

**UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' BELIEF IN 'RAPE MYTHS':  
A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY**

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OF THE FREE STATE.

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**JUNE 2003**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted by me for the Magister Scientiae degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty. I furthermore cede copyright of this thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

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## ABSTRACT

**KEY TERMS: RAPE, RAPE MYTH, RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE, CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY, GENDER, RACE, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, ATTITUDES, ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

The increasing prevalence of rape in South Africa is a disconcerting phenomenon. Various theories on the causative factors of rape are discussed in the light of the relevant literature. It becomes evident from the existing literature that one's attitudes regarding rape, the rapist and the rape victim are decisive factors in determining one's propensity to engage in sexual aggression. The construct attitude as well as theories concerning attitude development and change are also explored in the literature review. Rape-tolerant beliefs and negative attitudes towards the rape victim are important cognitive factors to take into account when examining rape. These permissive attitudes towards sexual aggression are collectively termed **rape myths**. Rape myths play a significant role in the recovery process of the rape victim, the probability of convicting the rapist and determining which incidences of sexual aggression will be defined as rape.

Relatively few studies on rape myths have been performed in South Africa and there is a substantial lack of cross-cultural studies in this regard. The main objective of this study is to determine the extent to which students at the University of the Free State adhere to rape myths. The influence of gender and race in determining rape myth acceptance was examined.

A non-experimental research design was employed, with gender and race as the independent variables and rape myths as the dependent variable. The research participants consisted of 486 students from the University of the Free State. The participants were obtained by randomly selecting three faculties, from which several classes were identified to take part in the study. There were 166 male and 320 female participants, of which 250 are white and 236 are black.



A biographical questionnaire was constructed to determine the demographic variables of gender, race, language and age. The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) was employed to assess rape myth acceptance. As the IRMA was constructed in English, it was translated into Afrikaans by means of back-translation. The respondents could participate freely in the study and could complete the questionnaires in their language of choice. As the nature of the topic is sensitive, the respondents remained anonymous. The reliability of the IRMA was calculated by means of Cronbach alpha coefficients and satisfactory reliabilities were obtained. A multivariate analysis of variance was performed to determine the extent to which the independent variables (gender, race) influence the dependent variable (rape myth acceptance). One-way analyses of variance were conducted for each of the four combinations of the independent variables to determine their combined effect on rape myth acceptance.

The most important research findings are the following:

- Males exhibited consistently greater acceptance of rape myths than females.
- The variable of race did not account for consistent differences in rape myth acceptance.
- The simultaneous effect of gender and race on rape myth acceptance exhibited that black male respondents accepted the most rape myths and black female respondents accepted the least rape myths.

One of the limitations to this study is the limited generalisability of the findings as all the participants are university students. Similar studies, with respondents from various sectors of the general public may expand the generalisability of the research findings. Future studies could also explore the influence of age, occupation or contact with sexual aggression on rape myth acceptance.

## OPSOMMING

**KERNWOORDE: VERKRAGTING, VERKRAGTINGSMITES, AANVAARDING VAN VERKRAGTINGSMITES, KRUIS-KULTURELE STUDIE, GESLAG, RAS, STUDENTE AAN UNIVERSITEIT, HOUDINGS, VARIANSIE-ANALISE**

Die hoë voorkoms van verkragting is 'n kommerwekkende verskynsel in Suid-Afrika. Verskeie teorieë wat die oorsaaklike faktore van verkragting uitlig, word aan die hand van toepaslike literatuur bespreek. Hieruit blyk dit dat 'n persoon se houdings en oortuigings oor verkragting en die verkragtingslagoffer 'n groot bydraende rol speel in die pleging van dié misdaad. Die konsep houdings, asook die ontwikkeling en verandering van houdings word breedvoerig volgens die literatuur bespreek. Persone met permissiewe houdings teenoor seksuele geweld blyk meer geneig te wees tot seksueel aggressiewe gedrag. Hierdie oortuigings en houdings oor verkragting word kollektief **verkragtingsmites** genoem en dit speel 'n groot rol in die herstelproses van die slagoffer, die waarskynlikheid dat die verkragter skuldig bevind sal word en bepaal tot 'n groot mate watter insidente van seksuele aggressie as verkragting geïdentifiseer sal word.

Daar is betreklik min studies reeds in Suid-Afrika gedoen oor verkragtingsmites en daar is veral 'n gebrek aan kruis-kulturele studies in hierdie verband. Die hoofdoelwit van hierdie studie is om te bepaal tot watter mate studente aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat verkragtingsmites ondersteun. Daar is ook ondersoek of daar beduidende verskille ten opsigte van geslag en ras bestaan met betrekking tot die ondersteuning van verkragtingsmites.

Daar is van nie-eksperimentele navorsing gebruik gemaak, met geslag en ras as die onafhanklike veranderlikes teenoor verkragtingsmites as die afhanklike veranderlike. Die ondersoekgroep van hierdie studie het bestaan uit 486 studente aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat. Hierdie studente is verkry deur drie fakulteite ewekansig te trek en groepe te selekteer om aan die studie deel te neem. Daar was 166 manlike en 320 vroulike respondente, van wie 250 blank is en 236 swart is.

'n Biografiese vraelys is opgestel om die demografiese veranderlikes van geslag, ras, taal en ouderdom te bepaal. Die Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance (IRMA) vraelys is geïmplementeer vir die meting van verkrachtingsmites. Aangesien laasgenoemde vraelys oorspronklik in Engels opgestel is, is dit vanuit Engels na Afrikaans vertaal deur middel van die terugvertalingsmetode. Die respondente kon die vraelys vrywillig voltooi in die taal van hul keuse. Aangesien die onderwerp van die vraelys sensitief van aard is, is hulle anonimiteit verseker. Die betroubaarheid van die IRMA is vir die Afrikaanse en die Engelse vertaling met behulp van Cronbach se alfa-koeffisiënt bereken en bevredigende toetsbetroubaarhede is verkry. 'n Meervoudige variansie-analise is uitgevoer om te bepaal of die onafhanklike veranderlikes (geslag, ras) 'n beduidende invloed uitoefen op die afhanklike veranderlike (verkrachtingsmites). Eenrigting variansie-analises is uitgevoer vir elk van die vier kombinasies van geslag en ras om hul gekombineerde effek op verkrachtingsmites te bepaal.

Die belangrikste navorsingsbevindinge is die volgende:

- Mans het deurgaans beduidend hoër aanvaarding van verkrachtingsmites as vrouens getoon.
- Ras het nie 'n konsekwente invloed op die aanvaarding van verkrachtingsmites uitgeoefen nie.
- Die gesamentlike effek van geslag en ras op verkrachtingsmites het getoon dat swart mans die meeste, en swart vrouens die minste mites aanvaar.

Een van die studie se tekortkominge is die beperkte veralgemeenbaarheid van hierdie resultate na die algemene bevolking, omdat al die deelnemers aan die studie studente is. 'n Soortgelyke studie met respondente uit verskillende sektore van die algemene publiek kan tot 'n groter veralgemeenbaarheid van resultate lei. Toekomstige studies kan die invloed van veranderlikes soos ouderdom, beroep of kontak met 'n slagoffer van verkrachting op verkrachtingsmites ondersoek.

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# **CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Rape is a major social problem that is prevalent in our country. It has also received great attention from the media in recent times following the alarming frequency with which the crime is perpetrated in South Africa.

Rape is committed more frequently in South Africa than in any other member country of Interpol (Hirschowitz, Worku & Orkin, 2000). Some researchers estimate that 149 rapes of women of all ages are committed each day (Carte Blanche, 2002). The National Victims of Crime Survey (2000) indicates that a total of 293 104 rape and attempted rape cases were reported in South Africa during the period between January 1994 and December 1999. In 1997 alone, 55 000 women were raped, which translates to about 134 women per 100 000 of the country's total population. Not all instances of rape are reported, as is illustrated by Hirschowitz, Worku and Orkin (2000), who estimate that only half of the rapes occurring in 1997 were reported to the police (approximately 68 per 100 000). These statistics illustrate the enormity and extent of the problem of rape in South Africa.

There are different estimates of the extent to which underreporting of rape occurs, but according to Hirschowitz, Worku and Orkin (2000) only about 50% of all rapes in South Africa will be reported. This means that the actual occurrence of rape is far greater than the numbers reflected by crime statistics. From police reports, less than half of the reported rape cases (47, 6%) were referred to a court after completion of an investigation. Of those cases that were referred to court, only half reached a trial (45,6% were withdrawn and 4,5% were settled out of court). The number of cases that went to court in 1997 was 22 121, but only one fifth (19,8%) resulted in the conviction of the accused (Hirschowitz, Worku & Orkin). From these statistics, it is evident that rape is one of the most prevalent crimes of our society and it has become a serious problem in South Africa.

The phenomenon of rape is multidimensional with various possible theories explaining the origin, nature and determinants of it. It is believed that rape is not caused by a single factor, but rather by the interaction of multiple factors (Nagayama Hall & Hirschman, 1991). Several contributing factors have been identified, including biological and genetic elements, psychological, sociological and economic factors.

Theorists believe that cognitive factors contribute significantly to a person's propensity to engage in sexually aggressive behaviour. These cognitive factors include permissive attitudes towards sexual aggression against women and attitudes that attribute the blame and responsibility for the rape on the victim. Rape myths are significant cognitive factors that determine attitudes towards sexual aggression, rape and the rape victim. Rape myths may be defined as 'attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women' (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 134). One of the functions of rape myths is to justify male sexual aggression and as such, to shift the responsibility for the rape from the perpetrator to the rape victim (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). These permissive attitudes towards rape result in a greater propensity to engage in sexual aggression and thus contribute significantly to the occurrence of rape.

According to Taylor, Peplau and Sears (2000), the existence of rape myths contributes to the incidence of rape in at least three ways. Firstly, the greater acceptance of rape myths by males than by females may indicate a direct contribution of gender towards the inclination to rape. Secondly, an adherence to rape myths is associated with a tolerance towards all violence, traditional gender role stereotypes and a hostility towards women, which are all associated with a greater propensity to rape. Lastly, violence and sexual aggression against women is tolerated by a society that endorses rape myths.

Rape myths not only increase the occurrence of rape; they also have a negative influence on the rape victim's psychological well being and her recovery process. If people with whom the rape victim comes into contact adhere to rape myths, these biased attitudes have a detrimental effect on the recovery of the victim. The rape



myths strengthen the victim's feelings of responsibility and guilt, which in turn prolong and complicate the recovery process. The adherence to rape myths by the victim and her support structure have far-reaching effects on the prognosis for recovery. It is evident that a greater adherence to rape myths will have a detrimental effect on the victim's healing process after the rape (White & Kurpius, 1999).

The adherence to rape myths also influences the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of rape definitions (Burt & Albin, 1981, Hazan & Grobbelaar, 1994). The acceptance of rape myths leads to restrictive rape definitions, which in turn deny the reality of many legitimate rape cases. Restrictive rape definitions imply that less occurrences of sexual aggression will be defined as rape. A person who does not view an act of sexual assault as rape, is less likely to report such a crime and also less likely to seek the necessary medical and professional help. In this way, rape myths may hamper the victim's recovery process. Similarly, if police officers adhere to the rape myths, they are not likely to open an investigation into the rape, which will lead to fewer prosecutions of assailants.

The large discrepancy between the occurrence and the reporting of rapes may be due to the rape survivor's feelings of guilt and shame. These negative emotions may be strengthened by negative attitudes that are held by members of the public towards victims of sexual assault. If the rape victim attributes responsibility for the rape to herself, she is less likely to report the rape for fear of being exposed to additional blaming attitudes from police officers or crisis workers. Thus, the adherence to rape myths may also contribute to the underreporting of rape cases to the police. The comparatively few convictions that are achieved may also serve to deter the reporting of rapes (Van der Merwe, 1995).

According to Sinclair and Bourne (1998), the conviction rate in the United States of America for forcible rape is far below that of other violent crimes. The majority of these assaults go unpunished for various reasons, one being the acceptance of rape myths by court officials. There is no single cause for rape, but one of the contributing factors seems to be the adherence to rape myths. Positive attitudes towards rape perpetuate victimisation of rape survivors and serve to attribute blame and responsibility to the survivors for the act of rape instead of to the rapist.

The acceptance of sexual aggression against women and an adherence to rape myths is evident in a culture that is tolerant of such aggression. Although the incidence of rape in South Africa is high, few studies have been done to assess the degree to which South Africans adhere to rape myths and what factors influence the acceptance of these myths. There is also a substantial lack of cross-cultural research regarding rape myth acceptance.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which university students in South Africa accept rape myths and to improve the understanding of the rape myth construct within the cross-cultural domain of South Africa. By expanding the magnitude of research on rape myths in South Africa, factors that contribute to the development and maintenance of these beliefs may be identified. The prevalence of rape currently in South Africa necessitates greater attempts in decreasing the occurrence of sexual aggression. The findings of this study would be applicable in attempts to reduce the likelihood of participation in sexually aggressive behaviour. In order to create a greater level of understanding towards rape victims, it is necessary to have accurate information regarding the existing attitudes towards sexual violence.

Previous research has highlighted the role of gender in determining rape myth acceptance, indicating that males consistently display greater rape myth acceptance than females. Culture and race also influence attitudes towards rape and rape myths, although there have been inconsistent findings in this regard. The focus of this study is to determine the level of rape myth acceptance among university students from the University of the Free State. The influence of demographic variables such as gender and ethnicity on the acceptance of rape myths will be investigated to determine if these variables are related to differences in attitudes towards the act of rape, the rapist and the victim of rape.

This knowledge is important when developing rape-prevention programmes, rape-education programmes and when training counsellors. It is also imperative to expand societal knowledge and awareness of rape myths and false beliefs towards rape, as

this should lead to a decrease in the victim's feelings of alienation and rejection. A greater understanding of the phenomenon of rape myths should also bring about positive changes towards rape victims in the arenas of law, policing as well as the psychological and medical fields.

### **1.3 DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS**

The following central terms are pertinent to the study and will therefore be defined.

#### **RAPE**

Rape may be defined as the unlawful act of engaging in sexual intercourse with a woman against her will and consent. The consent may be negated by force, fear as a result of threat, intoxication or when the female is incapable of giving consent, whether from a mental deficiency or as a result of being below the legal age of consent (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998). The present study will focus exclusively on the rape of an adult female by a male.

#### **RAPE MYTH**

Rape myths may be defined as beliefs about the act of rape, the rape victim and the rapist that are prejudicial, stereotyped and untrue. These rape myths produce an unsympathetic, antagonistic environment for the rape victim, which serves to justify male sexual aggression against women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

### **1.4 SYNOPSIS OF THE STUDY**

The following chapters of this dissertation will cover the topics as set out in the next section. In **Chapter Two**, an overview of the literature conceptualising attitudes will be given. The chapter will explore the definition of an attitude, the nature and function of an attitude, theories on the formation of an attitude, the relationship between attitudes and behaviour as well as an overview of attitude measurement.

**Chapter Three** will focus on the concept of rape and rape myths. Topics that will be covered in this chapter are the definitions of rape as well as theories of the causes of rape. The chapter will also focus on characteristics of a rapist, the after-effects of rape on the rape victim and various attitudes regarding rape. A literary overview of recent research on rape myths will also be presented.

**Chapter Four** documents the central research question and the methodological approach employed in the present study. The goals and specific hypotheses of the research are also given. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the research participants, as well as the research design, data collection procedures and measuring instruments. The statistical analyses employed in this study will also be clarified.

**Chapter Five** deals with the findings of the research study and also provides an analysis and interpretation of the data.

**Chapter Six** provides a summary of the main research findings and a concluding discussion of the study. Limitations to the present study as well as possible considerations for future research will also be highlighted.

## **CHAPTER 2 – DEFINING ATTITUDES**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the construct attitude will be conceptualised. Attitudes are regarded as cognitive appraisals that influence affect, cognition and behaviour to various topics. The main focus of this study is on the examination of the core cultural beliefs and attitudes towards rape and the rape victim. For this reason, the construct attitude needs to be defined clearly. This discussion will include the definition of an attitude, theories explaining the formation and alteration of attitudes as well as an overview of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour.

### **2.2 THE DEFINITION OF AN ATTITUDE**

There is some disagreement among psychologists regarding the exact definition of an attitude. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that an attitude is not directly observable, but is an abstract construct that can represent both internal and external structures and processes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

An attitude may be defined as ‘an enduring evaluation – positive or negative – of people, objects and ideas’ (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997, p. 229). Another definition of an attitude is ‘a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor’ (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Both of these definitions focus on the duality inherent in attitudes, as both positive and negative opinions may be held towards an attitude object. The cognitive aspect of an attitude is reflected by Smith and Mackie in their conceptualisation of an attitude, namely: ‘a cognitive representation that summarises an individual’s evaluation of a particular person, group, thing, action or idea’ (2000, p. 247). The evaluative nature of an attitude and the fact that an attitude is an abstract concept is evident in all three definitions.

The object of the attitude may be any aspect of one's physical or social circumstances, including objects (food, books), people (dentists, Australians), actions (taking drugs, rape) or abstract ideas (religion, philosophy) (Stroebe, 2000).

According to the Tripartite model, attitudes may encompass affective, behavioural and cognitive components and responses (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997; Brehm & Kassin, 1990). Attitudes may be viewed as the evaluative classification of a stimulus according to affective, behavioural and cognitive information (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). The affective component represents the emotional reaction regarding the attitude object; the cognitive component represents the thoughts and beliefs about the attitude object and the behavioural component represents the observable behaviour towards the attitude object.

Even though there remains some disagreement as to the exact definition of an attitude, several definitions emphasise the evaluative component inherent in attitudes. There is also support for a holistic view of attitudes that include the behavioural, cognitive and affective aspects of an attitude. In the following section, the nature of an attitude will be examined.

### **2.3 THE NATURE OF AN ATTITUDE**

Attitudes are central to our lives; they represent lasting evaluations and representations of things that matter to us. One's evaluation of attitude objects may range between favourable, neutral or unfavourable. This is termed the *direction* of the attitude and an attitude may thus have a positive, neutral or negative direction. The *intensity* of an attitude may also vary considerably and may fluctuate between mild, moderate or extreme (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

The importance of attitudes for social psychologists is two-fold (Baron & Byrne, 1997). Firstly, attitudes exert a strong influence on one's thoughts and interpretations of social information. In **cognitive terms**, an attitude functions as a schema, or framework that organises information and that facilitates the processing of social information. These frameworks determine what information is committed to memory

and what is only fleetingly brought into consciousness. Attitudes also provide quick access to relevant information and associated attitudes by schematically linking information in memory. Secondly, researchers often study attitudes, as it is believed to influence and determine **behaviour**. One's opinion about a topic may lead to clear choices about that topic, which in turn determines the action taken. Thirdly, attitudes are frequently determined and governed by one's **affective** feelings towards the attitude object, which in turn may lead to new cognitive schemas or corresponding behaviour (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

Most attitudes about important aspects are cognitively complex (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). One may hold diverse thoughts and beliefs about an attitude object, some of which may be contradicting. These beliefs may vary in importance and in resistance to persuasion. Although some beliefs may be contradictory, the fundamental attitude is generally stable. Thus, it may be possible to change singular beliefs about the attitude object, but the attitude in its entirety is often difficult to alter.

It is thus apparent that attitudes influence one's **behaviour** towards, **cognition** about as well as **affect** surrounding a variety of topics and have an impact on one's conclusions and assumptions about these topics.

## **2.4 THE FUNCTION OF AN ATTITUDE**

An attitude may represent **cognitive appraisals** and as such, will exert a definite influence on one's cognitive functioning. Similarly, an attitude is associated with a positive or negative **affect** about the attitude object. These influences are most apparent when the available information regarding an attitude object is ambiguous or minimal. The impact of the attitude also changes over time. As time passes, less information will be remembered and more will be inferred from one's attitudes (Wiggins, Wiggins & Van der Zanden, 1994). Another function of an attitude is to guide **behaviour** without too much cognitive effort. This occurs when one performs an automatic behaviour, which is still congruent with one's attitudes. One attitude may serve multiple functions depending on the context of the situation (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

The following are ways in which attitudes influence **cognition, affect** and **behaviour**.

- **KNOWLEDGE FUNCTION**

Attitudes categorise and organise social and situational information into discernible structures of good or bad and favourable or unfavourable (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). Attitudes simplify one's experiences by orientating one towards the important aspects of the attitude object, thus increasing one's efficacy (Smith & Mackie, 2000). By structuring the available information, attitudes simplify a complex amount of information.

- **INFLUENCES THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION**

Attitudes govern how attention will be paid to various sources of information. More attention will be paid to something towards which one holds a favourable attitude. Similarly, less attention will be paid to those attitude objects about which one holds an unfavourable attitude (Wiggins, Wiggins & Van der Zanden, 1994). Attitudes tend to restrict one's focus of attention in such a way that one is more orientated towards information consistent to one's attitudes. Similarly, one's attention is directed away from information that contradicts one's current attitudinal position. Behaviour is also guided by the avoidance of attitude objects about which an unfavourable attitude is held and approaching the attitude objects about which we hold positive attitudes (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

- **NECESSITATES LESS ACTIVE THOUGHT**

If the information from one's environment is consistent with one's attitudes, less time will be spent on active thought about the information (Wiggins, Wiggins & Van der Zanden, 1994). If the environmental information is contradictory to one's attitude, more time will be spent on active processing of the information. The evaluation of a new or familiar object may occur instantaneously, with the formation of attitudes becoming an automatic process (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).



#### ▪ **BIASES INFORMATION PROCESSING**

It is widely postulated that attitudes bias judgements and memory in such a way that they favour attitude-consistent material (Ajzen, 2001). When confronted with new social information, that which is consistent with one's attitudes is more likely to be remembered than information that is contradictory to one's attitudes. Attitudes also function to assist in the recollection of information that corresponds with the relevant attitude (Wiggins, Wiggins & Van der Zanden, 1994).

Attitudes function to bias one's interpretation of information in such a way that information supporting existing attitudes is preferred. This may take place through *assimilation*, where information that is fairly similar to one's current attitude is perceived as an exact confirmation of one's attitude (Smith & Mackie, 2000). The process of *contrast* may also bias information. This takes place when information that is incongruous to one's attitude is perceived as more inconsistent with the attitude than it is in reality. This incongruous information is generally rejected (Ajzen, 2001). Research indicates that well-informed and established attitudes may lead to the distortion of ambiguous information in order to provide further evidence in favour of the original attitude. Exposure to ambiguous information may serve to intensify one's attitude (Smith & Mackie).

#### ▪ **SOCIAL IDENTITY FUNCTION**

Social relationships are maintained by adhering to similar views as those of one's peers or views that are regarded in a favourable light. Attitudes govern emotional responses, especially regarding interpersonal encounters. Emotional reactions are at the forefront of attitude expression through attraction, self-esteem and prejudice (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

Attitudes are central to one's everyday life, which then influence various aspects of behaviour, cognition and affect. It is thus apparent that the construct of attitude functions as an important mediating link between the social information perceived from the environment and the responses towards such information. Theories on attitude development and change will be the focus of the following section.

## **2.5 THEORIES ON ATTITUDE FORMATION AND CHANGE**

The theories on attitude formation and change will be discussed with regard to three central processes, namely biological, psychological and social processes. These three spheres encompass all aspects related to attitudes and will form the basis of this discussion. Each theory will be discussed in terms of its focus on attitude formation and change. Relevant limitations and strengths of each theory will also be highlighted.

### **2.5.1 BIOLOGICAL PROCESSES**

#### **2.5.1.1 Genetic factors**

##### **– Attitude formation**

Though genetic predisposition was until recently not considered to be a primary determinant of one's attitudes, there is a growing body of evidence that supports the potentiality of genetic factors in determining one's attitudes.

The most convincing evidence for a genetic influence on attitudes comes from twin studies, where variance in attitudes is associated with variance in genetic make-up (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). Monozygotic and dizygotic twins are most often used in studies that aim to examine genetic predisposition. The rationale for this method is the fact that monozygotic twins share identical genetic make-up and dizygotic twins do not. Greater correlations between monozygotic twins indicate the probability of a genetic predisposition. Research studies have found the existence of higher correlations between the attitudes of monozygotic twins than that of dizygotic twins (Baron & Byrne, 1997).

