



**THE SILENT VICTIM: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON THE NATURE OF MALE  
SEXUAL VICTIMISATION IN UMLAZI, KWAZULU-NATAL**

by

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## DECLARATION

I, Andiswa Naledi Zondo, hereby declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my own unaided work.
- (ii) This research has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) The sources have been properly referenced both in-text and in the reference section.

Signature of Candidate



Date: 01 December 2023

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to every male individual who has been a victim of sexual violence and rape.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*“She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.*

*She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.”*

***Proverbs 31:25 – 26***

To my Lord and Saviour, who paved the way for this journey. He was always on time and never delayed, and when I felt like giving up, I was reminded that my strength would come from Him and that I could do ALL things! Thank you, Lord.

I would like to thank the following people:

**My parents and family**, I thank you so much for your love. Thank you for supporting me without question. Thank you for believing in me, especially when I felt it was too hard and started doubting myself. You never failed to encourage me and always reminded me of my capability. Your prayers carried me through this journey. I love you always.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored the phenomenon of male rape and focused on how the justice system currently responds to sexual violence against men. Prior to the amendment of the Sexual Offences Act of 2007 men were excluded from definitions and laws of rape, and this consequently caused their reluctance to report this form of sexual abuse when they had been exploited as victims. Men were also excluded as victims of rape from research on sexual violence, and a lack of understanding and knowledge about this crime made society believe that male rape was a myth; consequently, the myth prevailed that men could not be raped or sexually abused. Against this background, the study set out to understand the gendered stereotyping of femininity and masculinity as constructed by society to determine if it is perceptions of masculinity affect men's willingness, or unwillingness, to report sexual abuse. The under-reporting of male rape and the neglect of male rape by the former legal framework denied many male rape victims any justice or recourse. Currently, analyses of the issue of male rape have raised important questions about the treatment of male rape victims and their human rights, as many are still deprived of justice due to exclusion, stigma, and denial. The issue of male rape must be acknowledged and understood to ensure that it is appropriately decisively addressed as a crime, as only then will all male victims of rape receive justice and the perpetrators be apprehended and punished. A clear and unambiguous scholarly understanding of male rape has the potential curb sexual violence against men and boys through improved policies and better implementation of the law.

**Key Terms:** *Male rape; sexual assault; psychological effects; secondary victimisation; community.*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CPF	-	Community Police Forum
CSO	-	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
DW	-	Deutsche Welle
FBI	-	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GBV	-	Gender-Based Violence
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTSD	-	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SAPS	-	South African Police Service
SGBV	-	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UCR	-	Uniform Crime Report
UK	-	United Kingdom
UN	-	United Nations
USA	-	United States of America

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Crime in South Africa has been escalating steadily despite the advent of democracy, and increasing incidences of sexual assault and rape have been a major concern as demonstrated by statistics on victims of this form of abuse. As a result, South Africa is infamously called ‘the rape capital of the world’ as it is notorious for the highest rates of rape in the world (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002). Townships in South Africa experience higher levels of crime compared to areas such as formal suburbs where the majority of whites as well as residents of all races now reside since the advent of democracy (Breetzke, 2018). Ngcobo (2021: 1) argues that crime rates are still escalating in townships and other areas “that have dense numbers of informal settlements” due to a range of criminal activities in post-apartheid South Africa.

Historically, sexual assault and rape were associated with females, which was a justified assumption as only female rapes and abuse were reported and recorded while such crimes against males were swept under the carpet. Society generally believed that a perpetrator of rape was a psychopath who would stalk and then rape his female victim (Lonsway, 1996), which is a perception that was enhanced by narratives such as the one about Jack the Ripper who roamed the streets of London in the 1880s. However, in the more recent past, society has been rocked by reports of high rates of male rape and sexual abuse. Earlier research on sexual abuse and rape was marred by many gaps, and these gaps now highlight the lack of awareness of the full extent of this crime on female and male victims (Briere, Evans, Runtz & Wall, 1988). This lack of awareness and the dearth of scholarly knowledge have made it difficult to understand and accept male rape, while the situation has also made it hard for male victims to seek support. In many South African communities, male rape victims often become outcasts and even the butt of jokes, and this is the cause of many unreported cases of male sexual abuse (Briere et al., 1988). When earlier studies referred to sexual abuse, readers automatically pictured female victims, and this erased the perception that males could also fall victim to rape (Lonsway, 1996).

