape myths at the University of Namibia.

The existence of rape myths among some university students may be reflective of various factors. One possibility is that perhaps some Namibian university students endorse rape myths because they adhere (to some greater degree) to traditional

stereotypes concerning gender role behaviour (Yamawaki, Niwako, Tschanz & Brian, 2005).

It has been found consistently that in societies that adhere to conservative sexual attitudes, rape myths are more likely to be prominent than in non-traditional cultures (Alexis & Boris, 2002; Schaefer & Richard 1999). Also prominent in traditional cultures is the promotion of the ideology of male toughness, which is related to violence against women (Robertson, 1998). Robertson further pointed out that acceptance of rape myths is strongly related to adversarial sexual beliefs and tolerance of interpersonal violence. She further asserts that sexually aggressive men are more likely to believe myths about rape and to accept the use of interpersonal violence as an effective strategy for resolving conflict.

Furthermore, the tolerance for rape myths functions differently for males and female Lonsways and Fitzgerald (1995) explain that men tend to use rape myths as a way of justifying or denying the occurrence of a rape incident, while females endorse myths about rape to deny personal vulnerability and responsibility. Relating this ideology to the Namibian context, as one form of defence mechanism against rape, women may prescribe to strong religious beliefs and values about how a women should behave ('good' and 'moral' women should not behave in ways that may put them at risk for rape). In this regard, rape myth might act as a protective factor that fosters a sense of control and security in women.

To explain the gender differences in endorsement of rape myths, it is suggested that the strong association between gender and rape myth acceptance supports the feminist hypothesis that gender inequality perpetuates rape myths and that a male-dominated society tends to justify rape and blame victims (Suarez & Gadalla, 2010). Namibia is traditionally a male-dominated and patriarchal society. Additionally, Namibian society was for years subjected to a culture of violence because of the double overlay of German colonialism (1884-1915) and the imposition of the apartheid system (1919-1990) and the resulting socio-political liberation struggle.

It is theorized that the on-going struggle and transition to independence may have left many men with a sense of powerlessness and perceived emasculation. Rape and other forms of domestic violence committed against women and children may represent a displacement of aggression in which men reassert their power and dominance against the perceived "weaker" individuals in society. In this context, rape is used as an assertion of power and aggression in an attempt to reassert the perpetrator's masculinity (Robertson, 1998). Rape myths in this regard assist by perpetuating false beliefs and rationalizing the behaviour.

5.4 Victim and Perpetrator Blaming

On the rape vignette a mean score of 3.05 (SD 1.42) was obtained. This generally suggests that the majority of the sample was sympathetic to the victim in the vignette. This finding replicates a study by Curtiss (2010). However, it contradicts studies done by Yamawaki et al., (2007) and Szymanski et al (1993), where participants in the studies blamed the victim.

This finding generally suggests that most participants do not blame the victim, instead most participants blame the perpetrator. (Mean score =5.18; SD 1.23). However, upon closer analysis on individual items it becomes apparent that the support for the victim was ambivalent. The best illustration of this ambivalence is the set of responses to the statement “Jennifer may have desired the intercourse with John even though she resisted” which received the most variance in responses where there was a close split between the extremes. It would seem that the respondents were divided in how to react to this question and most respondents showed neither strong agreement nor disagreement, but rather stayed mainly in the middle of the scale rather than at the extremes. Clearly the victim’s resistance was not accepted by some participants. Rather, students seemed uncertain as to whether Jennifer may have actually ‘desired’ intercourse even though she indicated clearly that she did not.

Further analysis on the same item indicated that 36% of the female respondents agreed with the statement. This is considered a fairly large percentage as one would expect female students to be more sympathetic towards their counterpart in the scenario. This result could reveal deeper-lying beliefs that women are perceived to say no even when they mean yes.