In attempting to control environmental factors that may influence results, recent studies have focussed on twins who were separated early in life. The results still confirm a greater correlation between the attitudes of monozygotic twins than those of dizygotic twins or unrelated people. Studies have identified a significant genetic component to the complex attitude of job satisfaction (Arvey, Bouchard, Segal &

Abraham, 1989; Bouchard, Arvey, Keller & Segal, 1992). Genetic influences on other basic attitudes have also been discovered, such as religiosity, music and social aspects such as capital punishment (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

As one's genetic make-up is permanent and unchangeable, there is no known direct influence of genetic predisposition on attitude change. Certain personality characteristics that are genetically acquired may, however, influence attitude change, but this possibility has not been researched thoroughly. It is also important to note that if an attitude is influenced by heredity, the influence is not exclusive or unaffected to modification of other factors (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

– **Evaluation of the genetic factors**

One of the limitations of this viewpoint is the fact that only genetic factors are taken into account and no mention is made of environmental factors or personal choice in the formation of attitudes. The utilisation of this theory is also limited to attitude formation and does not contribute to our understanding of attitude change. Social influences on attitude formation and change cannot be disregarded. As such, a combined theory of genetic and social influences on attitude formation and change needs to be developed (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

The value of this theory is the contribution it makes towards the understanding of individual genetic structure. It is thus apparent that one's attitudes may be determined by more lasting processes than behaviour and cognition and that genetic make-up may play a significant role in the formation of attitudes.

## **2.5.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES**

### **2.5.2.1 Tripartite model**

– **Attitude formation**

The tripartite model of attitudes poses that the three components of an attitude, namely the cognitive, affective and behavioural components may not be of equal importance in the formation of the attitude (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997). When

the attitude is predominantly based on factual knowledge of the attitude object, it is described as a *cognitively based attitude*. The beliefs surrounding the properties of the attitude object function to weigh the positive and negative aspects of the object.

An *affectively based attitude* is primarily based on emotions and values that the attitude object elicits. This type of attitude may develop as a result of a person's religious and moral beliefs (e.g. attitude towards abortion), an aesthetic reaction (e.g. attitude towards a sculpture) or a sensory reaction (e.g. attitude towards a type of food) (Chaiken & Eagly, 1993). Affectively based attitudes share three characteristics (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997):

- 1) The attitude is not the result of a rational evaluation of the factual merits.
- 2) The attitude is not governed by logic (persuasion often fails to change the attitude).
- 3) The attitude is often associated with the person's values; thus trying to alter the attitude directly challenges the values.

Cognitions and affect surrounding an attitude object may have opposite valences and in such cases, the affective evaluation of the object usually takes precedence (Ajzen, 2001). It was also found that individuals differ in their tendency to base their attitudes on cognition or affect. Attitudes of those individuals who were classified as 'thinkers' were predicted by their beliefs about the attitude objects. The attitudes of individuals classified as 'feelers' could be predicted by their affect surrounding the attitude object (Ajzen).

A *behaviourally based attitude* is based on observations of one's own behaviour towards the attitude object. One's attitude towards a topic may only become clear when an action is taken; from which a behaviourally based attitude may be inferred (Aronson, Wilson & Akert, 1997). These attitudes are usually ambiguous and susceptible to attitude change strategies.

– **Evaluation of the tripartite model of attitudes**

The tripartite model stresses the inclusion of all three modalities of attitude functioning in the development of attitudes. The fact that the influence of external factors in the development of attitudes is excluded, is one of the shortcomings of this view. The three modalities are not necessarily separable from one another and do not represent independent factors at all times (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Even though this view cannot account for the development of all attitudes, the inclusion of affective, cognitive and behavioural processes certainly highlights the need for a holistic view of attitudes.

### **2.5.2.2 Cognitive consistency theories**

The core principle of the cognitive consistency theories is that people seek to maintain and re-establish consistency among cognitive elements. Both the balance theory and the cognitive dissonance theories are cognitive consistency theories that focus primarily on the clarification of attitude change.

#### **2.5.2.2.1 Balance theory**

Heider developed one of the earliest examples of a cognitive consistency theory to explain the occurrence of attitudes (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). He proposed that people naturally organise their preferences and dislikes in a symmetrical way. This particularly came to the fore when dealing with more than one person and a specific attitude. The relationship between the three was explained according to the balance theory. There are three aspects to the relationship to consider, namely: 1) The two people's evaluation of each other; 2) The first person's evaluation of the attitude object and 3) The second person's evaluation of the attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

In a balanced relationship (or system), one would expect to hold views similar to those of people one liked and dissimilar attitudes to those one disliked. This balance leads to a harmonious, coherent and meaningful perception of the relationship. Imbalance is defined as the unpleasant emotional state which occurs when two people

like one another, but hold conflicting attitudes or when two people dislike each other, but hold similar views about an attitude object (Baron & Byrne, 1997). The negative feelings created by this imbalance leads to pressure to restore the balance. This may be achieved by changing one's attitudes, by convincing the other person to change his or her view, by minimising the disagreement or by deciding to dislike the other person. The balance theory predicts that the direction of change will take place by means of the least effort principle, thus by changing as few relationships as possible to restore the balance (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

An example of the implementation of this theory is the positive attitudes that are associated with a product when it is endorsed by a celebrity, for example soft drinks that are endorsed by a popular singer (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). The balance theory has also been implemented in the explanation of consumer behaviour and quality control in the service sector (Carson & Carson, 1997; Woodside & Chebat, 2001).

– **Evaluation of the balance theory**

The balance theory provides a simplistic way of conceptualising attitudes and points out that there are always many different ways of resolving the inconsistencies within a relationship. Critics of this theory have labelled it as being an out-dated theory that is no longer viable with the current understanding of schemas that govern the information processing of attitudes. This is somewhat unjustified, as there has been a renewed interest in this theory many years after its conception. It has inspired numerous areas of research in the field of attitude change. Another distinct characteristic of this theory is the fact that it illustrates how one's attitudes towards issues and attitudes towards people are related in the perceiver's mind (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

#### 2.5.2.2.2 Cognitive dissonance theory

The cognitive dissonance theory proposed by Festinger, focuses primarily on the inconsistencies between one's attitude and behaviour and how this results in attitude change (Festinger, 1957; Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). This theory is similar to the preceding balance theory as to how dissonance in a relationship is established, and it provides possible hypotheses to how these imbalances may be resolved.

The theory is based on the assumption that each person strives for **consonance**, defined as 'a psychological state in which a person's cognitions, attitudes and behaviours are compatible with one another' (Brehm & Kassin, 1990, p. 471). Dissonance, on the other hand, can be defined as an 'internal state that results when individuals notice inconsistency between two or more of their attitudes or between their attitudes and their behaviour' (Baron & Byrne, 1997, p. 138). Dissonance creates psychological tension, which functions as a motivational force to reduce this imbalance and restore consonance. The importance of the attitude objects and the behaviour in question will determine the magnitude of the dissonance experienced (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Festinger, 1957). Thus, the greater the value and importance of the attitude(s) and behaviour, the greater the resulting dissonance, and the greater the pressure to relieve this dissonance.

All occurrences of cognitive dissonance do not result, however, in attitude change. There are four factors that must be present for behaviour to result in dissonance, in order to bring about attitude change, namely (Brehm & Kassin, 1990; Smith & Mackie, 2000):

1. The action must be perceived to be inconsistent with the attitude and the behaviour must produce unwanted negative consequences.
2. The individual must take responsibility for the action in question. Two factors play a part in the acceptance of responsibility, namely freedom of choice and foreseeable consequences. The person must believe that his behaviour was voluntary. When the person feels that his behaviour was not out of personal choice, no dissonance will be experienced. The person must also believe that the

negative consequences were foreseeable at the time of action. If the consequences could not have been predicted, no dissonance will result.

3. Psychological arousal must be experienced. This state of tension functions as the motivation to relieve cognitive dissonance. If a person's ability to experience arousal is inhibited (e.g. when tranquillised or under the influence of a substance), no dissonance will be experienced.
4. The arousal must be attributed to the action. If the arousal is attributed to other external influences, dissonance will not occur.

Cognitive dissonance will only be experienced when all four above-mentioned factors are in place. The result of dissonance is an unpleasant emotional state which functions as a motivational force to relieve the cognitive dissonance.

The following are ways to reduce such dissonance (Brehm & Kassin, 1990; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Festinger, 1957):

- Changing one's attitude
- Altering one's behaviour (this may prove difficult or impossible in various instances)
- Changing one's environment to justify the behaviour (in most cases this mode of reducing dissonance is not feasible or impossible)
- Changing one's perception of the behaviour, thus downplaying the significance of the behaviour in question
- Adding additional information that supports either the attitude or the behaviour that created the dissonance
- Minimising the significance of the internal conflict
- Reducing one's perceived choice in the given situation.

When deciding which of these dissonance-reducing methods are to be implemented, the one requiring the least effort will likely be chosen. Festinger proposed that in order to reduce the discomfort of cognitive dissonance, attitude change may occur (Smith & Mackie, 2000). The cognitive element is generally the easiest and most open method of change, thus resulting in an altered attitude. The occurrence of



dissonance not only motivates one to reduce the dissonance, but also guides one's attention in such a way that information that may increase said dissonance, is also avoided.

The phenomenon of cognitive dissonance remains a popular research topic. Culture appears to have a determining effect on the tolerance of the experiencing of the discomfort of cognitive dissonance. Iwao (1997) found that Japanese people are more tolerant of the inconsistencies of dissonance than people from Western cultures. Ruiz and Tanaka (2001) found that cognitive dissonance exerts a definite influence on one's willingness to engage helping behaviours.

– **Evaluation of the cognitive dissonance theory**

The cognitive dissonance theory is similar to the balance theory, in that it provides methods of conceptualising the conflicts between differing attitudes and between attitudes and behaviour as well as providing ways of resolving this conflict. The theory may seem simplistic, but it has far-reaching consequences in understanding attitude change in a range of everyday situations. The cognitive dissonance theory is in fact regarded as one of the most influential theories in social psychology (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). A shortcoming of this theory could be the fact that there is a strong focus on the cognitive elements of an attitude and the affective component is only taken into account as a negative side effect. Critics have also identified the fact that specific conditions must be met for counter-attitudinal behaviour to result in attitude change as a limitation of this theory. However, this theory is valuable for its relevance in explaining the inconsistencies between attitude and behaviour in a variety of attitude settings.

### 2.5.2.3 Self-perception theory

#### – Attitude formation

Darryl Bem developed the self-perception theory after the theory of cognitive dissonance originated and casts another view on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. The underlying assumption to this theory is that people have little knowledge or awareness regarding their attitudes (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). Also, that people rely on observation of their behaviour to ascertain their attitudes. Thus, attitudes are inferred from observing one's own behaviour as well as observing the situation in which the behaviour occurs (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

An example of the self-perception theory in practice may be as follows: One may choose one brand of chocolate from several brands. If someone asks the attitude surrounding that particular brand of chocolate, the following cognitions may occur: 'I chose this brand freely from a wide selection of chocolates, I must like this brand'. The inference will be made that as no one forced the selection, there must be a positive attitude that guided the choice (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

The self-perception theory consequently differs from the traditional view of the nature and origin of an attitude. An attitude was initially viewed as an enduring predisposition. The self-perception theory poses that expressions of attitudes are casual statements. This theory also credits the observation of one's own behaviour with the origin of attitudes. The technique of making people aware of their actions with the intent to establish favourable attitudes have become a frequently-used technique in the field of advertising (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

It has also been proposed that an effective therapist should implement the principles of self-perception theory in heightening the client's self-awareness (Robak, 2001). The therapist should make the person aware of his behaviour as well as the circumstances in which it occurs. Through facilitation by the therapist, the patient is then able to create accurate deductions of his attitudes about himself through reflection and self-perception.

– **Attitude change**

The self-perception theory poses that attitude change does not occur as a means to reduce an unpleasant state of arousal. A person is more likely to change his attitudes when the behaviour at hand is not compatible with a known attitude or the circumstances under which the behaviour occurred, justify an alteration of a known attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Both the self-perception and cognitive dissonance theories have found endorsement from research studies, even though they seem to contradict one another. It is now considered that when a person has had little contact with the attitude object or when it involves a vague, unimportant or new situation, the attitude is generally inferred from self-perception of one's behaviour. When confronted with a more controversial, captivating and enduring situation, dissonance theory is more likely to be at work (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

Another belief is that the self-perception theory accounts better for the effects of attitude-congruent behaviour and that the cognitive dissonance theory accounts better for the effects of attitude-discrepant behaviour (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

– **Evaluation of the self-perception theory**

Research has confirmed that Bem was mistaken in his claim that dissonance between attitude and behaviour does not result in a negative state of arousal. This theory may also lead to the trivialisation of attitudes as mere afterthoughts to behaviour. The self-perception theory has more value as a theory for attitude formation than one for attitude change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). The value of this theory is the fact that it is an innovative theory that posed a challenge to the cognitive dissonance theory.

#### 2.5.2.4 Expectancy-value theory

##### – Formation of attitudes

According to the expectancy-value theory, people choose the most suited attitude by weighing the positive and negative aspects of an attitude position. Attitudes are thus viewed as the function of the expected values and attributes that are assigned to the attitude object (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

It is assumed that people play active, rational parts in establishing their attitudes on the basis of the costs and benefits from a particular attitude position. The (1) magnitude of the positive result as well as the (2) likelihood of its occurrence, are taken into account when making this choice. It is posed that attitudes that may lead to a desired result will be adopted and those that may lead to negative outcomes will be rejected (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

The determining assumption underlying the expectancy-value theory is that: ‘people maximise the subjective utility of the various expected outcomes’ (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000, p. 145).

The two factors that jointly determine the choice of attitude are:

- (a) The *Value* or benefit of the particular result
- (b) The *Expectancy* or likelihood that this position will result in the desired outcome.

##### – Attitude change

To induce an attitude change, exposure to messages that change the underlying beliefs need to be present. The change in beliefs must occur in the subjective probability of the attribute (expectancy), the evaluation of the attribute (value), or both. The altered factors will equate to a different function and thus a different attitude position.

– **Evaluation of the expectancy-value theory**

The expectancy-value theory is particularly valuable when examining attitudes in conflicting circumstances. By using this theory, the choice of attitude position in ambiguous situations may be predicted. The hypothesis is that the position of choice will be the one that maximises the desired outcomes. One of the limitations to this theory is the fact that it functions primarily in terms of probabilities whereas contextual variables are often not taken into account. Critics also note the lack of a substantial hypothesis to explain attitude change as a shortcoming of this theory (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

### **2.5.3 SOCIAL PROCESSES**

#### **2.5.3.1 Social learning theory**

The social learning theory poses that attitudes are acquired in the same manner as habits, from interactions with or observation of other people and by associating feelings and values to different attitude objects (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

– **Attitude formation**

Attitudes may be learned through social learning processes such as direct reinforcement, punishment or acquired through imitation. The different methods of social learning will be discussed as follows.

▪ **Classical conditioning**

Behavioural theorists have identified the phenomenon of **classical conditioning**, whereby association becomes the method for attitude formation (Deaux, Dane, Wrightsman & Sigelman, 1993). When one stimulus is regularly followed by another, the first stimulus may become a signal for the second. In time, when the first stimulus is given, a person will come to expect the second to follow. The person may gradually start to acquire a similar reaction to the first stimulus as they have to the second. If the first stimulus (which elicits an emotional response) is repeatedly

experienced alongside a negative stimulus, the neutral stimulus will begin to evoke a similar negative emotional response (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

Studies show that when neutral words are repeatedly paired with stimuli that elicit a strong negative response, such as an electric shock, the neutral words acquire the capacity to evoke the same negative response (Baron & Byrne, 1997). Similarly, when neutral items were associated with stimuli that elicit a positive response, positive attitudes are formed towards the once neutral items. The process may occur with awareness of the pairing of stimuli, thus explicitly as well as implicitly, where awareness of the process is not present (Olson & Fazio, 2001). Therefore, repeated association with stimuli that evoke positive or negative responses may lead to the formation of attitudes.

- **Operant or Instrumental conditioning**

The process whereby attitudes are formed through reward or punishment is known as **operant** or **instrumental conditioning**. This states that the intensity or frequency of a chosen attitude may be increased or decreased, depending on the reaction with which it was followed (Deaux, Dane, Wrightsman & Sigelman, 1993). A person may choose to increase the expression of a certain attitude after it was initially followed by a favourable reaction (positive reinforcement). Similarly, the likelihood of expressing an attitude that was followed by a negative reaction (punishment) will decrease. The operant conditioning principle is associated with the social identity function of attitudes, where a particular attitude is held in order to be associated with a desired group (Bohner & Wänke, 2002).

- **Modeling**

**Modeling** occurs through observation and imitation of another person's behaviour and attitudes (Baron & Byrne, 1997). The first attitudes that one forms probably originate from one's parents. A child is likely to imitate his parents' attitude before being able to generate his own opinion, for example in choosing a political stance (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). Another example of modeling is seen in adolescents who follow their peer group's choices in clothing, music and hairstyle choices. A person is

more likely to imitate someone's attitude or behaviour who is important or whose opinion is valued (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

The three processes discussed are also applicable when considering attitude change. Conditioning or modeling may alter one's evaluative opinion of an attitude object as well as the frequency with which the attitude is expressed.

– **Evaluation of the social learning theory**

The social learning theory views the acquisition of attitudes as a passive process, whereby the person is exposed to stimuli, after which the attitude is attained by means of learning through association, reinforcement or imitation. Unlike theories that focus on the individual's active involvement in attitude acquisition, the social learning theory portrays the attitude holder as a passive bystander. Even though the social learning theory is not a recently developed theory, its principles are still applicable to the current understanding of learning phenomena (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

**2.5.3.2 Social comparison theory**

– **Attitude formation**

Attitudes may be acquired through social comparison, a process that seeks to verify opinions and perceptions. This process helps one to determine the accuracy of one's own social reality by comparing one's attitudes with those of others (Baron & Byrne, 1997). If one's attitude is shared by someone who is respected and admired, the attitude becomes confirmed and thus accepted to be correct.

The principle of social comparison has been specified in the explanation of eating disorders. Comparison to more attractive individuals increases the risk of body dissatisfaction as well as the development of eating disturbances, especially in females (Heinberg & Thompson, 1992). Social comparison between sisters was also found to predict dissatisfaction with one's appearance as well as negative attitudes about oneself (Tsiantas & King, 2001).

– **Attitude change**

The process of social comparison may bring about frequent attitude changes in order to maintain views that are similar to those of others. Attitudes may also be established by means of social comparison. Studies show that attitudes that were expressed by respected peers often lead to the formation of similar attitudes. This holds true, even if the person is without prior knowledge or information of the attitude object.

– **Evaluation of the social comparison theory**

This theory is an uncomplicated explanation of the social determinants of attitude formation and change. However, by only focussing on social processes and neglecting psychological and biological processes, the generalisability of this theory to all attitudinal spheres is compromised. The social comparison theory highlights the fact that one's need for acceptance even influences one's attitudes. Thus, the mechanism of social comparison may lead to the formation or alteration of attitudes as a result of social information, combined with a wish to hold similar views to that of respected others (Baron & Byrne, 1997).

### **2.5.3.3 The influence of cultural differences in attitude functioning**

The effect of cultural factors is important when considering the social processes that govern attitude functioning. In examining the social and cultural aspects of attitudes, two central aspects come to the fore, namely *individualism* and *collectivism* (Smith & Mackie, 2000; Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). Individualistic cultures such as Northern American cultures, are those that emphasise independence and place less significance on group interest. These types of cultures respond more favourably to persuasion that appeal to individual benefits, personal success and independence.



Interdependent or collectivist cultures such as the Japanese culture place a higher premium on group harmony and a sense of belonging. The advertising slogans in collectivist cultures are more successful when emphasising group benefits, interpersonal harmony and familial integrity.

## **Conclusion**

In this section, various theories on the development and change of attitudes were examined by focussing on the biological, psychological and social processes involved. From this discussion, it is clear that the construct of attitudes may be influenced by many factors in various situations according to specific conditions. Although each of these theories adds significant value to the understanding of attitudes, a comprehensive model encompassing all three processes is still lacking.

## **2.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR**

The purpose of studying attitudes is mainly to predict behaviour. The relationship between attitudes and behaviour is, however, not uncomplicated and linear. In essence, this relationship is concerned with the correlation between one's private word and public deed (Myers, 1993). It is generally assumed that one's personal beliefs and views determine one's public behaviour. If this were always the case, alteration of one's behaviour would then result from changing one's beliefs and attitudes.

One of the earliest experiments to focus on the relationship between attitudes and behaviour by LaPiere demonstrated this inconsistency (Myers, 1993; Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). At a time when racial discrimination against people of Asian origin in the United States of America was commonplace, LaPiere requested service to a Chinese couple from various restaurants and hotels. Only one establishment indicated a willingness to serve the couple. However, when travelling the country with the couple six months prior to the request, they received courteous treatment at all but one of the establishments (Myers). LaPiere concluded that when confronted with a situation, people readily act inconsistently with their attitudes. The Chinese couple

differed from the establishments' prejudiced ideas and this led the establishments to act contradictory to their attitudes (Taylor, Peplau & Sears). Although various aspects were criticised, the study does highlight the fact that the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is often complex and that external influences should always be kept in mind.

External influences may govern both attitudes as well as behaviour, which often lead to a weakened relationship between one's attitude and one's behaviour. External pressures may even influence one to act contradictory to one's beliefs. This complex relationship may be explained schematically by Figure 2.1.

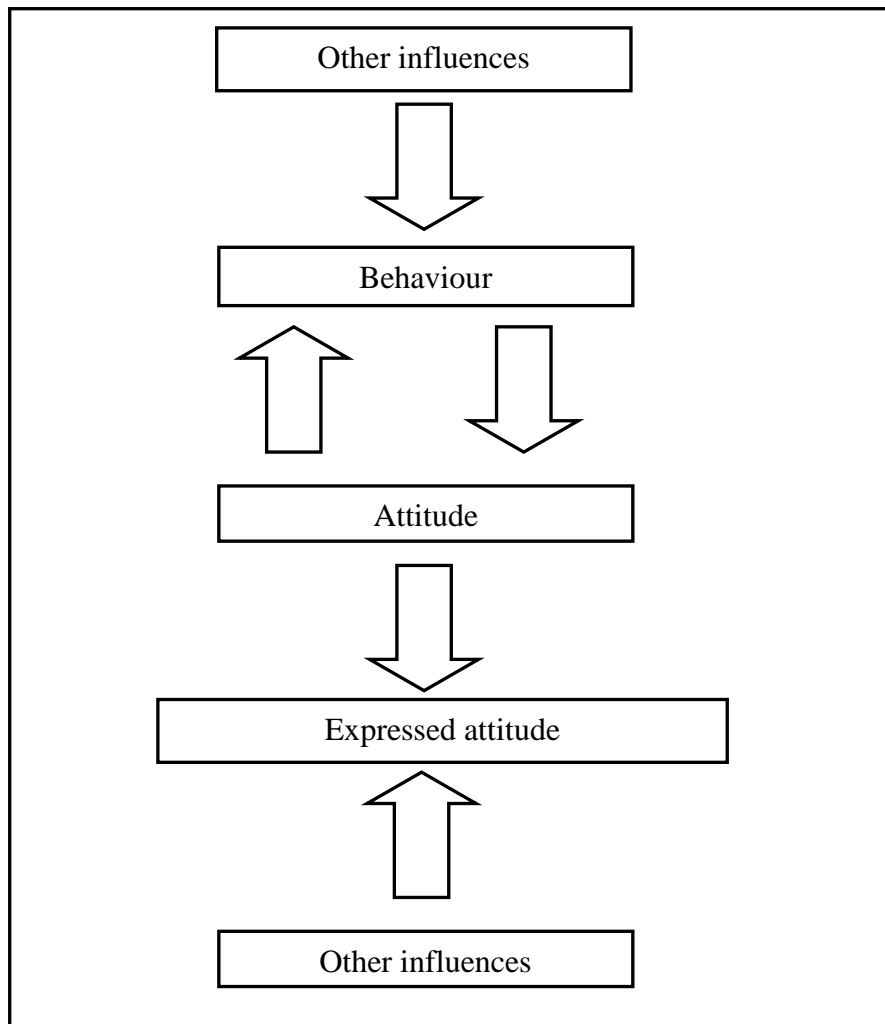
Moderator variables that govern the consistency with which attitudes influence behaviour will be discussed in the following section. Two theories of attitude-behaviour consistency, namely the reasoned action model and the theory of planned behaviour will then be reviewed.