Currently, a legal framework that addresses rape and the protection of both men and women does not exist in all countries, and many men therefore tend to refrain from reporting any kind of sexual assault or rape (LeGrand, 1973). South Africa has now not only adapted the definition of rape to make it a non-gendered crime, but has also promulgated laws that protect all victims of rape regardless of their gender or age. However, it has been argued that even though men have the liberty to report any sexual abuse against them, there are several societal constraints and male rape myths that stop them from doing so (Kaminer, Grimsrud, Myer & Williams, 2008; Javaid, 2017). The limited body of research involving male rape victims is not because there are no victims, but because of society's expectations of what men are and should be (Briere et al., 1988). When research on male rape gained momentum, it was clear that it is not only adult males who experience sexual abuse, but that boys younger than 18 years are also exposed to all forms of sexual assault and rape.

Studies have explored the plight of male minors who were victims of rape and how that affected them psychologically as boys and later as adults, and researchers agree that very few of them were able or inclined to report these cases (Briere et al., 1988; Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell 2008; Davies, Rogers, & Bates, 2008). Boys who were raped suffered severe short- and long-term effects, such as suicidal thoughts, alcohol and drug abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder, to mention a few (Briere & Conte, 1993). In an article that was published in *Health-ENews*, Mutizira (2022) states:

“According to Matrix Men, a non-profit organisation (NPO) that raises awareness about the effects of sexual abuse on men, 44% of all boys in South Africa have suffered some form of sexual abuse by age 18...Founder, Martin Pelders set up the NPO in 2011 based on his own sexual abuse experienced as a child. Since its inception, they have helped thousands of men deal with the pain of their childhood abuse in various ways.”

Apart from the rape of male adult and minor victims that occurs in South African communities, male rape is also prevalent in male prisons. According to Briere (1988), prior to the 1970s no research was conducted on male rape in South Africa as it was not recognised as a crime that was prevalent in society. However, this crime has recently been revealed as serious and problematic in prisons as many inmates have fallen victim to rape during their incarceration. In this regard, Abdullah-Khan (2008: 17) states:

*“Male rape within prisons can be viewed as an extension of powers forcibly taken by the aggressors to dominate the victims both physically and sexually. The rape of inmates is not*

*regarded sympathetically, due to the common belief that a 'man' cannot be forced to engage in anything against his will."*

Although male rape was a prevalent issue in prisons in the past, it has been hidden until recently when scholars started engaging in research on male abuse in prisons. However, the absence of authentic evidence and practical issues with regards to access to inmates have made it difficult for scholars to conduct research involving rape victims in jails. Male victims are also unwilling to report being raped in fear of ridicule, victimisation, and not being believed, particularly as prison rape seems not to be taken seriously (Eigenberg, 1989). In fact, prison rape seems to be largely overlooked by prison officials as they are imbued with the mentality that men cannot be raped (Javaid, 2015).

In the past, the first narratives of male rape were associated with prisons, and people assumed that this crime occurred only in prisons and not within communities. Thus, male rape victims who lived freely in communities had no way of revealing the abuse they suffered as they believed no one would believe them or do anything about it (Abdullah-Khan, 2008). According to Javaid (2015), the perception existed that male-on-male rape was only an issue among homosexual males in prison and that, when it occurred in society, only homosexuals were involved. In addition, when male victims attempted to report their victimisation, officials tended to categorise the incident as male-on-male rape in the homosexual community, which manifested as secondary victimisation of male rape victims.