This finding may suggest that young Namibian women see resistance to sexual advances as normative and perhaps cultural attitudes may be responsible for this behaviour. Women in many Namibian cultures are expected to be sexually submissive and not initiate or be obvious about their sexual desire, even when they are truly interested. It is, therefore, a cultural norm for a woman to resist sexual

advances; the man in turn ignores her resistance to the point that he may have sexual intercourse with her. A woman's resistance in this regard is interpreted as culturally expected. This cultural belief could serve as a possible reason why students seem unsure whether Jennifer was really not intending to have sexual intercourse with John or whether she was simply "playing hard to get". This cultural belief has some serious implications for both men and women. For males it makes it difficult to comprehend a woman's resistance as it could mean that she does not really intend to have sexual intercourse or maybe her resistance could be because she is subscribing to the cultural belief of "playing hard to get". Furthermore, men who subscribe to this cultural belief may ignore a woman's efforts at sexual resistance and engage in unintentional rape.

5.5 The Relationships between Victim-Blaming, Gender and Rape Myths Acceptance

When examining the role of gender in victim blaming, overall results indicate that the sex of the respondent was not significant in determining the degree of victim-blaming on the rape scenario. This finding suggests that students at the University of Namibia do not differ in victim-blaming and that both sexes tend not to blame the victim in the scenario, although this support for the victim is neither always clear-cut nor unconditional. This finding contradicts studies conducted by others (Hockett et al., 2009) that suggest that males tend to blame the victim more.

Rape myth acceptance were found to be a relevant factor in explaining victim-blaming ($r = .526, p < .000$). The results suggested that participants who endorsed rape

myths did not only tend to blame the victim but they also tended to excuse the perpetrator ($r = -.331, p < 0.001$). These findings support extensive literature which suggests that individuals who adhere to rape myths are also more likely to blame the victim (Bell, Kuriloff & Lottes, 1994; Gölge et al., 2003; Frese et al., 2004; Iconis, 2008 & Trangsrud, 2010). A high correlation between victim-blaming and adherence to myths rapes was expected since most rape myths tend to blame the victim. A victim is also blamed more when she is perceived to show behaviour that is 'blameworthy'. Since the victim in the rape vignette accompanied the perpetrator home, perhaps her behaviour was viewed as inappropriate. However, literature generally suggests that victims of acquaintance rape are blamed more than victims of stranger rape (Sleath & Bull, 2010).

When assessing the relationship between rape myths and victim-blaming, the sex of the participant was found to be a salient factor. In this context, males were found to blame the victim more in comparison to the female participants. Findings derived from various studies suggest that one of the possible factors underlying rape may be the general male population's continued acceptance of rape myths. Domalewski (2009) put forward that this result may reflect defensive attributions, or the idea that individuals tend to blame victims who are dissimilar to themselves. This is also supported by Buddie and Miller (2001) who suggest that this could be because most rape victims are women, men feel differently from this particular group of victims and thus are more likely to endorse rape myths than are women.

According to the belief in a just world theory, females may endorse rape myths and blame the victim as a way of distancing themselves from the reality of rape (Trangsrud, 2010). Attributing blame to the victim has been shown to be associated with increased psychological distress, delayed recovery, and poor perceptions of physical health (Ullman and Siegel as cited in Yamawaki et, 2005). Rape victims may, therefore, not only suffer from the actual but also from secondary victimisation. Furthermore, victim-blaming could lead to a tendency of victims enduring suffering in silence and blaming themselves for the ordeal. It has been found that consequences of rape include acute stress disorder (ASD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), eating disorders and substance abuse, all of which may manifest as a result of self-blame and lack of support from significant others (Lee et al, 2005).

5.6 Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

The study attempted to explore perceptions of rape and rape victims among a sample of University students as well as to describe the relationships between victim-blaming, rape myths endorsement and gender. The main findings of the study are that:

- The study obtained a mean value of 63 on the IRMAS ($SD = 21.13$) this score indicate that students did not endorse rape myths to any significant degree, but there was a fair level of ambivalence with respect to some particular rape myths.
- In line with other studies for example Gölge et al., 2004 and Chapleau et al., 2008 the results of the present study showed clearly that male students were significantly more accepting of rape myths than females.