### **2.6.1 MODERATORS OF ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR CONSISTENCY**

Specific conditions have been identified that increase the predictive strength of attitudes on behaviour. These conditions will be discussed as follows.

- **MINIMISING EXTERNAL INFLUENCES**

The effects of external factors that influence both attitudes and behaviour are seen in Figure 2.1. Social pressure to conform is one of the prime examples of an external factor that may influence one's behaviour or expression of an attitude. In order to strengthen the attitude-behaviour relationship, the influence of external factors should be restricted to a minimum. Examining behaviour over a long period, rather than focussing on isolated events is one way of minimising external influences (Myers, 1993).



**Figure 2.1 The relationship between expressed attitudes and behaviour**

(Myers, 1993, p. 115)

- **COMPATIBLE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR**

Almost all issues have several related attitude possibilities and one person is likely to hold more than one attitude about each issue. The assessable relationship between attitudes and behaviour is weak when the measured attitude is general and the observed behaviour is specific. If the measured attitudes are specifically related to the situation, it is a more potent predictor of behaviour (Myers, 1993; Smith & Mackie, 2000). It was also found that attitude-behaviour consistency was only produced when the attitude-object and the target of behaviour are the same (Ajzen, 1996). When the

attitude is a typical stereotype and the target of behaviour does not correspond with the stereotype, the attitude will not exert a significant predictive power on the behaviour.

#### ▪ ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ATTITUDE

For an attitude to exert a significant effect on behaviour, the relevant attitude should come to mind when confronted with stimuli to the attitude object (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

Accessibility of an attitude may be increased in three ways:

– Deliberately making the attitude accessible:

The effect of an attitude on behaviour increases if the attitude is brought to mind deliberately by thinking about the applicable attitude. If, however, other irrelevant attitudes about the attitude object in question are triggered by the situation, the link between attitudes and behaviour is weakened. A highly accessible attitude is one that is automatically activated when confronted with a stimulus to the attitude object (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

– Increasing self-awareness

The accessibility of one's attitudes increases when making a person feel more self-conscious, which in turn strengthens the attitude-behaviour correlation (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). One example of this is shopping areas with a great number of mirrors and windows. This is an attempt to reduce theft by increasing people's self-awareness in order to bring their attitudes to mind.

– Increasing the frequency of attitude expression

The frequency with which attitudes are employed also determines their potency. The more opportunity one has to express one's attitude, the more accessible the attitude

becomes to memory and the greater the influence on behaviour (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). Attitudes that are frequently expressed, reflected upon or activated by interaction and direct experience are stronger than attitudes that are less well established and seldom used. Recurrent use strengthens the relation between attitudes and behaviour and increases the accessibility of the attitude. Well-established attitudes will more likely lead to attitude consistent behaviour than those attitudes that are less frequently employed (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

- **ATTITUDE STRENGTH**

When an attitude is strong, it possesses a number of qualities, namely it is relatively stable over time, resistant to persuasion, and may predict manifest behaviour (Ajzen, 2001). An attitude's strength may be increased by increasing the personal relevance of the information on which the attitude is based. Strong attitudes are associated with high attitude-behaviour consistency. Similarly, weak and ambiguous attitudes are associated with inconsistencies between attitudes and behaviour (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000)

- **STABILITY OF THE ATTITUDE**

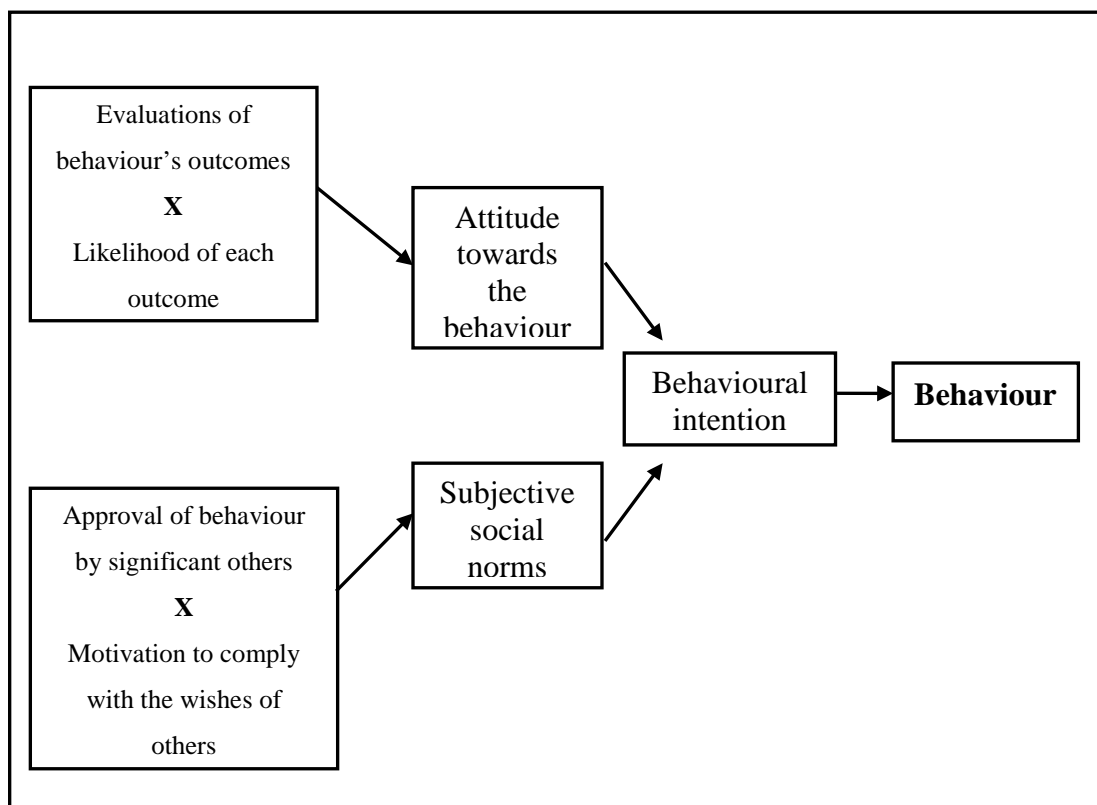
A clear, stable attitude is more likely to be a reliable predictor of behaviour than an unstable attitude. Stable attitudes are generally formed through direct experiences, rather than information from external sources. They are often linked with a high degree of information on the attitude object and reflect fundamental values and self-interest (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). These attitudes are more resistant to persuasion and will provide more reliable predictions of behaviour.

These conditions lead to a greater consistency between attitudes and behaviour. Attitudes play a significant role in determining behaviour and two models have been developed to clarify the attitude-behaviour relationship.

## 2.6.2 THE REASONED ACTION MODEL

In an attempt to explain the relationship between attitudes and behaviour, Fishbein and Ajzen developed the reasoned action model (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). This model attempts to identify the factors that influence the consistency with which attitudes determine behaviour.

The underlying assumption of the model is that behaviour is largely determined by a conscious intention. Behavioural intention, in turn, is determined by evaluating the potential effects of the actions as well as the responses from others. Knowledge of a person's intentions leads to a greater chance of predicting behaviour. Intentions facilitate the translation of attitudes to behaviour, by making one aware of all previous knowledge of behaviour (Smith & Mackie, 2000). The reasoned action model is illustrated in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2** The reasoned action model

(Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000, p. 167)

The reasoned action model poses that behaviour can be predicted more accurately when the behavioural intention is known. Behaviour is considered to be a function of one's intention to engage in the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Stroebe, 2000). These intentions originate from two sources, namely from one's attitude towards the behaviour as well as subjective social norms.

The attitude towards the behaviour in question is predicted by means of the expectancy-value framework. Using this theory, the value of the outcome is weighed against the likelihood of its occurrence. The subjective social norms represent one's idea of how respected others expect one to behave (Stroebe, 2000; Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). This determinant consists of two components, namely the approval of behaviour by significant others along with the willingness to comply with the wishes and expectations of others.

– **Evaluation of the reasoned action model**

The value of the reasoned action model is the fact that it may be used when considering a wide range of behaviours by implementing these constant variables. It is also successful in predicting various different behaviours. A criticism to the model is the fact that one's intention and behaviours are affected by external factors that are not considered in this model. Possible factors that should be taken into account when examining attitudes and behaviour are perceived moral obligation, self-identity and habits (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Behaviour is generally dependent on one's motivation as well as whether it is under the volitional control of the individual. Most behaviours are at least partially subject to factors other than volitional control, such as external factors determining the availability of resources (Stroebe, 2000).

### **2.6.3 THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR**

The theory of planned behaviour developed as a result of the criticisms raised surrounding the reasoned action model. An additional predictive variable, namely *Perceived control over outcomes*, was added (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). The additional factor may be assessed by direct measures or by determining a person's

beliefs surrounding personal control. Perceived behavioural control may influence behavioural intention or under certain circumstances, influence behaviour directly. This occurs when there is an actual lack of control (instead of a perceived lack of control) over behaviour. According to the theory of planned behaviour, people act in accordance with their intentions and perceptions of control over the behaviour, while intentions in turn are influenced by attitudes towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceptions of behavioural control (Ajzen, 2001).

Internal or external factors may determine the perceived behavioural control (Stroebe, 2000). Internal factors include ability, skill, information and compulsions. These internal factors may be collectively termed as will power. Factors that determine perceived control externally are opportunity and dependence on others.

It was found that the additional predictive variable proved to increase the model's ability to predict intention and behaviour. The model is especially useful when the behaviour in question poses problems with regard to control, for example the cessation of smoking or drinking (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

– **Evaluation of the theory of planned behaviour**

This revised model helps to clarify the understanding of behaviour as well as the attitudes that determine behaviour. As was raised earlier, the relation between attitudes and behaviour is not linear or simplex; there are various other factors that influence the relationship, which were incorporated into this model. The fact that only one new variable was introduced in this theory places some doubts as to the extent to which this theory provides a sufficient model of behaviour. Several factors that were omitted from this theory's predecessor, such as perceived moral obligation have still not been incorporated (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Some critics also note the lack of explanation for the process of planning behaviour as a limitation to this theory (Bohner & Wänke, 2002). Although the theory of planned behaviour may not encompass all influences on behaviour and attitudes, it is still a valuable theory in broadening the understanding of the relationship between attitudes and behaviour.



## **Conclusion**

The complex relationship between attitudes and behaviour was examined in the preceding section. The various factors that moderate the consistency with which attitudes predict behaviour was discussed, which include external influences, the compatibility of the attitude and the behaviour as well as the accessibility, strength and stability of the attitude. Two theories on the attitude-behaviour relationship was discussed, namely the reasoned action model and the theory of planned behaviour. The following section will briefly outline the measurement of attitudes.

### **2.7 MEASUREMENT OF ATTITUDES**

An attitude is an evaluative opinion and most standardised attitude scaling techniques measure a person's opinion on an evaluative continuum. The difficulty in measuring attitudes arises from the fact that it is a hypothetical construct that cannot be directly observed, but only inferred from measurable reactions to the attitudinal object. Through specifying response choices, one can then infer the respondent's attitude from his reaction to the request. The measurements of attitudes are thus concerned with measuring the expression of a person's views and beliefs. These expressions are greatly influenced by external factors and consequently do not predict behaviour perfectly.

Self-report questionnaires are of the most frequently used techniques for measuring attitudes. As attitudes often consist of various facets and are influenced by several factors, multiple-item attitude scales are most often employed (Brehm & Kassin, 1990). An attitude scale consists of a series of questions that provide reliable information about the *intensity* and *direction* of a person's attitudes. The respondents usually choose from options that range from extremely negative, through a neutral point to an extremely positive evaluation (Smith & Mackie, 2000).

One of the concerns surrounding this type of measurement, is the existence of one's social identity. If one feels that one's attitude may be received negatively, one's attitude may be distorted when it is expressed (Myers, 1993). Thus, external

influences may negatively influence the expression of attitudes, which in effect weakens the link between attitudes and behaviour.

The attitude objects that will be examined in this study are various aspects of rape, including attitudes towards the act of rape, the rape victim and the rapist. A multiple-item attitude scale will be administered and the respondents' attitudes will be inferred from their responses.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the focus was on the conceptualisation of attitudes, highlighting definitions of an attitude as well as the nature and the function of attitudes. Various theories explaining the formation and alteration of attitudes were reviewed, particularly with regard to the biological, psychological and sociological processes that underlie each of these theories. The relationship between attitudes and behaviour was also discussed, focussing on moderators that influence attitude-behaviour consistency as well as two models that clarify the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Finally, a brief review of the assessment of attitudes was given. This study focuses on attitudes and beliefs surrounding rape, rapists and victims of rape. The construct attitude was outlined in this chapter and the subsequent chapter will focus on conceptualising rape and beliefs surrounding rape.

## **CHAPTER 3 – THE CONCEPT OF RAPE**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The second central theme of this study is rape and rape myths. The concept of rape will be defined from a psychological and a legal perspective. Various theories on the causes of rape will be discussed and characteristics that are associated with rapists will also be examined. The discussion will also highlight the aftermath of rape as well as attitudes that are held regarding rape, rape victims and rapists. Finally, a review of recent research on rape myths will be discussed.

### **3.2 DEFINING RAPE**

The word **rape** originates from the Latin word '*rapere*', which means to seize or to take by force (Reader's Digest, 1998). It is only in the late sixteenth century that the word rape was used in reference to forced sexual assault (Vega, 2001).

The various definitions of rape fall on a continuum, which may range from very general to very specific (Burt & Albin, 1981). Radical feminists at the inclusive extreme of the spectrum believe that any sex that is coerced is rape. The coercion may be in the form of physical force, psychological pressure or economic demands. On the restrictive end of the spectrum, a person may believe that rape does not exist. The opinion of the general public falls somewhere in between these two extremes. Koss and Gidycz (1985) suggest a dimensional view of sexual aggression that places rape at the extreme end of a continuum of sexual behaviour.

Even after decades of research on rape, it is still not viewed as a symptom of a psychological dysfunction. The American Psychological Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) and the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) list other forms of sexual deviation such as fetishisms, but rape is not recognised in a similar manner (American Psychiatric Association, 1994; World Health Organization, 1992).

Koss, Gidycz and Wisniewski (1987) classify sexual aggression according to the degree of aggression that was involved. *Rape or attempted rape* is defined according to the legal definition of rape. *Sexual coercion* occurs when a person engaged in sexual intercourse after the use of verbal pressure or the misuse of authority, but no threats of physical violence or physical force was used. *Sexual contact* refers to sexual behaviour without the introduction of any verbal pressure, threats of violence, misuses of authority or direct physical violence.

According to Groth (1979), there are three ways of gaining sexual access to another individual, namely through consent (negotiation), through pressure (exploitation) or through force (intimidation). When both parties freely participate in a sexual encounter as a result of mutual interest and negotiation, it is viewed as *consensual* sex. In a non-consenting, *pressurised* encounter, an unwilling individual is pressured into the sexual activity by a person in power or dominance. The unwilling individual's vulnerability is exploited in such a way that refusal will lead to serious social, economic or vocational consequences. In a *forced* assault, which is defined as rape, the unwilling individual's safety is jeopardised, as there is the risk of injury or even death (Groth).

Koss and Harvey (1991) identified several factors that may discern different types of rape:

- The number of offenders distinguishes three types of rape, namely: *individual rape* (one offender), *pair rape* (two offenders) or *multiple rape* (three or more offenders).
- The interpersonal relationship between the offender and the victim characterises four types of rape, namely: *stranger rape* (no previous relationship), *acquaintance rape* (both parties know each other, but sexual behaviour is not appropriate to the relationship), *date rape* (intimacy would be appropriate in the relationship, but is obtained through force or coercion) or *marital rape* (victim and offender are spouses)
- The level of spontaneity determines three types of rape, namely: *planned rape* (the offender prepares the location, selects a victim with pre-meditation and uses

specific tactics for coercion), *partially planned rape* (the offender has made uncertain plans after meeting a victim by chance) or an *unplanned rape* (occurs impulsively without prior planning).

- The extent to which the rape becomes public knowledge discerns two types of rape, namely: a *reported rape* (the rape is reported to the police and an investigation is launched) or a *hidden rape* (the offence meets the legal definition of a rape, but is not reported). Two types of hidden rape exist: (a) *acknowledged rape* (the victim perceives the offence as a rape, but does not report it for various reasons, such as a fear of rejection or reprisal) and (b) *unacknowledged rape* (the victim does not realise that the incident meets the legal definition of a rape and she does not view herself as a rape victim).

The preceding section described rape in general terms and several classifications of rape were discussed. In the following section, the legal definition of rape will be summarised and factors that influence court proceedings in rape cases will be examined.

### **3.2.1 THE LEGAL UNDERSTANDING OF RAPE**

In legal terms, there are two forms of rape, namely *statutory rape* and *forcible rape*. *Statutory rape* refers to a man who engages in sexual intercourse with a female under the age of consent, even if she participates willingly (Vogelman, 1990). The legal definition of *forcible rape* is: ‘Rape consists in intentional unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent’ (Burchell & Milton, 1997, p. 487). Sexual intercourse is defined as any degree of penetration by the male genital organ into the female’s sexual organ (Vogelman). No other form of sexual contact between two parties may constitute rape, even though other forced sexual acts are just as traumatic and violating as forced intercourse (Reddi, 1994). Orgasm or ejaculation by the rapist needs not to take place for it to be defined as rape.

Before 1993, a husband could not be convicted of raping his own wife, but the rule was repealed. Section 4 of the Prevention of Family Violence Act 133 of 1993 now states: ‘Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in any law or in the

common law, a husband may be convicted of the rape of his wife' (Snyman, 1995, p. 425). South African law only recognises a female as a rape victim and only a male as a perpetrator even though this may not always be the case (Reddi, 1994).

The law deems that rape can only take place if intercourse occurs without a woman's consent. This consent should be given freely and consciously by a woman who has the mental capacity to comprehend what she is consenting to (Snyman, 1995). Any intercourse that takes place when a woman is unable to give consent (e.g. under the influence of a substance, sleeping or under hypnosis), also constitutes rape. In the eyes of the court, physical injury to the victim was originally perceived as proof that there was no consent on her part. Proof of strenuous physical resistance on the part of the victim was required in order to prove that consent was absent (Reddi, 1994). If there were no bruises on the victim's body, the court assumed that consent was present and the charge would have failed. Rape by means of coercion other than physical violence that would not leave bruises on the victim would have been very difficult to prove in court. Nowadays, it is accepted that consent may be negated by force, fear or the incapacity to give consent and the prosecution bears the burden of proof to prove the absence of consent (Reddi). This shifts the focus of the inquiry from the perpetrator to the behaviour and character of the victim.

Another factor that should be present when proving a rape has occurred is that of intent, which means that the perpetrator must knowingly have committed the crime. The offender must have foreseen the possibility that the victim did not consent to the act and yet still have proceeded with the deed (Reddi, 1994). It is still believed that some women deny that they want sexual intercourse and say 'no', when they actually want it or mean to say 'yes', which play a part when intent must be proven in court. The quality of the complainant's evidence is crucial to a successful conviction, as in most cases there are no witnesses to substantiate her claim.

The court holds the belief that false accusations of forced sexual intercourse is very common due to the warning of a Dutch lawyer in 1772 that 'no false accusation by a girl is more common than that of forced sexual intercourse' (Burchell & Milton, 1997, p.498). This warning reflects the persistent belief that women will lay rape charges out of fantasy or revenge. The belief in the accuracy of the warning for over 200

years has made the crime of rape rather unique in that the court distrusts the victim's account of the crime. There is, however, no empirical evidence that substantiates the claim that there are more false charges laid in sexual offences than in any other crime (Schwikkard, 1994). Special precautionary rules pertaining to the victim's evidence was developed in order to protect the defendant from false charges.

These are:

- 1.) Prompt reporting of the crime is seen as substantiation of the victim's claim.
- 2.) An independent witness should corroborate the victim's account or evidence.
- 3.) The victim's past sexual history may also be submitted in order to display her tendency to engage in sexual behaviour (Burchell & Milton, 1997).

The crime of rape is characterised by an underreporting to the police, which is attributed to the above factor as well as the tendency of the justice system to shift the blame to the victim of rape (Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 1991). It is thus not surprising that it is estimated that only four to five rapes are reported for every ten rapes that take place (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998). In order to protect the victim who appears on the witness stand, a number of states in the United States of America have introduced *rape shield laws*. These laws are statutes that restrict the nature of the personal questions asked of rape victims during the trial (Brehm & Kassin, 1990). No such measures currently exist in the South African Criminal Justice System.

Feminists consider the legal definition of rape to be in favour of male supremacy and too restrictive. Brownmiller (1975) suggested an alternative definition from a female's perspective: 'a sexual invasion of the body by force, an incursion into the private, personal inner space without consent – in short, an internal assault from one of several avenues and by one of several methods that constitutes a deliberate violation of emotional, physical, and rational integrity and is a hostile, degrading act of violence' (p. 376). This definition is more complete and comprehensive than the legal definition and has value for its inclusion of all spheres affected by the act of rape (James & Gilliland, 2001).

Reddi (1994) is of the opinion that the law has worked largely to the disadvantage of women and also has some suggestions as to how it should be modified. She proposes

that the definition of the crime should be expanded to include all forms of sexual attack and also be gender neutral with regard to the rape survivor and the perpetrator. It is also suggested that the element of consent should be removed from the definition of the offence.

This study focuses on the forcible rape of an adult female by a male rapist and the type of rape that will be considered is forcible rape. The preceding subsection outlined the general and legal definitions of rape as well as several subtypes of rape. Theories on the causes of rape will be discussed in the subsequent section.

### **3.3 THEORIES ON THE CAUSES OF RAPE**

Rape is a complex phenomenon and much has been written about various antecedent factors and processes. Consensus has not been reached as to which theory encompasses all aetiological aspects of rape. Several of the most prominent theories will be discussed in this section, which will include the feminist, evolutionary, sociological and multi-factorial perspectives on rape.

#### **3.3.1 THE FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON RAPE**

##### **3.3.1.1 The feminist or cultural theory of rape**

Feminist theorists are of the opinion that the patriarchal systems in most cultures which maintains **male dominance, power** and **control** may be of the most powerful causes of rape (Brownmiller, 1975; James & Gilliland, 2001). Modern society produces males who feel bereft of power and control, leading them to gain power in non-acceptable ways, such as rape. Rape is an act of violence where a person is forced to submit to one whom is in power, most frequently an adult male. In history, there are many instances where men had property rights on their dependents whether it is wives, children or slaves. This gave them the right to gain access to the bodies of their dependents as well. Throughout Western cultures, aggression and domination are regarded as acceptable characteristics only in males. Consequently, submission and compliance are characteristics befitting females. Brownmiller traced the



historical occurrence of rape to the time when it was committed in wars to reward the victors and to disgrace their vanquished enemies (James & Gilliland). This act of humiliation by raping and killing helpless women and children symbolises the absolute defencelessness in war. In modern-day rape, the act still represents the ultimate degradation and subjugation of a person.

The feminist theory perceives rape to be a 'pseudosexual act motivated by male desires to maintain supremacy over women in socio-political and economic terms' (Ellis, 1991, p. 631). Thus, the theory views rape as the result of male domination in nearly every important sphere, including politics and the economy. This social inequity leads to the perpetuation of the male view that women are subordinate to men affecting the sexual interaction between the sexes (Chasteen, 2001). A feedback process whereby the fear of being raped restricts female activities and life-styles is also postulated (Roze & Koss, 2001).