The purpose of this research was to explore male rape in depth, with particular focus on whether environmental and social settings contributed to the victimisation of male rape victims in the study area. An important question that was posed was whether these victims were responsible for the victimisation they suffered. The study also set out to determine how seriously male rape victims were taken when they reported incidents of sexual abuse/rape to the authorities, while the emotional, psychological, and physical impacts of rape on male victims were also explored to determine how they dealt with sexual victimisation after the event and how much it affected them in their efforts to move on. Furthermore, the study looked at male rape myths and why they have remained prevalent for so long.

## 1.2 Background to the Study

Historically, reports on the issue of rape dates as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century when the punishment of a perpetrator found guilty of rape was extremely brutal and cruel – much more so than it is in the present era. Guilty offenders now serve a prison sentence and suffer no physical abuse themselves (Javaid, 2015). When research was conducted on rape, studies tended to focus on women. They explored the number of women who had reported cases of rape, the psychological and physical harm they suffered, and how these victims found healing, if at all (Javaid, 2015, 2017). This was because, historically, rape was linked to women as they were the only gender that tended to report cases of rape. However, recent studies on male rape have reported an almost equal number of male and female rape victims, but scholars have argued that, because not all males report their cases, the number of male victims could be much higher than acknowledged (Mezey & King, 1987).

Studies that explored the issue of male rape commenced in the 1980's, but both participants and information were minimal (Javaid, 2015). Exposing male rape has often been deemed taboo, allowing individuals and society to believe that it is non-existent. This perception has had a negative effect on justice for male rape victims (Pretorius & Hull, 2005). Studies in the 1980s and 1990s explored the psychological effects of rape on young boys after their victimisation and how it affected them as adults in the long term (Briere, Evans, Runtz, & Wall, 1988; Briere, 1988; Ray, 1997).

As stated previously, rape was historically associated with females and not males because, statistically, most victims were female (Rosenfield, 1980; Mullins, 2009). For instance, McKibbin, Shackelford, Miner, Bates and Liddle (2011: 343) defined rape as “the use of force or threat of force to achieve penile-vaginal penetration *of a woman* without her consent”. This definition argued that men perpetrated rape and ignored the fact that men could also be victims of rape (Hedlund, 2012). It further implied that men could not experience any form of sexual victimisation as the definition did not include the words ‘male’ or ‘man’ as the victim. Furthermore, it implied that females were incapable of being the perpetrators or rape. Therefore, to ensure a non-gendered definition of rape and sexual assault, South Africa has adopted an amended definition of rape. According to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007 (Republic of South Africa, 2007), rape is defined as:

“Any person (A) who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant (B), without the consent of B, is guilty of the offence of rape.”

Sexual penetration is defined as:

“Any act which causes penetration to any extent whatsoever by –

- (a) The genital organs of one person into or beyond the genital organ, anus, or mouth of another person;
- (b) Any other part of the body of one person or, any object, including any part of the body of an animal, into or beyond the genital organs or anus of another person; or
- (c) The genital organs of an animal, into or beyond the mouth of another person.”

This definition implies that anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of rape or sexual assault. However, it has been argued that although the law was amended to include both genders, it is still difficult for males to report cases of rape (Javaid, 2015). Pretorius and Hull (2005: 1) state:

“Male rape appears to be an ever-increasing phenomenon that has only recently been recognised as a criminal act. Research regarding the impact of this type of assault on men, as well as the services that are provided to men, is limited.”