- The majority of the students blamed the perpetrator for his action and less blame was attributed to the victim.
- There was a significant strong positive association between victim-blaming and rape myths. No correlation was found between victim-blaming and sex of the participants.
- Generally, the findings of the study support the social learning and feminist theories.

5.7 Limitations and Suggestion for Future Research

This study is not without its own limitations, among which the following are deemed worth sharing. Convenience sampling was employed to recruit participants within the university. By its own nature, the selected technique allows the researcher to work with those participants who are conveniently available. The results can, therefore, not be generalized to other higher learning institutions, geographic regions, or other Namibian groups. It is, therefore, recommended that future research utilizes a larger population e.g. rape attitudes across tertiary students.

The current study was conducted using a sample of university students. It is possible that such a sample may have incorporated Western values through the education process. Further research is needed, therefore, to explore rape attitudes of non-student African samples (e.g. rural populations). The University of Namibia has some international students, thus the findings are not necessarily representative of Namibian students but may be a reflective of the diverse cultures. Future research might focus on comparing attitudes towards rape and rape victim by Namibian and

non-Namibian students. Also, the study did not take into consideration the different ethnic groups within the Namibian population which may influence perception of rape and rape victims. Therefore, future research needs to take this into consideration. Research should be aware that cultural values may interfere with participants' interpretations of what constitutes rape. It may be interesting to assess motives for rape in Namibia compared to Western countries. Also a study can also measure whether adhering to traditional masculinity and femininity roles impacts support for rape myths. Another interesting sample will be to do a pre- and post-test of myths before and after the University of Namibia core social Contemporary Issues.

Finally, another interesting avenue for further research would be the use of different kinds of rape scenarios (e.g. stranger rape vs. acquaintance rape) to examine differences in support level. Females constituted a larger proportion of the respondents and the university population at large. Thus the females' perceptions are reflected more than the males. Future studies can correct for this.

5.8 Conclusions

The findings of this study could have significant policy implications as they suggest a need for rape awareness programmes. Such programme could be aimed at reducing levels of rape myth acceptance and negative attitudes toward rape and victims of rape at the University of Namibia. There is limited exposure on Namibian university campuses to education or awareness campaigns about the incidence, circumstances and definitions of rape. This is common practice in North America where rape

prevention programmes are routinely disseminated across University campuses to sensitize young students about the dangers of 'date rape' and where slogans such as 'No Means No' have become part of the culture. With discussion and exposure to factual information, beliefs can be challenged and the endorsement of rape myths can perhaps be significantly decreased. Without factual information, even with regards to something as simple as what kind of behaviour actually constitutes rape, then personal biases and misinformation serves to reinforce endorsement of myths.

Young educated Namibian males and females are the future of tomorrow and social policies are likely be developed in concert with their views and attitudes in various arenas, including attitudes towards the crime of rape. Since the early 1970s, in America and other western countries, feminism has raised public awareness regarding women's rights and equality of the sexes to centre stage on many social policy fronts. This Cultural Revolution and its ramifications may have had, and may continue to have, much less influence on the African continent. If endorsement of rape myths is partly related to the continued cultural and sexual subjugation of women in Africa, then rape as a growing social phenomenon will not decrease unless in some fundamental way greater equality in women's roles and rights is achieved.

An interesting finding from the present study is that some rape myths were found to be more prevalent than others. Although these rape myths were not necessarily endorsed strongly by many people, most students seem ambivalent about their support towards rape myths. All of these rape myths were found to be 'victim

blaming' rape myths. One could speculate that certain other key values may be influencing this split in student views such as lower status of women within our society or strongly religious students could be blaming the victim much more than non-religious students. If other factors are spilling over and influencing rape myth acceptance in Namibia, through the perhaps unintentional but still inappropriate deflection of blame on the victim, then the clergy should take a much stronger stand in clarifying the fact that the 'victim' in a rape can never be at fault, no matter what the circumstances.