Three elements of the patriarchal ideology are believed to be at the core of sexual aggression. Firstly, females are deemed to be **less important** or **competent** than males in various spheres. Secondly, certain **behaviour** is exclusively reserved for a specific gender. **Aggression** by males is tolerated and even encouraged whereas passive behaviour is viewed as appropriate for females (Roze & Koss, 2001). Thirdly, the ideology 'contains beliefs which deny, excuse, exonerate, or justify extreme forms of male behaviour which epitomise their **power** position vis-à-vis women, such as rape, ... or which **blame** the victims of these acts for their own victimisation' (Burt, 1983, p. 133). These beliefs are central to a culture where sexual aggression frequently occurs. **Thus, the primary motivation for rape is regarded as the use of sexuality in order to maintain male dominance and control, instead of sexual gratification.**

### 3.3.2 THE EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE ON RAPE

#### 3.3.2.1 The evolutionary theory of rape

The evolutionary theory of rape poses that males and females differ in their time and energy spent on reproduction tasks. In mammals the female generally cares for the offspring whereas the male seeks to secure as many reproduction partners as possible (Ellis, 1989). The reproduction strategies for males and females differ markedly. Whereas females choose their mates carefully, males seek to maximise their potential for reproduction by seeking to copulate with as many sex partners as possible (Thornhill & Palmer, 2000). Males who are more **aggressive** in their quest for copulation have been **favoured by evolution**, thus perpetuating the phenomenon of sexual aggression. The evolutionary theory of rape opposes the feminist view that rape is primarily motivated by power and poses that sex is still the primary motive, but that the need for power is a means to an end (James & Gilliland, 2001). The existence of an evolutionary adaptation that perpetuates rape behaviour is also posed, as rape behaviour is reproductively superior to non-raping behaviour (Thornhill & Palmer). **Thus, the evolutionary theory of rape states that the need for the maximum copulation opportunities by males have led to the characteristic of aggression to be favoured by evolution.**

The feminist and evolutionary theorists have differing views on the primary motivation for rape (Vega, 2001). Feminist theorists are of the opinion that the patriarchal structure of society and a need for power and control are at the core of sexual aggression. Evolutionary theorists pose that forced copulation occur widely in the animal world, which predates the patriarchal structure at the core of feminist arguments (Archer & Vaughan, 2001).

### 3.3.3 SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RAPE

#### 3.3.3.1 The social learning theory of rape

The social learning theory rests on the belief that repeated exposure to any given stimuli promotes positive feelings towards it. The acquisition of aggression is learned through **imitation** and sustained through various forms of **reinforcement**. Three sources of aggression are identified; namely (1) associations with family and peers, (2) culture and (3) the mass media. The social learning theory regards rape as aggressive behaviour towards women that is learned through four interconnected processes: (1) violence towards women in real life or in the mass media, (2) repeatedly viewing violence and sex in the same context and thus associating violence and sexuality, (3) the perpetuation of various rape myths, (4) by desensitising viewers to the pain and humiliation of sexual aggression (Ellis, 1991; Ellis, 1989). **Thus, the social learning theory postulates that positive views towards sexual aggression are learnt and maintained through the joint influences of culture and experience that link aggression and sexuality.**

#### 3.3.3.2 The sociological view of rape

Rape as a social phenomenon has four possible causes as hypothesised by Baron and Byrne (1997). They consider **gender inequality** as one possible causative factor, referring to the fact that females are still holding inferior positions to men in most social spheres. The second factor is **pornography**, which perpetuates the belief that women are sex objects, dominated by men and which may also promote the condoning of sexual violence against women. Their third factor, **social disorganisation**, refers to the ignorance to social norms and constraints and the undermining of each individual's right to freedom and choice. **Legitimisation of violence** is their fourth factor, which relates to the media's widespread portrayal of violence and society's acceptance of it. Violence in sports, video games and military behaviour also serves to perpetuate this factor.

The phenomenon of pornography has been the focus of much attention in research on the causes of rape and will be discussed in greater detail. The media influences and shapes attitudes, values and behaviour, also towards rape and sexual assault (Baron & Byrne, 1997). The depiction in the media of forced sexual or romantic contact with a resistant female who becomes aroused and subsequently does not resist, serves two functions. Firstly, this dramatisation distorts perceptions of how women respond to sexual coercion in reality. Secondly, it may increase the likelihood of male aggression against females (Myers, 1993). The exposure to violent pornography was also found to have a desensitising effect by systematically decreasing the negative reaction that viewers have after each exposure (Linz, Donnerstein and Penrod, 1988). Results also indicated that the viewing of violent pornography heightened callous attitudes towards sexual violence among both male and female participants. The researchers found that the participants exhibited a tendency to perceive rape as less serious and displayed less sympathy towards the victims. **Thus, frequent viewing of violent pornography leads to accepting similar behaviour more readily by both genders and may in turn lead to a potential increase in males' propensity to engage in sexually violent behaviour.**

The construction of ethically acceptable experiments on sexual aggression is as yet not possible. As such, most studies have focussed on non-sexual aggression and self-reports of past experiences and future intentions. A study of the correlation between sexual aggression and violent pornography prevents conclusions about cause and effect (Baron & Byrne, 1997). There is, however, consensus that negative attitudes towards women are very prominent in sexual aggression. Violent pornography increases the negative view of women and may consequently cause an increase in sexual aggression (Brehm & Kassin, 1990).

**All four of these sociological factors serve to perpetuate the acceptance of male dominance, female submission and the occurrence of male violence against women.**

### 3.3.4 MULTI-FACTORIAL PERSPECTIVES ON RAPE

#### 3.3.4.1 The synthesised or bio-social theory of rape

Ellis (1991) developed a synthesised or bio-social theory of rape which draws on the feminist, evolutionary and the social learning theories and incorporates neuro-hormonal variables. Four propositions are posed: 1.) Rape is primarily motivated by two unlearned drives, namely the **drive to possess** and the **drive to control** a sexual partner. Ellis opposes the feminist view that rape is motivated solely by a need for power and identifies the two unlearned drives as motivation for all sexual behaviour, also rape. 2.) **Natural selection** favours males who make use of sexual aggression, as well as females who are more inclined to resist this forceful behaviour. Ellis poses that most males have also evolved a stronger sex drive than females. 3.) The motivation for sexual aggression is largely unlearned, but the behaviour surrounding the assault is derived from **learnt experiences**, rather than from imitation or attitudes. Ellis is not of the opinion that females contribute to their own victimisation, but that they may unintentionally encourage sexual aggression by succumbing to low levels of pressure. This leads to a learnt response from males that aggression is an acceptable way of obtaining sexual intercourse. An equation was developed to estimate a person's propensity to engage in sexual aggression, stating that it is a 'function of the strength of an individual's sex drive plus estimates of the probability of success minus the probability of being punished, divided by sensitivity to aversive stimuli' (Ellis, p. 631). 4.) Individuals differ in their exposure to **male sex hormones**, which in turn produces a difference in their sex drives and their sensitivity to the threat of punishment and the suffering of others. **Thus, males with higher sex drives and a lower sensitivity to the threat of punishment and to the suffering of others will be more inclined to sexually aggressive behaviour towards women.**

### 3.3.4.2 The quadripartite theory of rape

According to Nagayama Hall and Hirschman (1991), sexual aggression is a multi-factorial phenomenon for which there are multiple aetiological factors. Four critical components that increase the likelihood of the occurrence of sexual aggression were identified.

**Physiological sexual arousal** is an instinctive impulse that only becomes inappropriate when it is expressed inappropriately. By itself, this arousal is not adequate motivation for sexual aggression in all instances. **Cognitive appraisals** that deem sexual aggression to be justified is also called 'rape myths'. A man who is sexually aggressive may not evaluate his behaviour as being wrong and thus have no moral or ethical objections to such behaviour. When certain behaviour is viewed as appropriate it is likely to be acted upon, thus the sexually aggressive male may perceive coercion, whether verbal or physical, as appropriate and is likely to act upon his sexual impulses (Ward, 2001). **Affective dyscontrol** is the third factor that could facilitate sexual aggression, where negative emotions such as anger and hostility are inappropriately expressed (Nagayama Hall & Hirschman, 1991). In general, these affective states can be inhibited and only expressed in appropriate circumstances. Sexual aggression may occur when these emotions become so dominant and compelling that inhibitions such as guilt, moral conviction and empathy for the victim are disregarded. The preceding three factors are situational in nature and may not be enough to result in sexual aggression by themselves in a person with healthy personality functioning. **Personality factors** that could promote sexual aggression may involve early childhood experiences such as parental divorce, the presence of parental or sibling criminal history, parental neglect or physical or sexual abuse. These experiences have a detrimental effect on the child's developing personality and thus increase the likelihood of sexual aggressive behaviour as an adult (Ward).

Nagayama Hall and Hirschman (1991) also identified environmental factors that may play a role in the expression of sexually aggressive impulses. These factors include **peer support** (especially in gang rapes) and the ingestion of **alcohol**. The environmental factors may promote sexual aggression in a person that is predisposed to this behaviour as a result of the four precursors. **The absence of one of the four**

**precursors may decrease the likelihood of sexual aggressive behaviour. Similarly, a high intensity of one of the factors may heighten the intensity of the other three factors and thus promote the likelihood of sexual aggression.**

### **Conclusion**

Sexual aggression directed at women is a distressing issue that has only recently been a focus of social awareness. Four perspectives on rape were discussed in the preceding section. The feminist perspective views the male need for dominance and power as the main motivation for rape. The evolutionary theory identifies the male need for multiple copulation opportunities as the reason why sexually aggressive behaviour has been favoured by evolution. The sociological perspectives identify socio-cultural factors such as the exposure to violence, gender inequality and pornography as contributing to the phenomenon of rape. Two multi-factorial perspectives, namely the synthesised and the quadripartite theories, identify several interacting factors as causes of rape. As a result of the complex nature of rape, no encompassing theory has yet been developed. There seems to be no single cause for rape, but the acceptance of sexual aggression and the acceptance of rape myths seem to be significant contributing factors. The following section will examine various factors that are associated with the perpetrators of rape.

### **3.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RAPIST**

According to Groth (1979), it is possible to create a descriptive profile of a rapist, but there are very few unique characteristics that differentiate such a person from others. Even after numerous studies, the common view of the rapist is one that is filled with misconceptions and stereotypes. Characteristics that were found in sexually aggressive men will be discussed in this subsection.

### 3.4.1 PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RAPIST

Many studies have been conducted to determine which personality, attitudinal or behavioural aspects could distinguish males who are likely to engage in sexually aggressive behaviour from those who will not. Malamuth (1986) stresses that the interaction of multiple factors should be considered as causal to sexual aggression. Examples are factors that create motivation for the act, that reduce internal and external inhibitions which could prevent the perpetration of the act as well as factors that contribute to the opportunity for occurrence of the act. Six factors that were significantly related to sexual aggression were identified, namely: *Sexual responsiveness to rape, Dominance, Hostility towards women, Attitudes facilitating aggression, Sexual experience and Antisocial personality characteristics*. Interaction between these factors resulted in greater predictive strength in sexual aggression than merely combining the factors (Malamuth; Koralewski & Conger, 1992). **An interesting finding was that many men who would not engage in sexually aggressive behaviour displayed sexual arousal in response to media depicting non-consenting sexual intercourse similar to rapists.** The presence of any predictor will, however not invariably lead to high levels of sexual aggression.

Research on incarcerated rapists has identified factors that may cause sexual aggression and the most important motivational factors seem to be **power, anger** and **sexual frustration** (Lisak & Roth, 1988). Disinhibitory factors have also been identified, which are believed to facilitate sexual aggression. These factors are separated into two groups: external factors related to a situation that may disinhibit the aggressor and factors related to psychological characteristics that may reduce the effectiveness of social prohibition to such acts. Alcohol use is the most prominent external disinhibitory factor present in sexual aggression. Of the internal disinhibitory factors, impulsivity and under-socialisation seem to be the most important (Lisak & Roth).

In a study of non-incarcerated men, non-incarcerated sexually aggressive men could be distinguished from non-sexually aggressive men, with regard to the factors of power and anger (Lisak & Roth, 1988). Sexually aggressive men view themselves as



more frequently hurt by women; more aware of the power dynamics between men and women; more frequently feel belittled and ridiculed by women and feel the need to assert themselves as a result. They are generally more impulsive and view themselves as losing control when under the influence of alcohol. They also state less respect for society's rules and would more often discuss their sexual experiences with their peers than non-aggressive men would. Another factor, **disinhibition**, may be seen as a catalyst for sexual aggression. Thus, the population of non-incarcerated sexually aggressive men could be distinguished from non-aggressive men by similar motivational factors that have been identified in incarcerated rapists, the most prominent being anger and a need for power.

In a South African study of a non-forensic sample of males, Collings (1994) found that sexually aggressive behaviour and rape-supportive attitudes were positively correlated. This finding indicates that the acceptance of rape myths by South African males may be a contributory factor of rape, which is in accordance with the results of international studies.

The preceding subsection identified various characteristics found in sexually aggressive males. Some of these factors are sexual arousal in response to rape, a need for dominance and power, hostility towards women and disinhibition. The formation of a single descriptive profile that would encompass all rapists still poses a problem. The following section will focus on the after-effects of rape on the victim.

### **3.5 THE AFTERMATH OF RAPE**

Rape has a far-reaching effect on the victims and it influences all areas of the victim's life. The social, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and sexual functioning of the victim is detrimentally affected by this crime. This section will examine the short- and long-term effects experienced by the rape victim, as well as other factors that may influence her recovery.

As rape is experienced as a life-threatening trauma, it may result in the development of Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the victim. Burgess and Holstrom (1974) first documented the existence of a **Rape Trauma Syndrome** with specific symptomatology that victims experience in reaction to a rape (Hansson, 1992). This syndrome was defined as ‘the acute phase and long-term reorganisation process that occurs as a result of forcible rape or attempted forcible rape’ (Burgess and Holstrom, p. 982). The symptoms are primarily behavioural, somatic and psychological reactions that manifest in reaction to a life-threatening situation and are collectively termed, Rape trauma syndrome (Hansson, 1993).

Many psychologists recognise rape trauma syndrome as a specific form of PTSD because certain symptoms sets rape apart from other traumas, specifically an impairment in sexual functioning, fears of men and being touched, obsessive thoughts of contamination and associated compulsive washing (Frazier & Borgida, 1985; Hansson, 1993). It is important to note that not all rape victims develop a Rape trauma syndrome and that the absence of this syndrome does not imply that the person was not raped. Some victims may display the symptoms to varying degrees of intensity. The two distinct phases of Rape trauma syndrome are an acute phase of disorganisation and a long-term process of reorganisation and will be discussed in detail in the following section.

### **3.5.1 INITIAL PHASE – DISORGANISATION**

In the period following the attack, the victims may experience a number of different emotions and they usually express feelings of shock and disbelief. Two distinct reaction styles were present in an equal number of victims, and was termed the **expressed style** and the **controlled style**. Prominent signs of the **expressed style** are feelings of fear, shock, anger and anxiety that are exhibited through crying, tenseness and restlessness. The victims who exhibited a **controlled style** masked their feelings and came across as being calm, composed and even subdued (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974; Kaplan & Sadock, 1998).

The reactions immediately after the rape can be classified as physical, behavioural or psychological and each will be discussed separately.

### **3.5.1.1 Physical symptoms**

The physical symptoms of the rape victim may include the following (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974; Hansson, 1992; James & Gilliland, 2001):

- General bruising and pain from the physical attack on various parts of the victim's body.
- Symptoms such as tension headaches, fatigue and sleep disturbances are common, as well as an increased startled response.
- Eating disturbances, such as a loss of appetite or an increase in appetite may occur.
- Nausea, stomachaches or gastrointestinal irritability could also be experienced.
- Generalised vaginal pain, discharge or other complaints of discomfort are also frequently expressed.

### **3.5.1.2 Behavioural symptoms**

Disturbances in the victim's behaviour may also be noted and could include the following (Frazier & Borgida, 1985; Hansson, 1992):

- Crying more than usual.
- Being restless, agitated, struggling to concentrate and being unable to relax as well as being alert and watchful may be observed.
- Avoidance of socialising or not wanting to be left alone.
- Attempts to avoid any stimulus that is associated with the rape may be made.
- Sexual problems such as a fear of sex, a loss of interest in sex or a loss of sexual pleasure may be experienced.
- Increased washing behaviour because of a persistent feeling of being dirty after the rape.
- An increased use of substances like alcohol, cigarettes or drugs may occur.

Avoidance strategies such as staying at home and withdrawing from social contact are associated with higher levels of symptoms. Conversely, pro-active behaviour such as keeping busy, thinking positively and suppressing negative thoughts are linked to lower levels of symptoms (Frazier & Burnett, 1994).

### **3.5.1.3 Psychological symptoms**

Emotional reactions immediately following the rape may include the following (Frazier & Borgida, 1985; Hansson, 1992; James & Gilliland, 2001):

- Intrusive thoughts and feelings of the rape are commonly experienced.
- Flashbacks and nightmares about the rape, which cause a great deal of distress to the victim, are also frequently noted.
- Feelings of sadness, anger, irritability and anxiety occur more than usual and thoughts about suicide may even be present.
- Feelings of humiliation, embarrassment and self-blame are often experienced, mostly as a result of society's view that the victim is in some way responsible for the assault.

### **3.5.2 LONG-TERM PROCESS – REORGANISATION**

After the initial period of acute disorganisation has passed, most victims experience some period of reorganisation, which may take from months to years. The motor activities of victims are frequently increased during this period. This phenomenon may take the form of changing address or telephone numbers and other behaviour that may increase feelings of safety (Burgess & Holstrom, 1974; Hansson, 1992). Reaching out to family members or friends for support also occur more often after the attack.

Dreams and nightmares may also occur in the reorganisation phase. Two types of dreams were reported, namely where the victim wants to do something against the assailant, but wakes before acting, and where the victim is successful in her ability to fight off the attacker. Phobic responses to a traumatic event, termed 'traumatophobia'

are commonly seen among rape victims. The survivor may fear a wide range of situations or a situation similar to that which she was in when the attack occurred. Common reactions are a fear of indoors, a fear of outdoors, a fear of being alone, a fear of crowds, a fear of people behind them and sexual fears. If the rape was committed by a stranger, the victim is usually afraid of being alone, but when the rape was committed by an acquaintance, the victim often becomes distrustful and avoids forming close relationships (Schaefer & Lamm, 1992).

### **3.5.3 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE VICTIM'S RECOVERY**

Several factors influence the victim's likelihood of recovery after the incident (Koss & Harvey, 1991). These include aspects of the *person*, the *event*, the *environment* as well as the *intervention*. Characteristics of the victim that should be taken into account are the following: age, developmental stage, pre-trauma personality, ability to utilise support, perception of the trauma and the meaning she ascribes to it. Aspects of the event that should also be kept in mind are: the severity, duration and the frequency with which the rape occurred, the degree of physical violence involved as well as the level of personal violation incurred by the victim (Kaplan & Sadock, 1998; Smith & Kelly, 2001). Qualities of the environment that play a role in the victim's recovery process are: quality and continuity of social support, immediate responses from people she informs, attitudes and values held by the community and the level of physical and emotional safety that she perceives from the environment after the trauma (Smith & Kelly). Factors that are of great importance in the intervention are: the timing, setting and appropriateness of the intervention, the competence of the helping professional, the nature of the intervention and the locus of control the victim perceives to have (Koss & Harvey).

The victims of rape frequently experience self-blame for the crime. Three types of blame were identified by Janoff-Bulman (1979). Behavioural self-blame is found when the victim places the blame on her own modifiable behaviour, for example, blaming the fact that she walked alone to her car at night. Characterological self-blame occurs when the victim blames aspects of her own character for the assault, for example her trusting nature. The prediction was formed that victims who display

behavioural blame would adjust better than those experiencing characterological blame, because behaviour may be modified, but one's character is more persisting (Levett & Kuhn, 1991). However, victims who blame an aspect of society, for example the rising crime rate, for the assault were more likely to display better adjustment than victims who display the preceding two types of self-blame (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000).

## **Conclusion**

It is clear that being the victim of rape is a terrifying experience that has an effect on one's life in the short and long-term. Support from others is especially valuable during this time. Negative attitudes towards a rape victim are detrimental in the healing process, especially if those who hold them form part of your support structure or are employed in the helping professions. The following section will examine rape myths as well as attitudes that may be held towards the act of rape, the rape victim as well as the perpetrator of the offence.

## **3.6 ATTITUDES TOWARDS RAPE, RAPISTS AND RAPE VICTIMS**

This section will examine rape myths by focussing on the definition, formation and functions of rape myths. Specific myths surrounding the act of rape, the rapist and the victim of rape will also be explored.

### **3.6.1 THE DEFINITION OF RAPE MYTHS**

Myths are based on a person's perception and explanation of the truth, but are not necessarily based on fact (Van der Merwe, 1995). In reality, myths only convey a partial truth, which may lead to the belief in distorted truths and inaccuracies. This is the case in rape myths, where a partial truth – as seen by society – is believed as fact, with far-reaching implications, especially for rape victims. Myths also function as a means to give an explanation for an occurrence, even if it is false. Rape myths are thus a way in which rape can be explained in such a way that society does not feel

threatened by the possibility of the assault. However, this false security may lead to the further victimisation of a traumatised survivor.

Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1995) are of the opinion that the distinguishing characteristic of a myth 'is not necessarily the degree to which it represents an empirical fact, but rather the particular cultural function that is served by the belief or attitude' (p. 704). These rape myths have as function the justification of the sexual victimisation of women. Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1999) conceptualise myths as '(1) false or apocryphal beliefs that (2) explain some cultural phenomenon and (3) whose importance lies in maintaining existing cultural arrangements' (p. 29).

It is believed that sexual violence is supported by specific cultural characteristics and a core set of cultural beliefs, and attitudes about rape were identified and termed *rape myths* (Burt, 1983; Burt 1980). Burt (1980) defined rape myths as 'prejudicial, stereotyped or false beliefs about rape, rape victims and rapists that serve to create a hostile climate to rape victims' (p. 217). Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) found this definition inadequate in conveying the influence of myths on rape. They alternately defined rape myths as 'attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women' (p. 134).

Three attitudinal variables that contribute to condoning sexual aggression and lead to the development of rape myths were identified by Burt (1980; Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams, 1991). **Sex role stereotyping** refers to conventional ideas surrounding gender roles, focussing on the appropriateness of sexual behaviour. **Adversarial sexual beliefs** are described as 'the expectation that sexual relationships are fundamentally exploitative, that each party to them is manipulative, sly, cheating, opaque to the other's understanding, and not to be trusted' (Burt, 1980, p. 218). **Acceptance of interpersonal violence** pertains to the belief that interpersonal violence is an acceptable means of gaining sexual relationships with others. The greater the adherence to these three attitudes, the greater the acceptance of rape myths will be (Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams).

Sinclair and Bourne (1998) view rape myths as ‘nonfactual presuppositions that place blame on the victim and exonerate the perpetrator’ (p. 576). These myths imply that the victim holds at least partial responsibility for the rape, whether it was her behaviour, dress or location, thus there may be some justification for the actions of the perpetrator. Belief in rape myths may be rooted in the idea that it is in the male nature to dominate and exploit women and that, once a male is aroused, he is not able to control his behaviour (Anderson & Cummings, 1993).