Doherty and Anderson (2004), Hedlund (2012), and Denov (2004) argue that men may also fall victim to rape, whether the perpetrators are male or female. However, there is still a lack of community organisations that assist male rape victims. In addition, it is evident that although there has been some research done on male rape and that this crime has been recognised as prevalent in society, it is still not seen as an issue that needs to be discussed in some depth within communities (Pretorius & Hull, 2005). Studies conducted in the 1970s and 1980s (Rosenfield, 1980) on the issue of rape revealed the psychological effects of rape on women, while more recent studies on rape have shown that rape during war occurred in many countries, and these studies therefore primarily focused on the brutal rape of women (Mullins, 2009; Zihundula, 2017). The dearth of studies on the effect of rape on men thus prompted this study so that the gap in scholarly knowledge about the rape phenomenon may be viewed from a more balanced perspective.



### 1.3 Problem Statement

In efforts to elicit deeper awareness of the issue of male rape, it was important to consider prior research to obtain a clear understanding of the issue, especially as male rape has been both neglected and viewed as taboo. Javaid (2017) argues that the issue of male rape is a global problem that is worse in some parts of the world than in others (Shange, 2019). For the purpose of this study, the focus on male rape was on the South African context only.

A recent study has shown that a great number of South African men were victims of rape either at a young age or as adults. Javaid (2017) estimates that as many as one in five male adults were raped or sexually assaulted in the survey period, but the low rate of men reporting cases could have rendered this number greater than reported. The belief that men cannot be raped because they cannot physically be overpowered by their perpetrators is the main reason why male rape victims would rather suffer internally and not share or report their victimisation, and why only a very small percentage of men have had the courage to report their sexual victimisation to date (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Abdullah-Khan, 2008; Tswana, 2020). Therefore, societies must be made aware of how tragically their socially constructed beliefs result in male rape victims suffering physically, psychologically, and emotionally.

As the focus of the rape phenomenon has generally been on women and children (Jina, Machisa, Labuschagne, Vetten, Loots & Jewkes, 2020), this study aimed to shed light on the plight of male rape victims as well. The study explored the ignored and hidden nature of male sexual violence, how society responds to male victims, and the impact of sexual victimisation on men to balance scholarly knowledge about the sexual violence phenomenon. What makes male sexual victimisation a continuous major issue not only in South Africa but globally, is that there is a lack of research and reporting on it. Most individuals think it does not occur because of the belief that men cannot be victims of rape. Male victims who do come forward are often questioned about their sexuality and they are mocked and embarrassed and thereby experience secondary victimisation. According to Shange (2022), quite a large number of men have recently reported being raped or sexually assaulted, which highlights the prevalence of male victims of rape. In addition, South Africa has recorded some of the highest statistics regarding various sexual offences involving both men and women, which reiterates that sexual violence is an issue in this country.

**Table 1.2: Frequencies of male rape**

<b>Total, n (%)*</b>	<b>&lt;18 years Circumstances</b>	<b>n (%)*</b>	<b>95% CI</b>	<b>≥18 years n (%)*</b>	<b>95% CI</b>
<b>When rape occurred</b>					
Weekday	124 (62.3)	71 (63.4)	54.0 - 71.8	53 (60.9)	50.3 - 70.6
Weekend	75 (37.7)	41 (36.6)	28.2 - 46.0	34 (39.1)	29.4 - 49.7
<b>Location of rape</b>					
Victim's/perpetrator's home	81 (39.1)	60 (50.9)	41.8 - 59.8	21 (23.6)	15.9 - 33.6
Place with other people nearby	29 (14.0)	20 (17.0)	11.2 - 24.7	9 (10.1)	5.3 - 18.4
Open public space	52 (25.1)	33 (28.0)	20.6 - 36.8	19 (21.4)	14.0 - 31.1
Institution	45 (21.7)	5 (4.2)	1.8 - 9.8	40 (44.9)	35.9 - 55.4
<b>Perpetrators</b>					
Single	177 (87.2)	104 (89.7)	82.6 - 94.1	73 (83.9)	74.5 - 90.3
Multiple	26 (12.8)	12 (10.3)	5.9 - 17.4	14 (16.1)	9.7 - 25.4
<b>Sex of perpetrator</b>					
Male	199 (97.1)	114 (98.3)	93.3 - 99.6	85 (95.5)	88.6 - 98.3
Female	6 (2.9)	2 (1.7)	0.4 - 6.7	4 (4.5)	1.7 - 11.4
<b>Forms of sexual acts</b>					
Vagina by penis	13 (6.6)	4 (3.5)	1.3 - 9.1	9 (10.7)	5.6 - 19.4
Anus by penis	169 (85.7)	97 (86.7)	78.9 - 91.8	72 (84.7)	75.4 - 90.9
Oral/digital by penis/other object	14 (7.1)	8 (7.1)	3.6 - 13.7	6 (7.1)	3.2 - 14.9
Perpetrator masturbated or made victim masturbate him/her	5 (2.5)	4 (3.6)	1.3 - 9.2	1 (1.2)	0.2 - 8.0
<b>Time from rape to reporting to police</b>					
Within 3 days	138 (69.0)	70 (62.5)	53.1 - 71.0	68 (77.3)	67.3 - 84.9
Within 4 - 7 days	30 (15.0)	20 (17.9)	11.8 - 26.1	10 (11.4)	6.2 - 19.9
>1 week after the rape	32 (16.0)	22 (19.6)	13.3 - 28.1	10 (11.4)	6.2 - 19.9