The greatest revolution of our generation is the discovery that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives.

by William James

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

I ,..... freely and voluntarily consent to participate in the research project conducted by Ms. Ndeyapo Nafuka under the supervision of Dr. E. N Shino, Department of Psychology at the University of Namibia. I understand that the purpose of the study is to explore perceptions of rape and rape victims among young university students.

I understand that the researcher will request me to answer two set of questionnaires. My confidentiality and privacy of response will be safe guarded. I also understand that my participation is free and voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any point in time without any penalty.

.....
Participant

.....
Date

I HAVE EXPLAINED THE RESEACH PROCEDURE TO WHICH THE PARTICIPANT HAS CONSENTED TO PARTICIPATE

.....
Researcher

.....
Date

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire 1

Demographic Questions

Please answer the following demographic questions, by ticking in the appropriate box.

Gender:

Male	
Female	

Age:

17-22	23-26	27-31	32-36	37-42	43 and above

Faculty

Economics & Management	Law	Science	Education	Humanities & Social Science

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire 2

Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale – Short Form (IRMAS - SF)

In the following survey, you will be asked about your feelings toward various rape-related statements. Please consider your experiences and beliefs when responding. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). **Please circle your responses.**

- | | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Agree |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5...6.....7 | |
| 2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a "turn-on" | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 3. If a woman is willing to "make out" with a guy, then it's no big deal if he goes a little further and has sex. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 4. Many women secretly desire to be raped. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 5. Many so called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds afterwards" | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 6. Most rapists are not caught by the police. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 7. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 8. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 9. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |
| 10. Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals. | 1... 2... 3... 4... 5... 6.....7 | |

11. When a woman go around wearing low-cut tops or short shirt,
they' re just asking for trouble. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5....6.....7
12. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it
rape. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
13. Rape almost never happens in a women's own home. .. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
14. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
15. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape. ..1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
16. A women who goes to home or apartment of a man
on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex ..1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
17. When women are raped, it's often because the way
they said "no" was unclear.1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
18. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman,
but sometimes they get too sexually carried away. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
19. If a women claims to have been raped but has
no bruises or scrapes, she probably
shouldn't be taken seriously 1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
20. In reality, women are almost never raped
by their boyfriends 1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7
21. This society should devote more time to
preventing rapes. 1... 2... 3... 4... 5.... 6.....7

Please continue with the next questionnaire

APPENDIX D

Questionnaire 3

Rape Vignette

INSTRUCTIONS

Please consider the following scenario:

It is a Saturday night at an off-campus party. In attendance are Jennifer and John, who are unacquainted classmates. John approaches Jennifer, a noticeably attractive girl, by offering her a drink. They start a conversation and discover that they are in one of the same classes. Jennifer later finds out that the friend she had come to the party with has left early. John offers Jennifer a ride home and the two leave together. After they arrive at Jennifer's apartment, John asks to use the bathroom and Jennifer lets him inside. After a few minutes of talking and a few consensual kisses, John begins to push himself on Jennifer. She gently pushes him back and tells him to stop. Despite her verbal and physical resistance, John forces Jennifer to have sexual intercourse.

Please answer on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) the following statements.

- | | Strongly Disagree | Strongly Agree |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1. Jennifer is responsible for what happened | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |
| 2. John is responsible for what happened. | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |
| 3. Jennifer's resistance wasn't clear enough
John. | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6..... 7 | |
| 4. John should have accepted Jennifer's resistance
and stopped. | 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7 | |
| 5. Jennifer may have desired the intercourse with
John even though she resisted. | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |
| 6. Jennifer would be justified in reporting
John's actions..... | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |
| 7. Jennifer would have a weak case against
John if she reported | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |
| 8. Jennifer's rights were clearly violated. | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |
| 9. Jennifer should just forget this happened... .. | 1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7 | |

10. John should receive some form

of punishment

1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6.....7

Thank you for your time and honesty.