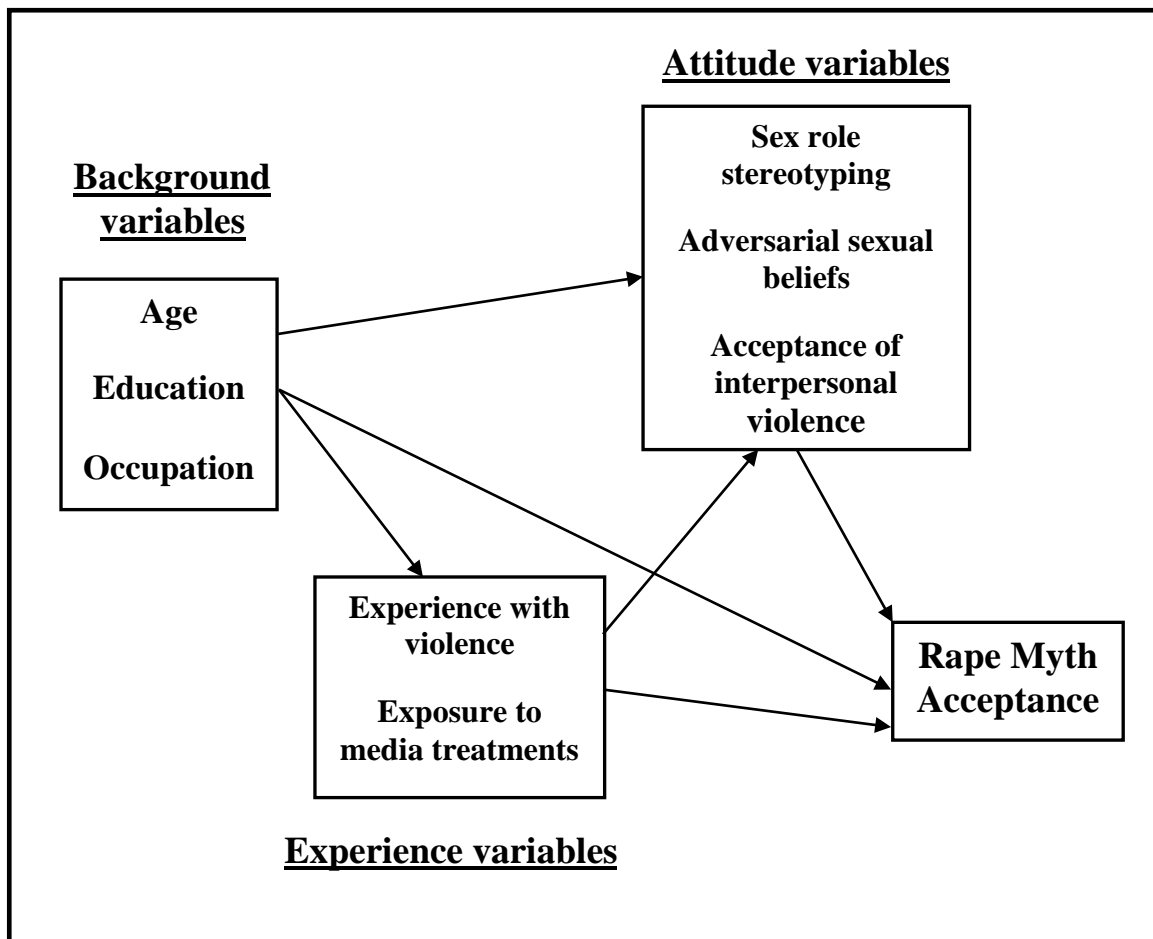
### 3.6.2 THE FORMATION OF RAPE MYTHS

Hazan and Grobbelaar (1994) state that rape myths are acquired through the process of sexual education, particularly in informal situations. The media also plays a definite part by portraying women as sexual objects, particularly in pornography. The onus should thus be on parents to teach the correct attitudes to children from a young age, with an emphasis on respect and not gender stereotypes. Care should be taken to eradicate myths from an early age, as they may have a far-reaching impact on the person’s sexual and social functioning later in life.

Burt (1980) developed a model to delineate the antecedents of rape myth acceptance, which is illustrated in Figure 3.1. At the extreme left of the illustration are the background variables age, education and occupation. Age and occupation are significantly related to the development of the attitudinal variables and occupation is directly related to rape myth acceptance. A higher level of education correlated with attitudes that are more liberal and is negatively related to rape myth acceptance, whereas the older the person is, the stronger is the adherence to rape myths. The **experiential variables** included *Experience with intra-familial violence* and *Exposure to media treatments of sexual assault*. Females exhibited less sex role stereotyping as a result of exposure to intra-familial violence, but not men. Exposure to media treatments of sexual assault led to lower levels of rape myth acceptance in male respondents, but not in female respondents. The **attitudinal variables** exerted the greatest effect on rape myth acceptance, with *acceptance of interpersonal violence* being the strongest predictor. As a result of her findings, Burt hypothesised that rape myth acceptance is part of a larger attitude structure, which may incorporate these



attitudinal variables. As these proposed attitudinal variables consist of pervasive and deeply held beliefs, rape myth acceptance may prove difficult to modify. The condition essential to targeting women as potential sexual victims may be *sex role stereotyping* and *acceptance of interpersonal violence* may then be the ‘attitudinal releaser’ of such assaults (Burt, p. 229).



**Figure 3.1** The antecedents to rape myth acceptance

(Burt, 1980, p.229)

Permissive attitudes towards rape seem to be part of a culture that permits sexual aggression and which exhibits a great separation between the genders (Bell, Kuriloff, Lottes, Nathanson, Judge & Fogelson-Turet, 1992). This socio-cultural perspective on rape attitudes identifies the role that society; family and peers play in determining rape attitudes. Societies with a high incidence of rape are characterised by a definite

separation between gender role expectations, subordination of women to men, high incidences of interpersonal violence and a high regard for male aggression (Sanday, 1981). The socialisation of gender roles by family and peers was also found to exert a powerful influence on the development of lenient attitudes towards rape (Kanin, 1985). Sexually aggressive men were found to have had a 'hypersexualised' socialisation. They engaged in sexual activity more frequently, had a larger number of sexual partners and were exposed to greater family and peer influences that encouraged sexual activity as a means to attain a masculine identity.

### **3.6.3 THE FUNCTION OF RAPE MYTHS**

Some theorists believe that rape myths serve different functions for men and women (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). The possible function for men may be to justify sexual violence towards women. For women, the function is possibly to deny personal vulnerability (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). This finding would partially explain the gender differences in rape myth acceptance that is commonly found in research.

Feminist theorists are of the opinion that the acceptance of rape myths influences the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of rape definitions (Burt & Albin, 1981; Hazan & Grobbelaar, 1994). A greater adherence to rape myths has a direct restricting effect on rape definitions. This implies that fewer incidences of sexual assault will be viewed as rape. Restrictive rape definitions deny the reality of many legitimate rape cases and will lead to less prosecution of assailants and complicate the victim's recovery process. This research illustrates that although rape myth acceptance has a negative effect on a person's perception of the victim, it also influences one's propensity to view a sexually violent act as rape (Burt & Albin). In theory, rejection of rape myths is expected to have the opposite effect.

Rape myths are not only detrimental to the psychological well being and recuperation of the rape survivor, but also complicate the work of those involved in the treatment of rape survivors. Firstly, the crisis workers may themselves hold rape myths and their biased attitudes towards the survivor may have a detrimental effect on the recovery of the victim. The psychological impact of the rape may be increased or

decreased by the responses of the health care workers who are in initial contact with the rape survivor (Alexander, 1980; Burgess & Holstrom, 1974; White & Kurpius, 1999). Secondly, when the victim herself adheres to rape myths, the process of treatment may be drawn out and complicated. The victim will experience self-blame for the assault and consequently suffer emotional distress. If her peers and social support structures also hold rape myths, the victim's feelings of guilt, self-loathing and self-recrimination will be reinforced. These factors will exert a detrimental effect on the victim's healing process.

Rape myths also have a role to play in the reporting and the laying of a rape charge (Van der Merwe, 1995). The negative views that society holds of rape victims create a stigma, which deters the reporting and acknowledgement of such an act. If the victim accepts these rape myths, the possibility of laying a charge is reduced, which in the end leads to an underreporting of a serious crime. The victim may be uncertain as to what rape entails and whether the assault could be defined as rape. It then follows that if the public opinion of rape could be changed, by reducing the acceptance of rape myths and increasing the public's knowledge of rape, it would have a positive effect on rape victims. Sinclair and Bourne (1998) also believe that rape myths have a deciding influence in the credibility of court witnesses and may contribute to the low conviction rate of rapists.

The acceptance of traditional gender roles is positively correlated to rape myth acceptance (Schaeffer & Nelson, 1993). Males are more likely to have rape supportive attitudes if they are of the opinion that females are inferior to males, that females are the property of males and that females are in some way dependent on males for their welfare. Thus, the more stereotyped a person's view of gender roles, the more likely is that person's acceptance of rape myths.

Rape-tolerant attitudes (Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams, 1991) are associated with rape-tolerant behaviour and placing greater blame on the victim. These attitudes are displayed in the form of adversarial sexual beliefs, the acceptance of rape stereotypes and traditional gender role attitudes. A study by Holcomb et al. displayed a low endorsement of general rape stereotypes among undergraduate students, but rape-tolerant attitudes that reflect adversarial sexual beliefs and

traditionality were strongly endorsed. Recent studies have shown that the endorsement of rape-tolerant attitudes is related to the actual involvement in sexually aggressive behaviour (Koss, Leonard, Beezley & Oros, 1985).

The function of rape myths to serve racial domination and racism is highlighted by the presence of several **racist rape myths**, such as ‘Most rapes are committed by Black men’ and ‘Black women are promiscuous and cannot be raped’ (White, Strube & Fischer, 1998, p. 158). Racism and sexism are two overlapping, dominating processes of social domination that exert a historical and contemporary effect on current rape myth acceptance. White, Strube and Fischer stress the interrelated nature of systems of social domination, which plays a central role in the development of attitudes pertaining to rape. It is their opinion that all social processes should be addressed when targeting rape myths in the Black community, especially among women.

With the recent focus on the spread of HIV and AIDS, the so-called ‘Virgin cure myth’ has been reported in South Africa and neighbouring countries (Carte Blanche, 2002). This myth states that a man who is infected with HIV can be cured by having intercourse with a virgin. This myth is believed to be advocated by traditional healers and is said to be the cause of many rapes among women and children.

Rape myths contribute to the incidence of rape in three ways (Taylor, Peplau & Sears, 2000). Firstly, males adhere more strongly to rape myths than do females, which may indicate a direct contribution to their inclination to rape. Secondly, a greater adherence to rape myths is associated with tolerance of violence in general, conservative gender stereotypes and hostility towards women, all of which promote rape (Burt, 1980; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995). Thirdly, rape myths cultivate a society that tolerates violence and sexual aggression.

As seen from the preceding discussion, rape myths have negative effects on the rape victim, as well as other members of society. Specific examples of rape myths regarding the act of rape, the perpetrator of rape and the rape victim will be examined in the following section.

### 3.6.4 MYTHS ABOUT RAPE

One of the most prevalent and persistent myths about rape is that it is **a sexual act** (James & Gilliland, 2001). If this myth is believed, then it is assumed that rape does not hurt, just as sex is not meant to be something that hurts. It can also be believed that rape might be something enjoyable and sensually stimulating. The truth is in fact, that rape is a violent, life-threatening act that is not enjoyed by the victim. The victim does not deem it to be a loving coupling as sex is supposed to be. The act of rape does however consist of sexual intercourse and the consequences may entail pregnancy and possible infection with a sexually transmitted disease, similar to consented sexual intercourse. The act of rape is in fact a violent act in which the perpetrator uses sex as a means to overpower and humiliate the victim. Sex is thus the means by which the rapist dominates the victim and therefore rape cannot be equated to sex.

The common misconception that rape is primarily **motivated by a heightened sexual desire** and the act of rape serves only to gratify this sexual need is false (Brownmiller, 1975; Groth, 1979). According to Groth, clinical studies have proven that rape is primarily motivated by non-sexual needs and as such, is a pseudosexual act. Rape is viewed as the sexual expression of power, domination and aggression. **The act of rape is complex and determined by multiple factors, but it involves hostility, anger, control and power, not lust and sensuality alone.** If one accepts the view that rape is motivated by sexual desire and the offender is sexually aroused, then one may believe that the victim had behaved in a certain way to create that arousal. In other words, she may have stimulated the offender's sexual desire intentionally or unconsciously and as such, caused this behaviour from the perpetrator (Groth; James & Gilliland, 2001). As can be seen, this misconception leads to many myths pertaining not only to the act of rape, but also to the offender and the rape victim.

Another myth that is commonly believed is that rape is an act **motivated primarily by lust**. Studies have shown that rape is actually driven by a need for domination, power, control and revenge. Some men may associate sex with violence and aggression. They may then perceive women as objects that may be dominated and

sex as an act of triumph, power and achievement. Rape is motivated primarily by aggression, power and violence, and sexuality becomes the means of expressing these non-sexual demands and feelings (Burgess & Holstrom, 1976; James & Gilliland, 2001).

Society furthermore holds the view that the **rapist experiences sexual fulfilment** after committing a rape (Van der Merwe, Conradie & Labuschagne, 1997), but research found that this is true for only a small percentage of perpetrators. As rape consists of forced sexual intercourse, it is evident why the victim and the perpetrator do not experience pleasurable reactions that are experienced accompanying consensual sexual intercourse.

Society holds the view that **rape seldom occurs in the victim's home**, which is also a myth, as this is the location where rapes are most frequently perpetrated (Gager and Schurr, 1976; Van der Merwe, Conradie & Labuschagne, 1997). The reason for this myth's existence may be that one's home is seen as a safe place where the crime of rape does not often take place.

This section highlighted the predominant myths pertaining to the act of rape. These misconceptions are held by many in society, which plays a significant role in the negative reactions towards rape victims. The following section will focus on various myths about the perpetrators of rape.

### **3.6.5 MYTHS ABOUT THE RAPIST**

The view that society holds towards a rapist is that of an **overly sexual person who cannot control his urges** or that he is a person who **yields to a provocative and vindictive female** (Groth, 1979; Van der Merwe, Conradie & Labuschagne, 1997). This belief perpetuates the idea that rape is a crime of sexual arousal and desire. It serves to negate the offender's responsibility for the act and more often than not, blames the victim. In one survey, one-third of the rapists were married men and sexually active with their wives. Of those rapists who were not married, most were

actively involved in sexual relations with people other than the victim at the time of committing the crime of rape (Groth).

Another false belief is that men who commit rape are **mentally insane** or **perverted** people. Rape is also viewed as the result of situational determinants, instead of originating from psychological factors. Groth (1979) views rape as the symptom of a psychological dysfunction, which may be temporary or enduring. A person who commits a rape is generally not insane, but may have psychological difficulties. Convicted rapists were not distinguishable from non-offenders on a range of psychological tests (Hazan & Grobbelaar, 1994). An increased tendency to express anger openly was found in rapists. This evidence disproves the myth that all rapists are mentally insane or unstable. These men lack close emotionally intimate relationships as well as the ability to be warm, trusting, compassionate and empathic. They commit rape because they are emotionally weak and do not have the ability to handle the demands of everyday life. Sexually aggressive men display low frustration tolerance and rely on sex as a means of overcoming distress, which make them an ongoing threat to society (Groth). Hazan and Grobbelaar state that the offender's aggression and antisocial behaviour are a consequence of his personality characteristics and not the provocative behaviour by the victim.

In several studies, it was found that rapists come from all walks of life, all occupations and all economical classes (James & Gilliland, 2001). A rapist could be one's neighbour, an upstanding businessman, a relative, a judge, or even a man of the cloth. The belief that **only certain men commit rape** serves to make one feel safe. It leads one to believe that the males one comes into contact with are not potential rapists and as such, serves to instil a false sense of security. The truth is actually very disconcerting, that every man could be a potential rapist and in turn, no one is completely safe. If a man from every segment of society is a potential rapist, then every woman who comes into contact with them is a potential rape victim.

The perspective of a rapist is met with conflicting ideas. Some researchers see the tendency to rape as a psychological deficit; others regard environmental factors as the underlying cause of the aggression. As discussed elsewhere in the chapter, there is no

profile that will fit all sex offenders and the myths surrounding them are widely believed. The following section will focus on the myths surrounding the rape victim.

### **3.6.6 MYTHS ABOUT THE RAPE VICTIM**

The word 'victim' originated in early antiquity and it originally referred to a beast that was selected for sacrifice, intimately related to the concept of a scapegoat. By sacrificing the victim, the rest of the community would then be kept safe from harm (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1995; Symonds, 1975). Even in modern day ideology, the word 'victim' still has a negative connotation and people are often wary of being associated with victims.

The attitude towards most victims is that the victim **could have done something to prevent the crime**, in this instance the rape. This originates in the need for all people to find a rational explanation for violent crimes. All people want to believe the ideology of a 'just world'. This belief is defined as 'the tendency of people to believe the world is just and that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get' (Myers, 1993, p.407). The belief that the victim is somehow to blame makes the respondent feel less vulnerable and helpless. Society has developed an illogical belief that 'If you act good, nothing bad will happen to you'. The alternate attitude is also held, 'If something bad happened to you, you did something wrong to cause it' (Myers). The holder of this belief explains a misfortune by reasoning that the victim is responsible for the assault (Burt, 1980). This hypothesis creates the illusion of safety, in that people who do not behave in a certain way are safe from harms such as rape. This belief is prominent in society's attitude towards rape victims where the victim is blamed for her part in the rape. The reality is in fact that every person reacts differently to the trauma of rape, but that no victim will 'ask for rape'.

The **victim's responsibility and participation in the offence** is one of the most common and persistent myths about rape. As mentioned previously, courts in South Africa disbelieve the victim's account of the assault until proven beyond reasonable doubt that it is true. This serves to perpetuate the myth that the victim is at least in part responsible for the rape and denies the rapist's guilt. According to Van der



Merwe (1995), courts and judges still perpetuate the stigma around rape victims by allowing myths to govern what is admissible in court. This is especially apparent in the questioning of the victim's character, implying that certain types of women are regarded as more likely to give consent to sexual intercourse and that the charge of rape is then unfounded. Blaming the victim serves to absolve the perpetrator indirectly of responsibility for the assault (White & Kurpius, 1999). The blaming attitude of society towards rape victims deters the victims from reporting rape, especially if the victim is familiar with the perpetrator.

A continuation of the previous belief, is that **only 'bad, loose or sexually promiscuous' women are rape victims**. This view perpetuates the idea that the victim is in some way to blame and responsible for the rape. If this myth is believed, then rape is deemed to be justifiable and deserved in some cases. No woman deserves to be raped, whether you are a minister or a prostitute, everyone is entitled to equal protection (Brownmiller, 1975; James & Gilliland, 2001).

When determining if a rape has occurred, it has to be decided whether the woman consented to the sexual acts that was performed. In the public opinion as well as in court, it is acceptable to include a woman's reputation, style of clothing, occupation, sexual history and character in the case as circumstantial evidence. It is stereotypically assumed that women with certain reputations or characteristics will consent more readily to sexual relations (Burchell & Milton, 1997; Burt & Albin, 1981). It is also taken for granted that women who dress in a particular way or who may be professional sex workers were 'looking for trouble' and consequently deserved to be raped. The assumption is then made that a woman who meets these criteria cannot be raped. There is however no evidence that dress or occupation plays any role in the rapist's actions (Burt & Albin). This type of reasoning and stereotyping victimises the survivor of rape and magnifies the effect that the assault has on her. Consequently, the male who commits rape will less likely be convicted for rape when the woman possesses any or all of the above-mentioned attributes. Determining the validity of a rape allegation on account of a person's character and not on the factual evidence, is prejudiced, unfair and irrelevant.

Koss and Dinero (1989) suggest a composite model of vulnerability to rape and attempted to identify certain factors that may predict a woman's vulnerability to rape. The researchers did not find any significant differences between women who have been raped and those who have not. In the light of this evidence, clinicians are encouraged to implement this finding to dispel the myth that women or their behaviour are to blame for the assault. Factors that may indicate a higher risk for rape are: a history of child sexual abuse, liberal sexual attitudes and higher than average levels of sexual activity. When these factors exist in conjunction with a higher than average use of alcohol, they are the most predictive of vulnerability to rape. The researchers stressed that these factors do not account for all incidences of rape and that many sexual assault victims do not meet any of the above-mentioned factors.

From the preceding section, the detrimental effects of rape myths are clear. The myths surround all aspects of rape and cloud society's understanding of the act itself, the perpetrator of rape and the rape victim. The following section will focus on various studies conducted on the acceptance of rape myths.

### **3.7 RESEARCH ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

#### **3.7.1 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES OF RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

Since the concept of rape myths was introduced, there has been an increase in the number of studies done to examine this phenomenon thoroughly and how it pertains to the crime of rape.

##### **3.7.1.1 The role of demographic variables in research on rape myth acceptance**

- **Gender and rape myth acceptance**

Gender differences is one of the most common research findings in the measurement of rape myths. Males generally tend to exhibit greater rape myth acceptance than do females (Bell, Kuriloff, Lottes, Nathanson, Judge & Fogelson-Turet, 1992; Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams, 1991; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; White & Kurpius, 1999).

Evidence that rape myths may function differently for males and females was found by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1995). It was suggested that for males, rape myths may function to justify sexual violence against women and for females, rape myths may function to deny personal vulnerability. **Hostility towards women** was found to be a strong predictor of rape myth acceptance for men and may function as a theoretical antecedent of rape myth acceptance for males. The researchers also suggested that subsets of myths should be examined further to establish whether males exhibit a greater acceptance of rape myths that function to justify sexual violence and whether females exhibit a greater acceptance of those rape myths that deny vulnerability.

A significant gender difference in the endorsement of rape myths was also found in one of the earliest studies on rape myths (Barnett & Field, 1978). Statements that identify power as the primary motive for rape were significantly more endorsed by female respondents, whereas statements that attribute the desire for sex as the main reason for rape were significantly more endorsed by male respondents. A desire to protect males from false charges of rape was displayed by male respondents' support for statements that advocate a difficulty in proving a rape as well as that a woman's degree of resistance should be the determining factor in assessing whether a rape has taken place. Constructs that are related to masculinity were constant predictors of the acceptance and perpetration of sexually coercive behaviour in a study by Truman, Tokar and Fischer (1996). The endorsement of traditional gender roles and negative views towards feminism was also positively correlated with rape myth acceptance.

Manipulating the verdict of a rapist in a fictional rape case influenced rape myth acceptance and empathy for the victim for both male and female respondents (Sinclair & Bourne, 1998). The majority of students who participated in this study displayed a low to moderate level of rape myth acceptance and achieved a high score on a victim empathy scale. Male participants generally accepted more rape myths and had less empathy for the victim than female participants did. After a not guilty verdict was given, male participants displayed higher rape myth acceptance and lower victim empathy than after a guilty verdict. Female participants consistently had high levels of empathy for the victim irrespective of the verdict, but displayed greater rape myth acceptance after a guilty verdict was given. The researchers provided a 'Cycle of blame'-principle to explain the phenomenon of the results of the male participants

(Sinclair & Bourne). This principle states that rape myths have a biasing effect on jury decisions in rape trials and that not guilty verdicts strengthen pre-existing rape myths and thus perpetuates the cycle of blame. The above-mentioned model could not explain the results of the female participants and it was hypothesised that a different theory (the 'Just world'-hypothesis) could explain their views. If the perpetrator is found guilty, then the victim is exonerated from blame and the participant's belief in a righteous world is adversely affected, as this could mean that anyone could fall prey to such an event. If, however, the participant could find fault in the victim's behaviour, then there could at least be some blame on the victim's part, which would explain the rape and still maintain the illusion of a just world. According to Sinclair and Bourne, 'the participant needs to blame the victim, and does so by accepting victim-blaming myths' (p. 586). As men in the general public are less likely to be victim to such assaults, this hypothesis is more appropriate for women.

According to Anderson and Cummings (1993), males may apply pressure on a woman who is unwilling to engage in sexual intercourse. The level of pressure may fall within a continuum that could range from lying about their feelings to physical aggression. A strong positive correlation between the acceptance of traditional female gender roles and the acceptance of rape myths was found, as well as a positive correlation between the acceptance of rape myths and the belief that rape is often reported falsely. Thus, women who accept traditional gender roles for females are more likely to disbelieve another woman's report of rape (Anderson & Cummings). In the United States where juries are used in court, defence lawyers attempt to include several older women who are more likely to accept traditional female roles and thus will more likely dismiss the claim of rape as being false.

- **The influence of ethnicity and culture on rape myth acceptance**

Greater acceptance of rape myths is seen in societies where there is a higher incidence of sexual assault. A study by Muir, Lonsway and Payne (1995) compared the acceptance of rape myths by American and Scottish students and found that there was more rape myth acceptance among the American population where rape is also more

prevalent. In countries where rape myth acceptance is less severe, males are less likely to engage in sexual aggression, such as rape.

There have not been consistent results in studies that examine the relationship between rape myth acceptance and ethnicity. Field (1978) was one of the few researchers to find that race was a significant predictor of rape myth acceptance among all respondent groups, which included the general public, police officers and convicted rapists. Diverse trends on the subscales of rape myth acceptance complicated the conclusions. According to Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994), there is a possible trend among the limited number of studies concluding that white respondents (especially white women) were less acceptant of rape myths than black respondents. It was also suggested that the concept of race may be confounded with other factors such as culture, religion, gender role stereotypes, which may all influence rape myth acceptance directly.