*CI = confidence interval.*

*\*Total sample size varies per variable owing to missing data.*

Source: Jina et al., 2020.

These data reveal the shocking extent of male rape in the early 2020s, but it may be argued that these figures are only the tip of the iceberg as many men might still not report incidences of rape due to fear of stigma and ridicule and because, in some areas, male rape is still considered taboo (Mlambo, 2020). In an article in *The Conversation*, Du Toit (2022) states:

“According to Rees Mann, the founder of South African Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse, one in six adult males in the country have been victims of sexual offences in their lifetimes and, in

2012, 19.4% of all sexual abuse victims were male. But men are up to 10 times less likely than women to report sexual violence against them.”

Rape has always been a major problem in society because of the stigma associated with being a victim of rape, and it is an even bigger problem amongst male rape victims because most victims are forced to hide their assaults in order to save themselves from being publicly humiliated and shamed. This makes it even more difficult for male victims to accept their victimisation, seek help, and speak openly about their assault, yet many find it traumatising to deal with the psychological impact their assault has had on them (Jina et al., 2020).

Societies must be made more aware of the reality of the sexual victimisation and rape of boys and men, and must understand the repercussions of male sexual victimisation on their psyche. However, creating victim hierarchies should be avoided based on the gender of the victim. This means that male cases of sexual violence or rape should not be compared to those of women as sexual victimisation is an issue that affects men just as much as it is an issue that affects women (Goodley, 2019). Unfortunately, if the exclusion of men as victims of sexual violence persists, no awareness will be created of this issue and society will continue perceiving men only as the perpetrators and never the victims. Because of the patriarchal society we live in, the perception prevails that men cannot be vulnerable, especially in terms of sexual violence and mental health issues, and this makes it difficult for most men to come forward to report an incident of rape and seek assistance, as they fear that they will lose their 'manhood' and the respect of their communities and families (Goodley, 2019). Conversely, by fully acknowledging that males can be victims of rape, they will be motivated to seek the necessary help and support. This will also result in men addressing the causes of male victimisation, the impact it has, and the consequences they experience, and this openness about a previously perceived 'taboo' will benefit male victims (Goodley, 2019).

In the context of the aforementioned, the purpose of this study was to obtain in-depth understanding of male rape and sexual victimisation and to explore to what extent this issue prevailed in the community under study. In addition, the findings will broaden scholarly understanding of male rape as it uncovered the prevalence and perceptions of male rape and sexual victimisation.