- **Rape myth acceptance and occupation**

Acceptance of rape myths by crisis counsellors, rapists, the police and the general public was compared by Field (1978). Crisis counsellors perceived rape more negatively than did the police, convicted rapists or the general public. The rapists were significantly more likely than the crisis counsellors to endorse the following statements: Rape prevention is primarily the women's responsibility; rape is motivated by a desire for sex; punishment for rape should not be severe; victims are likely to precipitate rape through their appearance or behaviour; rapists are not mentally normal; rape is not motivated by a need for power; a raped woman is a less desirable woman; and women should not resist during rape. It is interesting to note that the general public's responses correlated more closely to those of the police and the rapists than to those of the crisis counsellors (Field).

Burt (1983) also found similarities between the general public and rapists' attitudes towards rape. Rapists were more likely to justify violent behaviour and to dissociate blame for the aggression than the general public. A higher level of acceptance of violence and more personal experiences of violence correlated to a significantly more tolerant view of violence and more sympathy for the offender by the general public.

The rapists exhibited a greater tendency than the general public to blame the victim for a violent or sexual assault, to justify violent situations and to dissociate blame from the perpetrator of violence. There was a strong positive correlation between exoneration of the offender and acceptance of rape myths by the rapists.

- **Rape myth acceptance among student populations**

Professional status proved to be a determining factor in the acceptance of rape myths in a comparison between undergraduate students, graduate counselling students and mental health professionals (White & Kurpius, 1999). Male respondents consistently held more negative beliefs towards rape victims than female respondents did for all educational levels. Undergraduate students held more negative attitudes than graduate counselling students, who in turn held more negative attitudes than the mental health professionals did. When the interaction between gender and training level was examined, it was found that the most negative views are held by male undergraduates and the most favourable attitudes are held by female mental health professionals (White & Kurpius). These findings support the belief that female rape victims should (where possible), be treated by female mental health professionals. Females may be able to identify more readily with the victim than males and may be less likely to blame the victim.

Schaeffer and Nelson (1993) studied the effect of on-campus residence on the acceptance of rape myths by males. It was found that those who chose to live in co-ed residences held less traditional views of gender roles than males who chose to live in single-sex and fraternity residences. Residents of co-ed housing facilities were less accepting of rape myths than males in other housing facilities. No significant differences were found between single-sex and fraternity residents on traditional gender roles or rape myth acceptance. A possible explanation for this finding may be that co-ed residences created the opportunity for males to challenge gender stereotypes and also rape myths. It is, however, unclear whether males who chose single-sex and fraternity residences may already possess these attitudes or if the housing facility helped to create these attitudes.

Date and acquaintance rape frequently go unreported, as both the victim and the perpetrator do not view the occurrence as being a rape, especially when the involved parties were on a date or are acquaintances (Harrison, Downes & Williams, 1991). Two scales were identified to measure attitude change after the implementation of a program focussing on date and acquaintance rape on campus, namely blame of the victim or denial and perceptions of factual information. Men were found to hold substantially more blaming attitudes towards the victim for both date and acquaintance rape than women. The males also adhered to more misconceptions surrounding rape than did females, which included a less serious view of the assault and thus, a lesser degree of understanding of rape. Various forms of intervention were found to raise males' awareness and understanding of date rape significantly as can be seen in a substantial decrease of victim-blaming attitudes (but not on the perceptions of factual information scale). The scores of the females who participated in the study did not show a significant change, as their scores were high from the beginning and a possible ceiling effect may have been present.

Among university students, verbal coercion seems to be the most prevalent method of sexual coercion (Fisher, 1996; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). It was found that one in four males have used verbal deception as a means to have sex, whereas only 0.2% of the respondents admitted to having used force to have sex. Verbal methods were the most frequently used strategy to persuade a woman and ignoring a woman's protests was the most often used indirect method of coercion. Four statistically significant factors were found to predict verbal coercion in university men. These were: greater sexual activity or experience, a greater belief that a woman uses refusal as a token, excessive use of alcohol and a greater likelihood of raping if the participant was sure of not being caught (Fisher). The lies that were used to coerce mainly fell into two categories, namely falsely indicating caring and commitment and denying that it was casual sex, thus falsely promising some future contact. The situations where the participants lied most frequently were at a party (66%) and in either of the male or the female's apartments (34%). In the study by Rapaport and Burkhart, attitudes pertaining to sexually aggressive behaviour were the best predictors of sexual coercion. A system of values held by sexually coercive males was hypothesised through which they perceive women as their opposition and thus legitimise aggression against women, particularly sexual aggression. Their behaviour may also be

potentiated by characteristics of irresponsibility and poor socialisation. These attitudes and values create the opportunity for involvement in sexually coercive behaviour.

### **Conclusion**

Various demographic variables have been examined in order to determine the extent to which they influence rape myth acceptance. Gender differences in the acceptance of rape myths are well-documented findings, with male respondents displaying consistently greater rape myth acceptance than female respondents. More rape myths are accepted in societies with a high incidence of rape than in those with a low incidence of rape. The relationship between race and rape myth acceptance is associated with inconsistent findings among several studies. There is a slight trend to suggest that white respondents are less accepting of rape myths than black respondents are. The influence of occupation, professional status and campus residency on rape myth acceptance has also been the topics of research abroad.

### **3.7.2 SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIES OF RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

There is a lack of substantial research on rape myths from South African researchers. This is particularly ironic, as South Africa is a country with one of the highest rates of rape in recent times.

The acceptance of rape myths by Jewish adolescents between the ages of 17 and 20 was the focus of a study by Hazan and Grobbelaar (1994). These teenagers rejected all but two myths posed to them. The accepted myths are: 'Women "invite" rape by their actions or the way that they dress' and 'A women with her skirt up can run faster than a man with his pants down'. These two myths reflect the view of society that rape can be prevented by avoiding provocative dress and behaviour.

In a quantitative South African study on rape myths by Van der Merwe (1995), the researcher found that men and women held similar beliefs on most of the rape myths. Both genders accepted the myths that a victim's skimpy clothing and daring attitude



have a causal effect on the act of rape. The myth that rape is primarily an act governed and motivated by sexual desire was also accepted by both genders. With regard to the *modus operandi* of the offender, it was accepted by both genders that rape usually occurs in dark alleys, but not so often in the victim's own home. This is of concern, especially in the light that such beliefs may give women a false sense of security, which may increase their vulnerability (Van der Merwe). Both genders were of the opinion that the revealing clothing of the victim had a greater precipitating effect than the physical beauty of the victim. Males and females also accepted the myth that a woman who flirted and gave sexual cues was more likely to be raped. The researcher was also of the opinion that a lack of knowledge on rape was a contributing factor in the acceptance of rape myths and that the media plays a big part in the perpetuation of these attitudes (Van der Merwe).

Van der Merwe, Conradie and Labuschagne (1997) found that employees of a South African University held four prominent myths about the rapist. The respondents agreed that rape is only a sexual act, that the rapist's behaviour is motivated by strong sexual needs, that the rapist experiences sexual fulfilment after rape and that most rapes do not occur in the victim's house. The respondents accepted the four myths, which may indicate a lack of knowledge about the crime. The researchers were of the opinion that efforts to prevent rape should not be directed only at the behaviour of the victim but that all should take responsibility for their actions. By placing all the responsibility on the victim, society holds her solely responsible for being a victim of rape and in doing so, rape myths are being reinforced.

A study by Levett and Kuhn (1991), using the vignette methodology, examined the effect of attitudes towards the rapist and the rape victim when manipulating three forms of prejudice. The research was aimed at exploring the power structures of South African society, namely class, race and sex discrimination. All of the respondents were white students at a local university. When the offender was a black man and/or of low class, the respondents were significantly more punitive than towards a white offender. The attitudes towards the victim did not differ significantly when the race or class of the offender was manipulated. Female respondents were more likely to attribute characterological blame to the victim (that she may have been

a certain type of woman) than male respondents. Male respondents were more likely to attribute behavioural blame to the victim (that she may have encouraged the assault) than female respondents. Male respondents achieved significantly lower scores for the stigmatisation of the victim than female respondents when the offender was white. The male respondents attributed significantly higher scores of stigmatisation to the victim when the perpetrator was black or of low class. It was thus suggested that issues such as race and class characteristics of the offender had a significant influence on the attitudes of white South African university students.

### **Conclusion**

Very few South African studies have been conducted on rape myth acceptance. Several studies have identified rape myths that are accepted by diverse populations such as Jewish adolescents, students and university employees. The participants in several of the studies share a lack of knowledge surrounding rape, which appears to contribute to the acceptance of rape myths.

The present study will focus on university students' acceptance of rape myths and will make use of the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale for assessing rape myth acceptance (Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999).

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter highlighted the most important general and legal definitions of rape and discussed various theories pertaining to rape. These theories took biological, psychological and sociological factors into consideration in attempting to explain the phenomenon of rape. Due to the complex nature of rape, no central, encompassing theory for rape exists. Similarly, there is no known profile of a rapist that would include all characteristics of a rapist, although certain risk factors were highlighted in this chapter. The consequences of rape affect all aspects of the rape victim's life and these effects were also discussed. This chapter also focussed on the phenomenon of rape myths and highlighted the formation and function of these rape myths and discussed the particular myths pertaining to the act of rape, the rapist as well as the

rape victim. Finally, a review of previous studies on rape myth acceptance was given, which highlighted the most significant international and South African findings on rape myth acceptance.

## **CHAPTER 4 – METHOD OF RESEARCH**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The methods undertaken in executing the study will be the focus of this chapter. The research design employed in this study will be discussed as well as the central research question and the specific goals that were derived from the research question. The selection and description of the research participants, the measuring instrument and the statistical analysis will also be focussed upon in this chapter. Lastly, a summary of the chapter will be given.

### **4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this research study, a non-experimental research design was made use of, as the research participants were not randomly allocated to different test groups. With this type of research, the researcher cannot control the independent variables of the participants, such as their culture, ages and gender. Non-experimental research does not aim to determine a cause and effect relationship between the relevant variables (Huysamen, 1993).

The research design that was made use of aimed to determine whether the independent variables of gender and race had a significant influence on the dependent variables of the total rape myth acceptance score as well as the seven subscales.

### **4.3 CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION**

The directing research question is: **To what extent do participants of this study accept rape myths and what is the role of gender and ethnicity in the development of these attitudes?**

#### **4.4 GOALS OF THE RESEARCH**

The specific goals of the research, as derived from the purpose of the study stipulated in section 1.2 and the central research question, are as follows, to:

- a) determine the level of rape myth acceptance of the students attending the University of the Free State.
- b) evaluate whether biographical factors such as gender and ethnicity are related to differences in rape myth acceptance.
- c) examine possible combined and interaction effects between the demographic variables of gender and race on rape myth acceptance.

#### **4.5 HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were derived from the literature study and will focus on the mean differences in rape myth acceptance of University students.

##### **HYPOTHESIS 1**

**There will be significant main effects for gender and race with regard to rape myth acceptance.**

**A significant difference between male and female acceptance of rape myths is expected. It is hypothesised that males will exhibit greater rape myth acceptance than females with regard to the total scores, as well as the following seven rape myth subscales: She asked for it (SA), It was not really rape (NR), He did not mean to (MT), She wanted it (WI), She lied (LI), Rape is a trivial event (TE), Rape is a deviant event (DE).**

One of the most frequently reproduced findings is that males exhibit a greater level of rape myth acceptance than do females (Bell, Kuriloff, Lottes, Nathanson, Judge & Fogelson-Turet, 1992; Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams, 1991; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; White & Kurpius, 1999). The expectation is that this finding will be replicated in the current study and pertain to the total scores as well as the individual subscale scores.

**A significant difference between black and white respondents' acceptance of rape myths is expected. It is hypothesised that black respondents will display a greater acceptance of rape myths than white respondents with regard to their total scores as well as the seven subscales as previously identified.**

Previous studies have not found consistent results when considering the relationship between rape myth acceptance and ethnicity. There is a trend that suggests less adherence to rape myths among white respondents (especially white women) than black respondents (Field, 1978; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). It is expected that black respondents will display greater rape myth acceptance than white respondents on the total score as well as on the seven subscales.

**There will be significant interaction effects between gender and race on the total rape myth acceptance and on the seven subscales outlined previously.**

The following hypotheses examine the combined effect of gender and race on rape myth acceptance.

## **HYPOTHESIS 2**

Four combinations of the two independent variables were considered to determine how the combined effects of gender and race influence total rape myth acceptance scores. The hypotheses were constructed in the light of previous research, which demonstrated a greater acceptance of rape myths by male respondents than female respondents and greater acceptance by black respondents than by white respondents.

### **Hypothesis 2.1**

**It is expected that black male and female respondents will differ significantly with regard to the total rape myth acceptance scores. The hypothesis is that black males will exhibit greater rape myth acceptance than black females.**

### **Hypothesis 2.2**

**A significant difference between white male and female respondents' total rape myth acceptance is also anticipated. It is hypothesised that white males will display significantly greater rape myth acceptance than white females.**

### **Hypothesis 2.3**

**It is expected that black and white male respondents will differ significantly in their acceptance of rape myths with regard to the total scores. It is hypothesised that black male respondents will exhibit significantly greater rape myth acceptance than white male respondents.**

### **Hypothesis 2.4**

**A significant difference in rape myth acceptance is expected between black and white female respondents. It is expected that black female respondents will display significantly greater rape myth acceptance than white female respondents.**

## **4.6 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

### **4.6.1 SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in the research study were all students of the University of the Free State. Three faculties were randomly selected from a total of seven faculties. The selected faculties consisted of Social Sciences, Law and Natural Sciences.

Specific under- and postgraduate classes were selected from each of the three faculties to acquire students to participate in the study. The sampling of students in existing classes for research purposes is known as a captured audience and was selected for its convenience and economic advantages (Huysamen, 1993). Only second-year, Honours and Master's level classes were considered for selection as research participants. Care was taken to have a fairly representative distribution of participants according to gender, race and language.

### **4.6.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

#### **Biographical details**

The biographical characteristics of the research participants will be discussed in this section as obtained by the biographical questionnaire. The total number of students taken into consideration for the statistical analysis was 486.

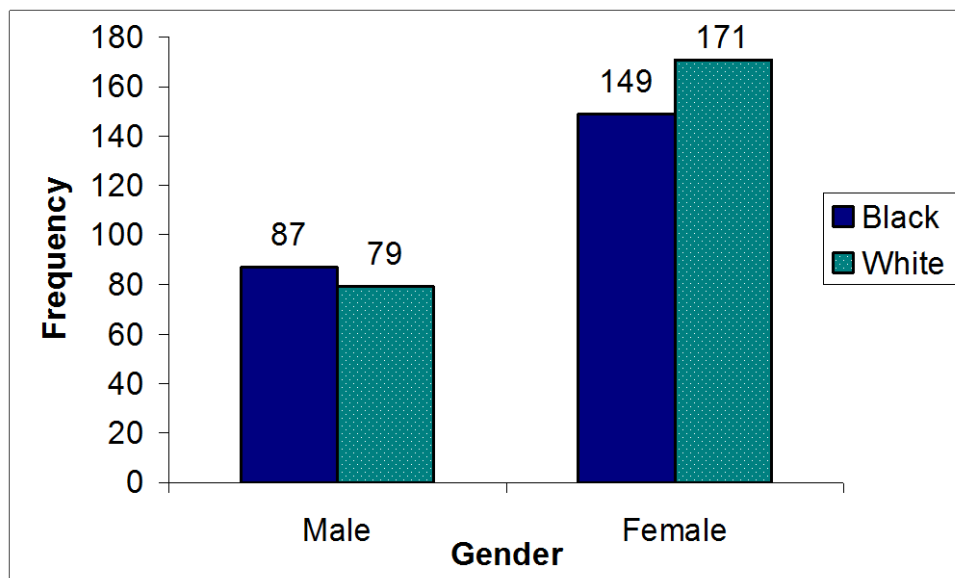
#### **4.6.2.1 Gender**

Of the total number of participants, 166 are male and 320 are female. This translates to a percentage of 34.2% male and 65.8 % female participants. The frequency distribution of participants according to gender is illustrated in Figure 4.1.



#### 4.6.2.2 Ethnic group

Of the 486 participants, 250 are Caucasian (White), 211 are African (Black), 30 students are Coloured and nine are of Asian heritage. As the latter two ethnic groups only comprised 8.0 % of the total number of participants, they were grouped with the African or Black participants for the statistical analysis. The African group of students totalled 236, which is 48.6% of the total number of respondents and the Caucasian group totalled 250, which is 51.4% of the total number. The distribution of respondents according to race is thus fairly equal. Figure 4.1 illustrates the distribution of participants according to gender and race.



**Figure 4.1** The distribution of participants according to gender and race

#### 4.6.2.3 Language

The questionnaire was administered in both Afrikaans and English and the respondents had the opportunity to respond in their language of choice. The questionnaire was completed in Afrikaans by 234 respondents, which corresponds with a percentage of 48.1% and 252 respondents completed the questionnaire in English, a percentage of 51.9%.

#### 4.6.2.4 Age

The mean age of the research participants is 21.92 and the mode is 20.00. The youngest participant was aged 18 at the time of the study and the oldest participant was 43 when completing the questionnaire. A frequency distribution of the participants' ages are given in Table 4.1, which illustrates that approximately three quarters of the participants were between the ages of 20 and 24 at the time of completing the questionnaire.

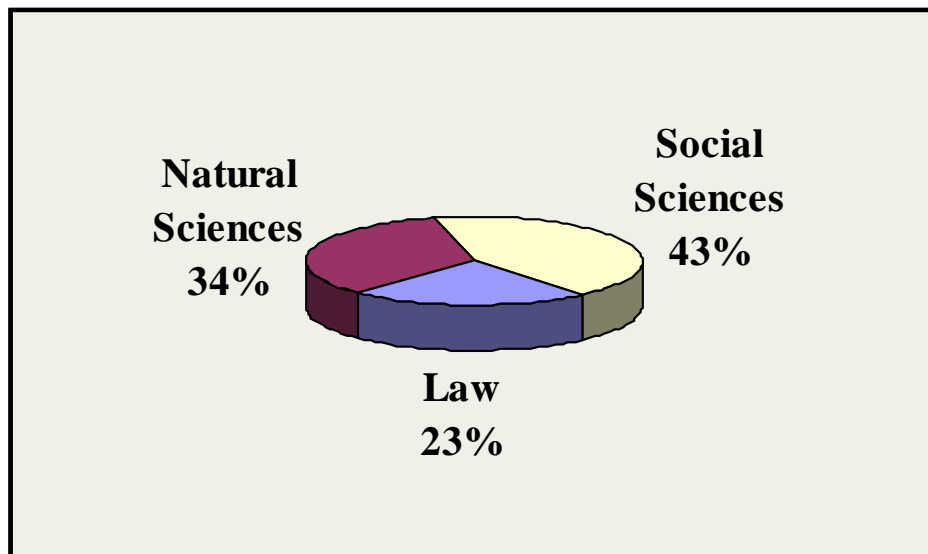
**Table 4.1 Frequency distribution of the ages of the research participants**

<b>Age interval</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>18 - 19</b>	65	13.4
<b>20 - 24</b>	359	73.8
<b>25 - 29</b>	38	7.9
<b>30 - 34</b>	10	2.1
<b>35 - 39</b>	7	1.4
<b>40 +</b>	4	0.8
<b>Incomplete</b>	3	0.6
<b>Total</b>	486	100

#### 4.6.2.5 Level of education

The students were asked to disclose their year of study in the biographical questionnaire and they were grouped as either undergraduate or postgraduate students. Of the 486 participants, 403 were undergraduate students; a percentage of 82.9% and 83 were postgraduate students; a percentage of 17.1%.

The students from three randomly selected faculties were approached; these faculties are Social Sciences, Law and Natural Sciences. The distributions of the students among the faculties are as follows: 210 from the Faculty of Social Sciences, 167 from the Faculty of Natural Sciences and 115 from the Faculty of Law. Figure 4.2 illustrates the distribution of students between the faculties.



**Figure 4.2** The distribution of participants between the faculties

#### **4.7 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

It was decided that the questionnaires would be administered in groups, as only one person is necessary to give instructions and answer related questions. The cost-effectiveness as well as the relatively high response-rate for such administrations were some of the advantages that contributed to the selection of this procedure (Huysamen, 1993). One of the limitations to administering a questionnaire to a group, is the fact that the sample is restricted to a single population and thus may not be representative of the target population.

The questionnaires were administered during the lectures of the selected classes. Permission to administer the questionnaires during lectures was obtained from each lecturer before commencement of the study. The students had the opportunity to participate of their own free choice and to complete the questionnaires in either Afrikaans or English. As the nature of the study's topic is sensitive, all questionnaires were completed anonymously, which is also maintained in the group administration. Any questions and uncertainties pertaining to the questionnaires were clarified by the administrator of the questionnaires as they arose.

## **4.8 PROBLEMS THAT AROSE DURING THE STUDY**

No serious problems were encountered in the completion of this study. Of the 506 students who participated in the study, 20 questionnaires were rendered unusable because of too many unanswered items. Of these 20 students, 17 were undergraduate and three were postgraduate students.

## **4.9 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

The following instruments were employed in the study and each will be discussed separately:

- A biographical questionnaire
- The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale

### **4.9.1 THE BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

The biographical questionnaire was designed to include the independent variables as well as other relevant information. The information obtained by the biographical questionnaire consisted of the participant's gender, home language, race, age, year of study and faculty of study. The biographical questionnaire (in both English and Afrikaans) is set out in Appendix A.

### **4.9.2 THE ILLINOIS RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE SCALE (IRMA)**

The Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA) is a 45-item self-report questionnaire that examines the respondent's level of rape myth acceptance. The original version of the questionnaire, the Rape Myth Acceptance Scale was devised by Burt (1980) and primarily focussed on three constructs, namely: *acceptance of traditional sex role stereotypes, interpersonal violence and adversarial sexual beliefs*. There were, however uncertainties about the validity of the questionnaire's factor structure and dimensions.

Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1999) endeavoured to solve some of the structural problems of the original questionnaire and focussed especially on the wording and clarity of items and the representation of the rape myth construct in their development of an adapted version, named the Illinois Rape Myth Acceptance Scale (IRMA). The end-result is a 45-item questionnaire with 40 rape myth items and five filler items to help control response sets (Payne, Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1999).

Each item of the IRMA is assessed by means of seven point Likert-type response categories ranging from 1 = not at all agree to 7 = very much agree. The total score of the items can be calculated to reflect an assessment of rape myth acceptance. In the analysis of the data, the mean scores are given out of a maximum of seven for comparability of the subscale scores. A greater score corresponds with a greater degree of rape myth acceptance. As the questionnaire was constructed in English, it was translated into Afrikaans, using the back translation method.

The questionnaire consists of seven rape myth subscales that will also be examined in this study. These subscales and the number of items that each subscale consists of, are:

- She asked for it (8 items)
- It was not really rape (5 items)
- He did not mean to (5 items)
- She wanted it (5 items)
- She lied (5 items)
- Rape is a trivial event (5 items)
- Rape is a deviant event (7 items)

### **RELIABILITY**

The overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of the IRMA was calculated by Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1999) to be 0.93. The alpha coefficient for each of the subscales of the questionnaire ranged between 0.74 and 0.84 with an average of 0.79.

As this questionnaire was developed and standardised on an American population, the reliability regarding a South African population is unknown. For this reason, the measuring instrument's Cronbach alpha coefficients will also be calculated for this study. The questionnaire employed in this study (in both the English and Afrikaans translations) is given in Appendix B.

#### **4.10 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

All statistical analyses were carried out by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) computer package (George & Mallery, 1999).

##### **4.10.1 RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT**

The reliability of the IRMA was calculated by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. According to Huysamen (1996), the alpha coefficient indicates the degree to which all items of a questionnaire measure the same construct, thus the internal consistency. The equation for calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the following:

$$\textit{coefficient alpha} = \left\{ \frac{J}{J-1} \right\} \left\{ 1 - \frac{\text{sum of the item variances}}{\text{variance of the total test}} \right\}$$

where J represents the total number of items of the questionnaire (Cronbach, 1951).

The alpha coefficient for the total group participating in the study was found to be 0.92, which indicates a high internal consistency and corresponds with that of Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1999). The alpha coefficient for each of the subscales of the questionnaire ranged between 0.71 and 0.84, which also corresponds with that found by Payne, Lonsway and Fitzgerald.