## **1.4 Rationale for the Study**

The fundamental reason for embarking on this study was the dearth of scholarly research on male rape not only on a global scale, but specifically in the South African context. The perception exists that many men fall victim to rape but rather live with the consequences than report it to receive assistance. Research has shown that there are several gaps in the literature of male rape because the number of men who have reported sexual abuse has been very low not because no men have fallen victim to rape, but because men simply choose not to come forward to report such incidences. This study therefore intended to address this gap in the literature by providing in-depth information about male victims of rape, their psychological state after being victimised, society's response or behaviour towards male victims of rape, and how socially constructed rules play a part in the visibility of rape victims.

When the literature was perused, male rape victimisation was clearly an under-studied topic in Criminology and, as a result, still misunderstood. Thus, male rape myths and misconceptions still persist in most communities and affect how people respond to and treat male rape victims. According to Walfield (2021), male rape refers to the sexual assault of a male victim through the use of force and/or sexual coercion without their consent. Due to lack of understanding and the maltreatment of male rape victims, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study in the quest to expose the misconceptions of male rape and to eradicate male rape myths that still prevail in society.

## **1.5 Research Aim, Objectives, and Research Questions**

### **1.5.1 Aim**

This study aimed to explore the prevalence and nature of male rape in the township of Umlazi, which is situated near the city of Durban.

### **1.5.2 Research Objectives**

The research objectives were to:

- Explore the prevalence of male rape in the Umlazi area;

- Identify the factors that result in male rape;
- Determine if and why there is underreporting of male rape by victims;
- Understand the impact that the criminal justice system has on the reporting of male rape by victims.

### **1.5.3 Research Questions**

To achieve the objectives and aim of the study, the investigation was guided by the following research questions:

- What is the extent of the prevalence of male rape in the Umlazi area?
- What are the factors that lead to male rape?
- Do male victims refrain from reporting cases of male rape, and why?
- Does the response of the criminal justice system have an impact on male rape victims?
- What strategies could be used to enhance awareness of the issue of male rape?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study will be beneficial to men living in Umlazi who are suffering psychologically and emotionally in silence a result of being sexually assaulted or raped at a young age or as an adult. The social stigma of being a male victim of rape or assault is unacceptable, and the study will therefore create awareness of the male rape phenomenon and the psychological effects that male victims experience. Support groups will be encouraged to use various platforms where men will feel comfortable being vulnerable and where they can be open about their victimisation. This may initiate a roll-out process that will increase the number of men who come forward and report their perpetrators. The findings and recommendations of this study may therefore assist in better informing community members of the issue of male rape and hopefully encourage male rape victims to report their cases and receive support so that their stories can assist other victims who may still feel ashamed of their victimisation.

Moreover, this research will provide suggestions as to how law enforcement officials and health care workers can handle cases when males come forward to report their perpetrators and any possible injuries. Furthermore, it will contribute significantly to existing knowledge of male rape to educate the community on the impact rape has on males, especially in societies where

males do not feel comfortable to report or talk about it (Pretorius & Hull, 2005). This study also hopes to enlighten police officers about the reasons why male victims find it difficult to report their cases to officials and the effects that unsympathetic treatment and a mocking attitude have on victims.

The study focused on the male rape phenomenon in the township of Umlazi in KwaZulu-Natal where a high rate of male rape and sexual assault had been recorded (SAPS, 2019/2020). When the findings are appropriately and sensitively disseminated to the larger Umlazi community, awareness will be created regarding the issue of male rape and both affected and ignorant residents will be enlightened about this issue so that they will better understand how to assist and support male rape victims. This will be achieved as the participants were selected from the community and they will be able to use the findings and recommendations of the study as a guide to address the problem of male rape in the community. It is therefore envisaged that the findings of the study may be used as a basis for training and awareness programmes that can be conducted in various community centres in the township. Such centres will be identified where the community will be taught how to provide proper care and facilities to assist male rape victims and how they can prevent the prevalence of male rape myths and the secondary victimisation male rape victims experience. The findings and recommendations may lead to a decrease in the topic of male rape being taboo, and one that can be frequently discussed to generate community-initiated solutions that will help in addressing the plight of male rape victims.