As the questionnaire was translated from English to Afrikaans for this study, the alpha coefficient was also calculated for both languages. The coefficient for the questionnaires completed in English was 0.93 and for those completed in Afrikaans, the coefficient alpha was 0.92. This indicates a high internal consistency of the questionnaire for both languages.

#### **4.10.2 EFFECT SIZE**

In view of the large sample sizes involved in the study, effect size estimates were computed. Cohen (1977) defines effect size as ‘the degree to which the phenomenon is present in the population’ (p. 9). Effect size is also considered to be the standardised measure of group differences, which may be expressed as the ‘differences in group means divided by their standard deviation’ (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998, p. 352).

Cohen developed the following equation to calculate the effect size for analysis of variance ( $f$ ):

$$f = \frac{\sigma_M}{\sigma}$$

where  $\sigma_M$  represents the standard deviation of the distribution of means and  $\sigma$  represents the standard deviation of the population (Aron & Aron, 1994).

From this, it is evident that the effect size may be increased by two factors, either:

- a.) a large difference among the population means, or
- b.) a small variance within the population

The effect size values may also be estimated from an actual study, using the following equation:

$$\text{estimated } f = \frac{\sqrt{F}}{\sqrt{n}}$$

where  $n$  represents the number of subjects in each group (Aron & Aron, 1994).

Cohen (1977) proposed conventions for  $f$  as the following (Aron & Aron, 1994):

Effect Size	
small	$f = 0.10$
medium	$f = 0.25$
large	$f = 0.40$

The statistical analyses and relevant procedures will be discussed according to the hypotheses in the following section.

#### **4.10.3 MAIN AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF GENDER AND RACE ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

Hypothesis 1 relates to the degree to which the two independent variables of gender and race influence the level of rape myth acceptance. Rape myth acceptance as the dependent variable is represented by the seven subscales as well as the total score. A Multivariate analysis of variance was performed to determine the significance of the main and interaction effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables.



#### **4.10.4 THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF GENDER AND RACE ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

Hypotheses 2.1 to 2.4 focus on the combined effect of gender and race on rape myth acceptance. One-way analyses of variance were conducted for each of the four combinations of the independent variables to determine their effect on rape myth acceptance.

#### **4.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined the research methods undertaken in the research study. The research design was identified, as well as the central research question. The main goals and hypotheses of the study were also stipulated. The methods by which the research participants were selected was discussed and the participants were described according to the relevant demographic variables of gender, race, language, age and level of education. The appropriate data collection procedures, measuring instruments and statistical procedures employed in the study were also examined. The research findings will be the focus of the subsequent chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5 – RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The results of the research study will be discussed in this chapter. The findings of the attitude questionnaire will be outlined according to each hypothesis. The results of the analyses of variance will also be discussed.

### **5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The results of the statistical procedures will be discussed in this section, according to each of the hypotheses.

#### **5.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 1**

**Significant main effects were expected for the independent variables of gender and race on rape myth acceptance. The dependent variable of rape myth acceptance is represented by a total score as well as the following seven rape myth subscales: She asked for it, It was not really rape, He did not mean to, She wanted it, She lied, Rape is a trivial event and Rape is a deviant event. It was hypothesised that males will display significantly greater rape myth acceptance than females on the total score as well as the seven subscales. It was expected that black respondents will exhibit significantly greater rape myth acceptance than white respondents with regard to the total score as well as the subscales.**

A multivariate analysis of variance was performed to cross the two independent variables of gender and race completely. This will determine the significance of the main effects of both gender and race as well as the interaction of these two variables on rape myth acceptance. This analysis was performed for each of the seven rape myth subscales as well as the total rape myth acceptance scores.

The means and standard deviations for the total rape myth acceptance score as well as for the seven rape myth subscales are given in Table 5.1. The findings will be reported according to each of the subscales and the total score.

**Table 5.1 Means and standard deviations of the total scores and the seven subscales according to gender and race**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Total</b>	Male	Black	2.993	1.041	87
		White	2.807	0.961	79
		Total	2.904	1.005	166
	Female	Black	2.217	0.819	149
		White	2.462	0.895	171
		Total	2.348	0.868	320
	Total	Black	2.503	0.980	236
		White	2.571	0.928	250
		Total	2.538	0.953	486
<b>She asked for it</b>	Male	Black	3.078	1.282	87
		White	3.279	1.298	79
		Total	3.173	1.290	166
	Female	Black	2.369	1.104	149
		White	2.967	1.228	171
		Total	2.689	1.208	320
	Total	Black	2.630	1.220	236
		White	3.066	1.257	250
		Total	2.854	1.257	486
<b>It was not really rape</b>	Male	Black	2.308	1.192	87
		White	2.089	1.333	79
		Total	2.204	1.262	166
	Female	Black	1.758	0.943	149
		White	1.757	1.131	171
		Total	1.758	1.046	320
	Total	Black	1.961	1.073	236
		White	1.862	1.206	250
		Total	1.910	1.143	486
<b>He did not mean to</b>	Male	Black	3.526	1.403	87
		White	3.595	1.232	79
		Total	3.559	1.321	166
	Female	Black	2.937	1.360	149
		White	3.444	1.227	171
		Total	3.208	1.313	320
	Total	Black	3.154	1.402	236
		White	3.492	1.228	250
		Total	3.328	1.325	486

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>She wanted it</b>	Male	Black	2.979	1.219	87
		White	2.410	1.230	79
		Total	2.708	1.253	166
	Female	Black	2.124	1.119	149
		White	2.001	1.187	171
		Total	2.058	1.156	320
	Total	Black	2.439	1.226	236
		White	2.130	1.213	250
		Total	2.280	1.228	486
<b>She lied</b>	Male	Black	3.722	1.275	87
		White	3.663	1.040	79
		Total	3.694	1.166	166
	Female	Black	2.631	1.039	149
		White	3.269	1.082	171
		Total	2.972	1.108	320
	Total	Black	3.033	1.246	236
		White	3.394	1.083	250
		Total	3.219	1.178	486
<b>Rape is a trivial event</b>	Male	Black	2.683	1.279	87
		White	1.970	1.212	79
		Total	2.343	1.294	166
	Female	Black	1.662	0.850	149
		White	1.625	1.078	171
		Total	1.642	0.977	320
	Total	Black	2.038	1.139	236
		White	1.734	1.131	250
		Total	1.882	1.144	486
<b>Rape is a deviant event</b>	Male	Black	2.713	1.251	87
		White	2.490	1.122	79
		Total	2.607	1.193	166
	Female	Black	2.022	1.039	149
		White	2.036	1.074	171
		Total	2.030	1.056	320
	Total	Black	2.277	1.168	236
		White	2.179	1.108	250
		Total	2.227	1.137	486

The main and interaction effects of gender and race will be discussed according to each of the subscales, as well as for the total score.

### **She asked for it**

The main and interaction effects for the subscale **She asked for it** is given in Table 5.2, according to gender and race. It is evident that both gender and race have significant main effects on this subscale. Males achieved significantly higher scores than females on the subscale **She asked for it** ( $F(1, 482) = 19.234, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, when race is not brought into consideration, gender significantly influences the scores in this subscale. White respondents achieved significantly higher scores on the subscale **She asked for it** ( $F(1, 482) = 11.802, p = 0.001$ ). Thus, when the gender of the respondent is not taken into consideration, the race of the respondent significantly influences the acceptance of this rape myth.

Male respondents display a significantly greater adherence to this myth than females. White respondents accept this rape myth significantly more than the black respondents of the study do. The greater acceptance of this myth by respondents who are male and respondents who are white, illustrate a tendency to place the responsibility for the rape on the victim and in doing so, justifying the perpetrator's actions.

**Table 5.2 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale 'She asked for it'**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	28.330	19.234 **	0.000	0.038
Race	1	17.384	11.802 **	0.001	0.024
Gender*Race	1	4.295	2.916	0.088	0.006
Error	482	1.473			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

There is a non-significant interaction effect of gender and race on this rape myth subscale ( $F(1, 482) = 2.916, p = 0.088$ ). Thus, the effect of race on the acceptance of this rape myth was found to be similar for male and female respondents.

### **It was not really rape**

The main and interaction effects of gender and race for the subscale **It was not really rape**, are presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale ‘It was not really rape’**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	21.168	16.732 **	0.000	0.034
Race	1	1.332	1.053	0.305	0.002
Gender*Race	1	1.292	1.021	0.313	0.002
Error	482	1.265			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

Table 5.3 indicates a significant main effect for gender on the scores of this subscale, with males displaying more acceptance than females do ( $F(1, 482) = 16.732$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, male respondents are significantly more likely to deny the legitimacy of a rape claim than female respondents are. There is a non-significant main effect for race, with black respondents exhibiting more acceptance of this myth than white respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 1.053$ ,  $p = 0.305$ ). This finding reflects that black respondents tend to deny the truthfulness of the rape and to doubt the victim’s account of the assault more than white respondents do.

The interaction effect of gender and race on the subscale **It was not really rape** was not found to be significant ( $F(1, 482) = 1.021$ ,  $p = 0.313$ ). Thus, the significant effect of gender on the acceptance of this rape myth is similar for white and black respondents.

### **He did not mean to**

The main and interaction effects of gender and race on the rape myth **He did not mean to** are displayed in Table 5.4. There is a significant main effect for gender on this subscale, with male respondents achieving significantly higher scores than female respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 8.799, p = 0.003$ ). Thus, males are significantly more likely than females to exonerate the perpetrator for the rape. A significant main effect for race was also present for the subscale **He did not mean to**, with white respondents displaying significantly more acceptance of this myth than black respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 5.332, p = 0.021$ ). The white respondents of this study are significantly more likely to vindicate the rapist than the black respondents are.

**Table 5.4 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale ‘He did not mean to’**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	14.917	8.799 **	0.003	0.018
Race	1	9.038	5.332 *	0.021	0.011
Gender*Race	1	5.250	3.097	0.079	0.006
Error	482	1.695			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

There is a non-significant interaction effect between gender and race on the subscale **He did not mean to** ( $F(1, 482) = 3.097, p = 0.079$ ). Thus, gender exerts a similar effect on the acceptance of this myth for white and black respondents.

### **She wanted it**

The main and interaction effects of gender and race on the acceptance of this myth are presented in Table 5.5. A significant main effect for gender is present, with males achieving significantly higher scores than females for the subscale **She wanted it** ( $F(1, 482) = 31.321, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, gender exerts a significant influence on the acceptance of this rape myth. Males are more likely than females to believe that the

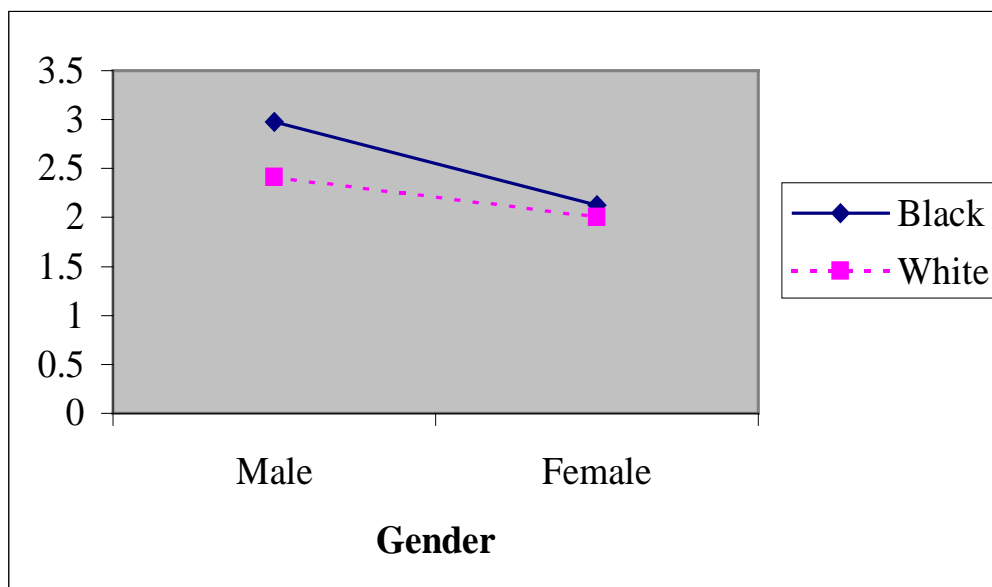
victim invited the attack and that she is to be held responsible for the rape. There is a significant main effect for race on this subscale, with black respondents displaying significantly greater acceptance of this myth than white respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 9.362, p = 0.002$ ). The black respondents are more likely to believe that the victim was responsible for the rape and that she deserved what happened to her than the white respondents are.

**Table 5.5 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale ‘She wanted it’**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	43.573	31.321 **	0.000	0.061
Race	1	13.025	9.362 **	0.002	0.019
Gender*Race	1	5.439	3.910 *	0.049	0.008
Error	482	1.391			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$



**Figure 5.1 Graph of the interaction between gender and race on the subscale ‘She wanted it’**



There is a significant interaction effect between gender and race for the subscale **She wanted it** ( $F(1, 482) = 3.910, p = 0.049$ ). This indicates that the effect of race on the acceptance of this rape myth is different for male and female respondents. The interaction effect is illustrated by Figure 5.1.

### She lied

Table 5.6 presents the main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale **She lied**. A significant main effect for gender was found, with males exhibiting significantly more acceptance of this myth than females ( $F(1, 482) = 49.669, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, males are significantly more likely to disbelieve a rape victim's acknowledgement of a rape than females are. Race also exerted a significant main effect for the subscale **She lied**, with white respondents achieving significantly higher scores on this scale than black respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 7.563, p = 0.006$ ). Thus, the white respondents in this study are significantly more inclined than the black respondents to doubt a rape victim's disclosure of the assault.

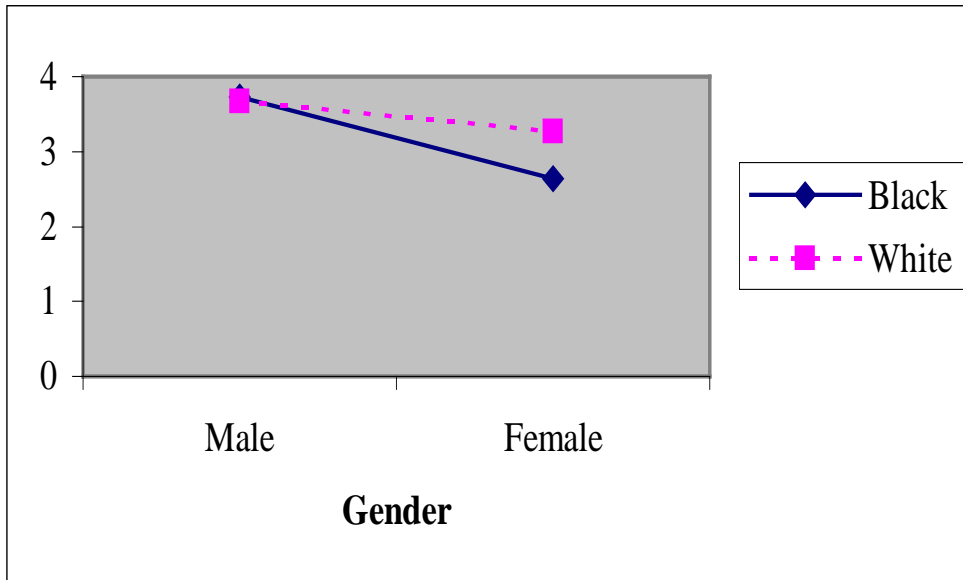
**Table 5.6 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale 'She lied'**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	60.089	49.669 **	0.000	0.093
Race	1	9.150	7.563 **	0.006	0.015
Gender*Race	1	13.221	10.928 **	0.001	0.022
Error	482	1.210			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

A significant interaction effect between gender and race was found for the rape myth **She lied** ( $F(1, 482) = 10.928, p = 0.001$ ). This finding demonstrates the fact that the influence of race on the acceptance of this rape myth is different for male and female respondents. The interaction effect of gender and race on the subscale **She lied** is depicted in Figure 5.2.



**Figure 5.2 Graph of the interaction between gender and race on the subscale 'She lied'**

**Rape is a trivial event**

The significance of the main and interaction effects of gender and race on this subscale is given in Table 5.7.

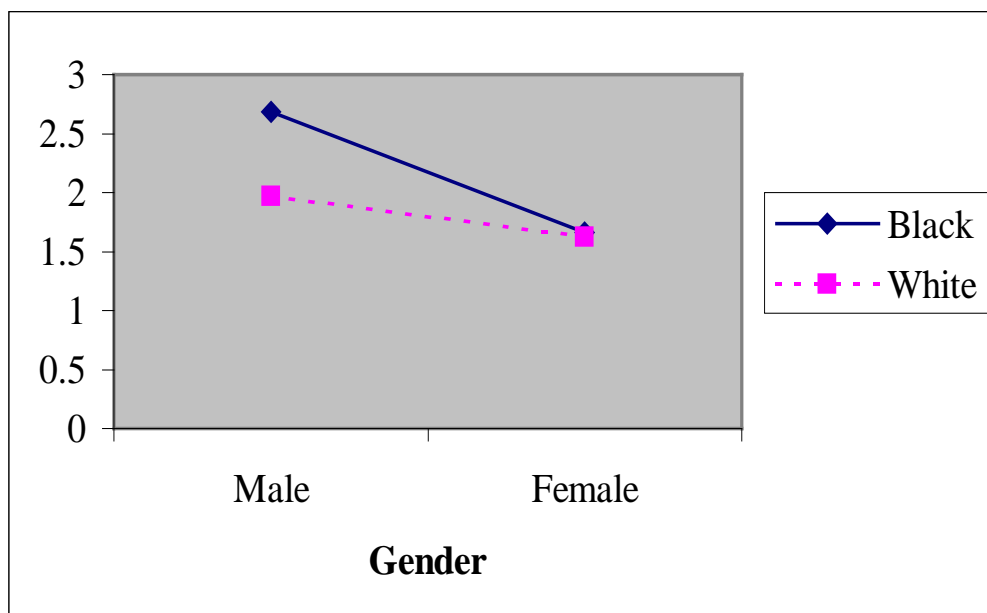
**Table 5.7 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale 'Rape is a trivial event'**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	50.832	43.766 **	0.000	0.083
Race	1	15.335	13.203 **	0.000	0.027
Gender*Race	1	12.446	10.716 **	0.001	0.022
Error	482	1.161			

\*  $p < 0,05$   
 \*\*  $p < 0,01$

Table 5.7 indicates a significant main effect for gender for the scores on the subscale **Rape is a trivial event**. Males achieved significantly higher scores than females on this subscale ( $F(1, 482) = 43.766, p = 0.000$ ). This finding indicates that males are more likely than females to minimise the seriousness of rape. A significant main effect for race was found for the subscale **Rape is a trivial event**, with black respondents achieving significantly greater scores than white respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 13.203, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, the black respondents are significantly more likely to trivialise the importance of rape, than the white respondents are.

There is a significant interaction effect between gender and race on the subscale **Rape is a trivial event** ( $F(1, 482) = 10.716, p = 0.001$ ). The influence of gender on the acceptance of this myth was found to be different for black and white respondents. Figure 5.3 illustrates the interaction between gender and race on this subscale.



**Figure 5.3** Graph of the interaction between gender and race on the subscale ‘Rape is a trivial event’

### **Rape is a deviant event**

The results for the main and interaction effects of gender and race on this subscale are presented in Table 5.8. There is a significant main effect for gender on the subscale **Rape is a deviant event**. Males exhibited significantly greater adherence to this myth than females ( $F(1, 482) = 29.219, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, the male respondents are more likely than the females to believe that rape is only committed by mentally insane individuals. Race did not exert a significant main effect on this subscale, with black respondents displaying higher scores on the subscale **Rape is a deviant event** than white respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 0.971, p = 0.325$ ). Thus, black respondents displayed a non-significantly greater tendency than white respondents to accept this myth.

**Table 5.8 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on the subscale ‘Rape is a deviant event’**

Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	35.694	29.219 **	0.000	0.057
Race	1	1.187	0.971	0.325	0.002
Gender*Race	1	1.523	1.247	0.265	0.003
Error	482	1.222			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

From Table 5.8 it can be seen that there is a non-significant interaction effect between gender and race ( $F(1, 482) = 1.247, p = 0.265$ ). Thus, the effect of gender on the acceptance of the myth **Rape is a deviant event**, is similar for black and white respondents.

### **Total rape myth acceptance**

The main and interaction effects of gender and race on the total rape myth acceptance scores are presented in Table 5.9.

**Table 5.9 Main and interaction effects of gender and race on total rape myth acceptance**

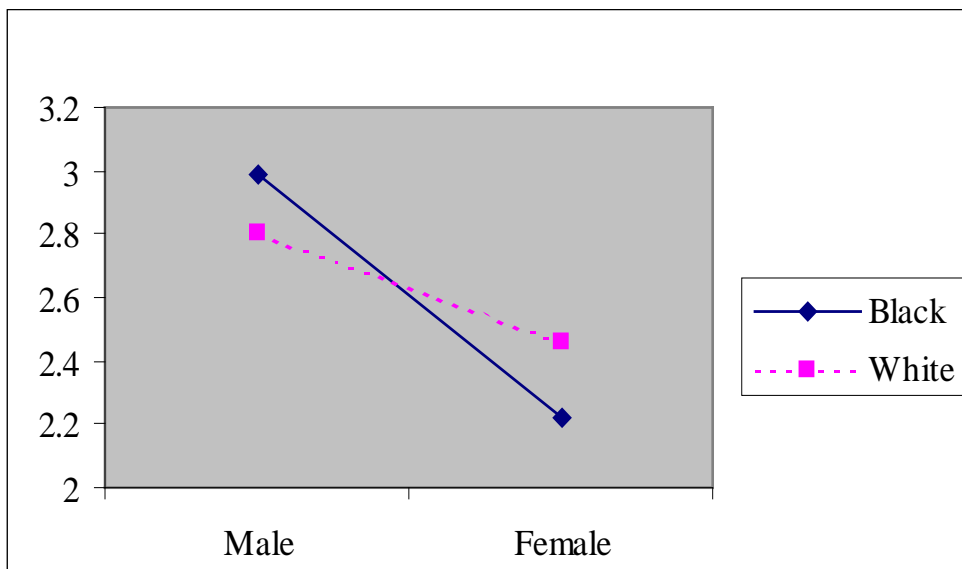
Source	df	Mean square	F	Significance	Effect size
Gender	1	34.260	41.220 **	0.000	0.079
Race	1	0.098	0.117	0.732	0.000
Gender*Race	1	5.044	6.069 *	0.014	0.012
Error	482	0.831			

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

As can be seen from Table 5.9, gender exerts a significant main effect on the total rape myth acceptance scores, with males obtaining significantly higher total scores than females ( $F(1, 482) = 41.220, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, the gender of a respondent was a significant determinant of total rape myth acceptance. There is a non-significant main effect for race on the total rape myth acceptance score with white respondents achieving greater total rape myth acceptance scores than black respondents ( $F(1, 482) = 0.117, p = 0.732$ ). This indicates that race was not a significant determinant of the respondents' total rape myth acceptance scores.

A significant interaction effect between gender and race on the total rape myth acceptance scores was found ( $F(1, 482) = 6.069, p = 0.014$ ). This indicates that the effect of gender on the total rape myth acceptance of the respondents differs for white and black respondents. The interaction effect between gender and race on the total rape myth acceptance is depicted in Figure 5.4.



**Figure 5.4** Graph of the interaction between gender and race on total rape myth acceptance

These findings indicate highly significant differences in the rape myth acceptance of males and females, with male respondents invariably displaying significantly greater acceptance of rape myths than female respondents do. The finding corresponds with that of previous research, which also consistently indicates a significantly higher level of rape myth acceptance among males than females (Bell, Kuriloff, Lottes, Nathanson, Judge & Fogelson-Turet, 1992; Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams, 1991; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; White & Kurpius, 1999).

The finding that white respondents achieved higher total rape myth acceptance scores than black respondents contradicts the trend noted by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) that there is less endorsement of rape myths among white respondents than black respondents. With regard to the seven subscales, there were not consistent findings according to race. These findings suggest that race in itself may not exert a direct, constant influence on rape myth acceptance. It seems as if black and white participants endorse rape myths that blame the victim for the assault, but they differ in the blame they place on the victim. Black respondents are more likely to minimise

the seriousness of the rape, whereas white respondents are more inclined to exonerate the perpetrator from blame.

Although significant main and interaction effects for both gender and race were found, the small effect sizes indicate that the findings should be interpreted with caution. As seen from the equation in section 4.10.2, effect size is influenced by both the magnitude of  $F$ , as well as the number of research participants. As the sample sizes for this study are large, the effects may be attributed to the large number of participants instead of the effect of the independent variables.

## 5.2.2 HYPOTHESIS 2

One-way analyses of variance were performed to determine the significance of the differences between the respondents' total rape myth acceptance when considering the four combinations of the two independent variables of gender and race. The results are presented in Table 5.10.

**Table 5.10 Summary of analysis of variance between gender and race**

		N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	$F$	Significance
<b>Black</b>	<b>Male</b>	87	2.9925	1.0409			
	<b>Female</b>	149	2.2166	0.8195			
<b>Significance of difference</b>					1	40.185 **	0.000
<b>White</b>	<b>Male</b>	79	2.8073	0.9609			
	<b>Female</b>	171	2.4617	0.8945			
<b>Significance of difference</b>					1	7.692 **	0.006
<b>Male</b>	<b>Black</b>	87	2.9925	1.0409			
	<b>White</b>	79	2.8073	0.9609			
<b>Significance of difference</b>					1	1.411	0.237
<b>Female</b>	<b>Black</b>	149	2.2166	0.8195			
	<b>White</b>	171	2.4617	0.8945			
<b>Significance of difference</b>					1	6.460 *	0.012

\*  $p < 0,05$

\*\*  $p < 0,01$

### **Hypothesis 2.1**

**It was expected that black males would display significantly greater total rape myth acceptance than black females would.**

Black males achieved significantly higher total rape myth acceptance scores than black females ( $F(1, 234) = 40.185, p = 0.000$ ). Thus, the main effect of gender that was found in Hypothesis 1 also holds true when only the black respondents are considered.

### **Hypothesis 2.2**

**It was hypothesised that white male respondents will achieve significantly greater total rape myth acceptance scores than the white female respondents would.**

White male respondents achieved significantly higher total rape myth acceptance scores than white female respondents ( $F(1, 248) = 7.692, p = 0.006$ ). Thus, when only the white respondents are considered, gender still exerts a significant influence on the total rape myth acceptance scores.

### **Hypothesis 2.3**

**The black male respondents were expected to achieve significantly greater total rape myth acceptance scores than the white male respondents.**

Black males achieved higher total scores than white males, but the difference is not statistically significant ( $F(1, 248) = 1.411, p = 0.237$ ). Thus, when only considering the male respondents, there was not a significant difference between the two compared races on the total rape myth acceptance scores.



### **Hypothesis 2.4**

**It was hypothesised that the black female respondents would achieve significantly greater total rape myth acceptance scores than the white female respondents would.**

White females achieved significantly higher total rape myth acceptance scores than black females ( $F(1, 248) = 6.460, p = 0.012$ ). Thus, race exerts a significant effect on rape myth acceptance when only female respondents are examined, but in the opposite direction as was expected.

Thus, when only considering the total rape myth acceptance scores, black male respondents accepted the most rape myths and black female respondents accepted the least rape myths.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study display both similarities and differences to that of previous research abroad. These findings replicated the trend found in numerous other studies that males accept more rape myths than females do. The variable of race did not account for consistent differences in rape myth acceptance. White respondents displayed slightly greater total rape myth acceptance, but there were differences in the trend noted when the subscales were regarded separately. There was a significant interaction effect between gender and race on the total rape myth acceptance scores as well as on three of the subscales considered. Comparisons of the findings pertaining to the individual subscales were not possible, as there are no previous research studies that focussed on the effects of gender and race on the individual subscales. The small effect sizes indicate that these findings may be attributed to the large number of research participants, instead of to the magnitude of the independent variables' effects on rape myth acceptance. The simultaneous effect of gender and race on rape myth acceptance found that black male respondents accepted the most rape myths and black female respondents accepted the least rape myths.

## **CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will highlight the main findings of this study in the light of the proposed hypotheses and discuss the implications for future research. Possible shortcomings of the study will also be highlighted and some suggestions will be given.

### **6.2 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The main research findings will be discussed according to the proposed hypotheses. Each section will deal with the present study's findings and how it relates to previous research.

#### **6.2.1 HYPOTHESIS 1 – THE MAIN AND INTERACTION EFFECTS OF GENDER AND RACE ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

There was a significant main effect for gender on the total rape myth acceptance as well as the seven subscales. Similar to various previous studies, there were significant differences between males and females with regard to the acceptance of rape myths. Male participants displayed consistently higher rape myth acceptance with regard to the total scores as well as the individual subscales of the questionnaire. This corresponds with the findings of other researchers who found that gender was a significant determinant of rape myth acceptance (Bell, Kuriloff, Lottes, Nathanson, Judge & Fogelson-Turet, 1992; Holcomb, Holcomb, Sondag & Williams, 1991; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994; White & Kurpius, 1999).

White respondents displayed slightly greater total rape myth acceptance than black respondents did. This is inconsistent with the findings of Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994) who observed an opposite trend. There were also inconsistent differences between white and black respondents on the seven subscales. This finding is also

contrary to that which was hypothesised. A possible explanation for this may be the fact that the South African respondents hold different views towards rape than those of other countries and as such, display different trends in rape myth acceptance.

Black and white students endorse rape myths, but the findings indicate that the two groups may differ in the types of myths that are endorsed. Some trends are noted when considering the effect of race on the rape myth subscales. White respondents are more likely to place the responsibility for the rape on the victim and to exonerate the perpetrator from blame. Black respondents are more accepting of rape myths that indicate that the victim invited or deserved the rape. The white respondents of this study are more likely to disbelieve the victim's acknowledgement of rape than the black respondents are. Black respondents are more likely to endorse rape myths that minimise the seriousness of the offence.

There were significant interaction effects between gender and race on the total rape myth acceptance. Thus, gender exerted a dissimilar effect on rape myth acceptance for white and black respondents. Significant interaction effects between gender and race were found on three of the rape myth subscales. These findings pertaining to the individual subscales could not be compared with that of other studies, as there is a lack of studies that focus on the influence of gender and race on the individual subscales. The inconsistency with which race influences rape myth acceptance may indicate a complex influence on rape myth acceptance. It may also reflect the presence of external influences, possibly related to race, that exert an influence on rape myth acceptance.

The small effect sizes encountered in this study indicate that the research findings should be interpreted with caution. The statistically significant effects that were observed may be attributed to the large number of research participants, instead of to the effect of the independent variables on rape myth acceptance.

## **6.2.2 HYPOTHESIS 2 – THE COMBINED EFFECTS OF GENDER AND RACE ON RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE**

Significant gender differences were found when black and white respondent groups were examined separately, with males displaying significantly greater rape myth acceptance than females. When only male respondents were considered, black respondents displayed greater rape myth acceptance than white respondents. For females, white respondents exhibited significantly greater rape myth acceptance than black respondents did. Thus, black male respondents displayed the greatest rape myth acceptance and black female respondents exhibited the least rape myth acceptance.

### **Conclusions**

It is evident from these findings that gender plays a significant part in determining rape myth acceptance. Males are more likely to blame the rape victim and to exonerate the perpetrator for the assault than females are. Race also exerts an influence on rape myth acceptance, but this effect is inconsistent when considering the individual subscales. To reduce the level of rape myth acceptance, intervention strategies should thus place more focus on the education of males on rape and its effects, irrespective of their race.

## **6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY**

The participants of the present study were not randomly selected, but were part of captive audiences who were randomly selected. This method was chosen for its cost-effectiveness and convenience. The representativeness of the sample selected of the total student population may thus have been compromised.

As the target population of this study only consisted of university students, the sample was fairly homogenous. This sample limits the generalisability of the research findings to other populations. Future studies may focus their research on populations similar to those of Burt (1980) and Field (1978) who compared the rape myth acceptance of rapists, police officers, crisis workers and the general public. These

samples would generate findings that would be generalisable to a wider population. It is generally accepted that students display less endorsement of rape myths than do members of the general public (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Thus, a greater level of rape myth acceptance may be expected from a non-student population. The student sample was chosen as their developmental stage renders them susceptible to cultural mythology regarding gender, sexuality and violence. While it is important to continue research on student samples and their rape myth acceptance, future studies could expand their participants to different populations.

The questionnaires were only translated into Afrikaans and English, but a great proportion of the research participants were African, for whom neither of the two languages is their mother tongue. It was accepted that as all participants were enrolled students at the University of the Free State, they would have a good understanding of at least one of the two selected languages. The administrator of the test dealt with any uncertainties pertaining to the questionnaire, but there may still have been misunderstanding of some of the questions. In future research, this can be avoided by translating the questionnaires into one or more of the relevant African languages, to ensure greater comprehension.

Although measures were taken to ensure that the participants understood the questionnaire, scales such as the IRMA are unquestionably time and culture bound. The phrases used in the questionnaire may be colloquial in nature, which may be unclear to certain people and become outdated relatively quickly. The particular questions may also not be relevant to all members of South African cultures. The domain of rape myth acceptance may differ markedly among cultures other than those in which the IRMA was developed. The present items may thus be inadequate in exploring the rape myths that are unique to the South African culture.

This study employed a large number of participants, which necessitated further scrutiny of the effect sizes. The small effect sizes that were encountered imply that the significant findings may be attributable to factors other than the variables of gender and race. Future studies may wish to make use of smaller sample sizes in order to achieve a more accurate indication of the effect of demographic variables on rape myth acceptance.

## **6.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future studies may wish to explore the relationship between rape myth acceptance and demographic variables from a qualitative viewpoint. In this way, the concept of rape myth acceptance may become clearer and new rape myths could be identified. The study may even identify candidates for an intervention program that aims to decrease rape myth acceptance, decrease the likelihood of sexual aggression and increase the person's knowledge regarding rape. The female participants of this study were not asked to disclose whether they have been the victims of rape or attempted rape. This issue may be explored in a sensitive, qualitative environment and there could be assessed whether it exerts a significant influence on rape myth acceptance. Previous studies have also explored the effect that contact with a rape victim has on rape myth acceptance, an aspect that could also be a focus of future research.

As seen from the present study's findings, as well as that of Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994), the effect of race on rape myth acceptance is complex. The influence of race may be confounded by external influences such as culture and religion. Future studies may wish to explore these external influences and their separate influence on rape myth acceptance, instead of solely focussing on race as a determining variable.

The scale that was employed in this study does not differentiate between attitudes towards stranger, acquaintance and date rape. The attitudinal variables relating to each of these three types of rape may be unique and are not assessed by the IRMA. Although this study illustrated that the rape myths identified in international studies are also held by South African students, rape myths that are unique to the South African culture may also exist. A South African rape myth scale could be designed to assess whether such unique attitudes exist. Another advantage of such a scale would be the fact that it would take the diversity of the South African culture into account, which would make it more suitable for assessing rape myths in South Africa.

The possible effect of different fields of study was not a focus of this study and thus was not considered in the report of the findings. The field of study may have a determining effect on rape myth acceptance, as certain domains are likely to have

contact with rape victims, such as the psychological and medical professions. Thus, future studies with student populations may wish to examine the effect of different study fields on rape myth acceptance. The existence of specific rape myths that pertain to certain occupations could also be a focus of future study. The endorsement of rape myths that relate to the distrust of a victim's account of the rape may influence the probability of a police officer of opening an investigation. Similarly, the acceptance of rape myths that place the blame on the victim will significantly influence the actions of people in legal occupations.

Another factor that may have influenced this study's results, is the contribution of age to rape myth acceptance. Burt (1980) found that age is positively correlated with rape myth acceptance. Future studies may also wish to explore the effect of different demographic variables such as age and religion in determining rape myth acceptance.

## **6.5 CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed to determine the extent to which rape myths are accepted among university students in South Africa. The objective was to improve the understanding of the rape myth construct in the cross-cultural South African domain. It focussed specifically on the influence of the demographic variables of gender and race on the degree of rape myth acceptance. Even though some of the findings correspond with that of studies abroad, there are indications that there are some unique differences in the field of rape myth acceptance in South Africa. As rape is such a serious crime in this country, more efforts should be made to increase people's awareness and knowledge of rape myths among all populations. This is likely to lead to a decrease in the occurrence of rape as well as the reporting of rape.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear student,

I am currently doing research on people's attitudes regarding rape. Your participation in this research will contribute to a better understanding of this field.

All information provided will be treated strictly confidentially and anonymously. Try to be as honest as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. **Please do not leave any questions unanswered, because that will have an influence on the research.** If you really don't know which option to choose, pick the one that first comes to mind. It should not take longer than twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire. We appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

**PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER WITH A CROSS.**

**1. Are you...?**

Male.....  1

Female.....  2

**2. What is your home language?**

Afrikaans.....  1

English.....  2

Southern Sotho .....  3

Other, specify.....  4

**3. Which ethnic group do you belong to?**

Black .....  1

Asian.....  2

Coloured .....  3

White.....  4

**4. What is your age?**

- 18-19.....  1
- 20-21.....  2
- 22-23.....  3
- 24 or older.....  4

**5. What is your academic status?**

- second year.....  1
- third year .....  2
- honours .....  3
- master's.....  4
- other, specify .....  5

Geagte student,

Ek doen tans navorsing oor studente se houdings teenoor verkragting. U deelname aan hierdie navorsing sal 'n waardevolle bydrae op hierdie gebied lewer.

Alle inligting wat verstrekk word, is streng vertroulik en anoniem. Dit sal hoog op prys gestel word indien u alle vrae so eerlik as moontlik beantwoord. Daar is geen regte of verkeerde antwoorde nie. **Moet asseblief nie enige vrae onbeantwoord laat nie, want dit sal die navorsingsresultate beïnvloed.** Indien u regtig nie weet watter opsie om te kies nie, kies die een waaraan u eerste dink. Die vraelys behoort nie langer as twintig minute te neem om in te vul nie. Ons waardeer u bereidwilligheid om aan hierdie navorsing deel te neem.

### MAAK 'N KRUISIE IN DIE BLOKKIE VAN U KEUSE

#### 1. Is u...?

Manlik.....  1

Vroulik.....  2

#### 2. Wat is u huistaal?

Afrikaans.....  1

Engels.....  2

Suid-Sotho.....  3

Ander, spesifiseer.....  4

#### 3. Aan watter etniese groep behoort u?

Swart.....  1

Asiër.....  2

Bruin.....  3

Wit.....  4

**4. Wat is u ouderdom?**

18-19.....	1
20-21.....	2
22-23.....	3
24 of ouer.....	4

**5. In watter akademiese jaar is u?**

2de jaar.....	1
derde jaar.....	2
honneurs.....	3
magister.....	4
ander, spesifiseer.....	5

## APPENDIX B

### ILLINOIS RAPE MYTH ACCEPTANCE SCALE (IRMA)

<b>Choose one of the statements: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Slightly Disagree, 4-Neutral, 5-Slightly Agree, 6-Agree, 7-Strongly Agree</b>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. If a woman is raped while she is drunk, she is at least somewhat responsible for letting things get out of control.							
2. Although most women wouldn't admit it, they generally find being physically forced into sex a real "turn-on".							
3. When men rape, it is because of their strong desire for sex.							
4. 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							
5. Women who are caught having an illicit affair sometimes claim that it was rape.							
6. Newspapers should not release the name of a rape victim to the public.							
7. Many so-called rape victims are actually women who had sex and "changed their minds" afterwards.							
8. Many women secretly desire to be raped.							
9. Rape mainly occurs on the "bad" side of town.							
10. Usually, it is only women who do things like hang out in bars and sleep around that are raped.							
11. Most rapists are not caught by the police.							
12. If a woman does not physically fight back, you can't really say that it was rape.							
13. Men from nice middle-class homes almost never rape.							
14. Rape isn't as big a problem as some feminists would like people to think.							
15. When women go around wearing low-cut tops and short skirts, they're just asking for trouble.							
16. Rape accusations are often used as a way of getting back at men.							
17. A rape probably didn't happen if the woman has no bruises or marks.							

<b>Choose one of the statements: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Slightly Disagree, 4-Neutral, 5-Slightly Agree, 6-Agree, 7-Strongly Agree</b>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Many women find being forced to have sex very arousing.							
19. If a woman goes home with a man she doesn't know, it is her own fault if she is raped.							
20. Rapists are usually sexually frustrated individuals.							
21. All women should have access to self-defence classes.							
22. It is usually only women who dress suggestively that are raped.							
23. Some women prefer to have sex forced upon them so they don't have to feel guilty about it.							
24. If the rapist doesn't have a weapon, you really can't call it a rape.							
25. When a woman is a sexual tease, eventually she is going to get into trouble.							
26. Being raped isn't as bad as being mugged and beaten.							
27. Rape is unlikely to happen in the woman's own familiar neighbourhood.							
28. In reality, women are almost never raped by their boyfriends.							
29. Women tend to exaggerate how much rape affects them.							
30. When a man is very sexually aroused, he may not even realise that the woman is resisting.							
31. A lot of women lead a man on and then they cry rape.							
32. It is preferable that a female police officer conducts the questioning when a woman reports a rape.							
33. A lot of times, women who claim they were raped just have emotional problems.							
34. If a woman doesn't physically resist sex – even when protesting verbally – it really can't be considered rape.							
35. Rape almost never happens in the woman's own home.							
36. A woman who "teases" men deserves anything that might happen.							
37. When women are raped, it's often because the way they said "no" was ambiguous.							



<b>Choose one of the statements: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Slightly Disagree, 4-Neutral, 5-Slightly Agree, 6-Agree, 7-Strongly Agree</b>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. If a woman isn't a virgin, then it shouldn't be a big deal if her date forces her to have sex.							
39. Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away.							
40. This society should devote more effort to preventing rape.							
41. A woman who dresses in skimpy clothes should not be surprised if a man tries to force her to have sex.							
42. Rape happens when a man's sex drive gets out of control.							
43. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on the first date is implying that she wants to have sex.							
44. Many women actually enjoy sex after the guy uses a little force.							
45. If a woman claims to have been raped but has no bruises or scrapes, she probably shouldn't be taken too seriously.							

<b>Kies een van die stellings: 1-Verskil ten sterkste, 2-Verskil, 3-Verskil effens, 4-Neutraal, 5-Stem effens saam, 6-Stem saam, 7-Stem beslis saam</b>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. As 'n vrou verkrag word terwyl sy dronk is, is sy ten minste gedeeltelik daarvoor verantwoordelik as sy toelaat dat dinge hand uitruk.							
2. Alhoewel die meeste vroue dit nie sal erken nie, vind hulle dit aantreklik (a "turn-on") om gedwing te word om seksuele omgang te hê.							
3. Wanneer mans verkragting pleeg, doen hulle dit as gevolg van hul sterk begeerte na seksuele omgang.							
4. As 'n vrou bereid is om met 'n ou te "vry" is dit nie so erg as hy so 'n bietjie verder gaan en seksuele omgang met haar het nie.							
5. Vroue wat uitgevang word dat hulle 'n verbode liefdesverhouding het, sê soms dat dit verkragting was.							
6. Koerante behoort nie die naam van 'n verkragting-slagoffer aan die publiek bekend maak nie.							
7. Baie sogenaamde verkragtingslagoffers is inderwaarheid vroue wat seksuele omgang gehad het en later "van plan verander het".							
8. Baie vroue het 'n geheime begeerte om verkrag te word.							
9. Verkragting vind hoofsaaklik "aan die verkeerde kant van die treinspoor" plaas.							
10. Dit is gewoonlik net vroue wat in kroeë kuier en rondslaap wat verkrag word.							
11. Die meeste verkragters word nie deur die polisie gevang nie.							
12. As 'n vrou nie fisies terugbakei nie, kan 'n mens nie sê dat dit regtig verkragting was nie.							
13. Mans uit goeie middelklasgesinne pleeg amper nooit verkragting nie.							
14. Verkragting is nie so 'n groot probleem soos wat sekere feministe mense wil laat glo nie.							
15. As vroue in laehalsbloese en kort rompe rondloop, vra hulle net vir moeilikheid.							
16. Verkragtingsaanklagte word dikwels gebruik om mans terug te kry.							
17. Daar het waarskynlik nie verkragting plaasgevind as die vrou geen kneusplekke of merke het nie.							

<b>Kies een van die stellings: 1-Verskil ten sterkste, 2-Verskil, 3-Verskil effens, 4-Neutraal, 5-Stem effens saam, 6-Stem saam, 7-Stem beslis saam</b>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Baie vroue word seksueel aangewakker wanneer hulle gedwing word om seksuele omgang te hê							
19. As 'n vrou huis toe gaan saam met 'n man wat sy nie ken nie, is dit haar eie skuld as sy verkrag word.							
20. Verkragters is gewoonlik individue wat seksueel gefrustreerd is.							
21. Alle vroue behoort toegang te hê tot selfverdedigingsklasse.							
22. Dit is gewoonlik net vroue wat suggestief aantrek wat verkrag word.							
23. Sommige vroue verkies om gedwing te word om seksuele omgang te hê, want dan hoef hulle nie skuldig te voel daarvoor nie.							
24. As die verkragter nie 'n wapen het nie, kan 'n mens dit nie regtig verkragting noem nie.							
25. As 'n vrou seksueel uitlokkend is, sal sy op die ou end in die moeilikheid kom.							
26. Om verkrag te word, is nie so erg soos om beroof of aangerand te word nie.							
27. Dit is onwaarskynlik dat 'n vrou in haar eie woonbuurt verkrag sal word.							
28. Vroue word in werklikheid byna nooit deur hul kêrels verkrag nie.							
29. Vroue is geneig om die effek wat verkragting op hulle het, te oordryf.							
30. Wanneer 'n man seksueel baie gestimuleer is, sal hy moontlik nie eens agterkom dat 'n vrou weerstand bied nie.							
31. Baie vroue gee mans aanleiding en sê dan dat dit verkragting was.							
32. Wanneer 'n vrou 'n verkragting aanmeld, behoort 'n vroulike polisiebeampte verkieslik die ondervraging te behartig.							
33. Dikwels wanneer vroue beweer dat hulle verkrag is, het hulle eintlik maar net emosionele probleme.							
34. As 'n vrou nie fisies weerstand bied teen seksuele omgang nie – selfs al protesteer sy verbaal – kan dit nie werklik as verkragting beskou word nie.							

<b>Kies een van die stellings: 1-Verskil ten sterkste, 2-Verskil, 3-Verskil effens, 4-Neutraal, 5-Stem effens saam, 6-Stem saam, 7-Stem beslis saam</b>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. Verkragting vind amper nooit in 'n vrou se eie huis plaas nie.							
36. 'n Vrou wat mans "terg" verdien enige iets wat mag gebeur.							
37. Wanneer vroue verkrag word is dit dikwels omdat hulle op 'n dubbelsinnige wyse "nee" gesê het.							
38. As 'n vrou nie 'n maagd is nie, behoort dit nie 'n groot probleem te wees as die man met wie sy uitgegegaan het haar dwing om seksuele omgang te hê nie.							
39. Dit is gewoonlik nie mans se voorneme om vroue te dwing om seksuele omgang te hê nie, maar soms raak hulle net seksueel in vervoering.							
40. Hierdie samelewing behoort meer moeite doen om verkragting te voorkom.							
41. 'n Vrou wat skamelik geklee is behoort nie verbaas te wees as 'n man haar probeer dwing om seksuele omgang te hê nie.							
42. Verkragting vind plaas wanneer 'n man se seksuele drang buite beheer raak.							
43. 'n Vrou wat ná die eerste aand uit met 'n man na sy huis of woonstel gaan, impliseer sy dat sy seksuele omgang wil hê.							
44. Baie vroue geniet eintlik seksuele omgang nadat die ou 'n bietjie geweld gebruik het.							
45. As 'n vrou daarop aanspraak maak dat sy verkrag is, maar sy het geen kneus- of krapplekke nie, hoef sy seker nie té ernsig opgeneem te word nie.							