### **1.7 Research Methodology and Design**

The study was conducted in Umlazi township, which is a large township in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. This study was qualitative in nature and obtained authentic data from identified participants. In-depth information was generated based on their experiences of and perspectives on male rape and victimisation in the Umlazi community. Due to the hidden nature of male rape in the study area, no actual victims could be identified and recruited. The qualitative approach was augmented by an exploratory research design which included the perusal of previous literature on the topic of male rape. The researcher used two methods of data collection, namely open-ended interviews with recruited participants who provided detailed information pertaining to the study topic, as well as focus group discussions. The combination of these two methods generated rich data that illuminated the perspectives of selected

community members (20 in total) on the research problem. They were selected by means of the convenience non-probability sampling technique. The information that was collected from the research participants was analysed thematically in six phases. A more detailed discussion on the research methodology of this study will be provided in Chapter four.

### **1.8 Definition of Key Concepts**

The terms ‘rape’, ‘rape myths’, ‘sexual assault’, ‘psychological effect’, and ‘community’ are used throughout this dissertation and are defined in this section for clarification.

**Rape:** Definitions of rape vary among various parts of the world as some global communities still believe that male rape does not exist, and many thus still use a definition that is gender specific. However, some countries have recently amended this definition to recognise men as male victims as well. According to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007 (Republic of South Africa, 2007), the perpetrator of rape is defined as “any person who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant without the consent of the complainant”.

**Rape Myths:** According to Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994: 134), rape myths are defined as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists”. This term refers to mistaken beliefs that people have about male rape, such as that men cannot be raped, men cannot be raped by women, men should know how to fight off their perpetrators, and male rape only occurs in homosexual communities, amongst others.

**Sexual Assault:** According to McLean (2013), sexual assault occurs when one touches another individual in a sexual manner without that person giving their consent. This includes sexual intercourse that is forced, inappropriate sexual touching, especially of private body areas, and unwanted kissing without the victim’s consent.

**Psychological Effects:** A victim of rape or sexual violence can experience a number of psychological effects as a result of being victimised. Many victims tend to struggle to regain their mental health because they internalise the victimisation instead of receiving help so that they can heal. As a result of sexual assault and rape, victims may suffer from severe

psychological effects such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), lowered self-esteem, weight gain or weight loss, sexual dysfunction, and sleep disorders (Mason & Lodrick, 2013).

**Community:** MacQueen, McLellan, Metzger, Kegeles, Strauss, Scotti, Blanchard and Trotter (2001: 1927) state that a common definition of community is that it is “...a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings”.

## **1.9 Chapter Sequence**

**Chapter One – Introduction and Background:** This chapter explores the concept of male rape and how the justice system responds to the sexual violence against men. This chapter provides an introduction and background to the study as well as the problem statement and the research aims, objectives, and research questions. The key terms that are used are defined and briefly discussed, while the structure of this dissertation as it is presented in chapters is also presented.

**Chapter Two – Literature Review:** This chapter focuses on the literature review that explored previous scholars’ work on the issue of male rape. The aim was to critically explore earlier research, identify the gaps within current research, and acquire in-depth knowledge about how society treats men that are victims of rape. Furthermore, aspects such as the history of male rape, the involvement of young boys as victims of rape and sexual assault, the rape of adult males, the response of the justice system to male rape victims, and the psychological effects male rape are explored.

**Chapter Three – Theoretical Framework:** In this chapter, the theoretical framework in which the study was embedded is discussed. Because the issue of male rape has been under-studied, there was no specific theory to fully explain it. However, research has shown that by using the feminist approach and the gender theory, the male rape and victimisation phenomenon can be



explained in some depth. Therefore, by combining the two theories, an in-depth understanding of what male rape is and how it was understood by the study participants could be elicited.

**Chapter Four – Research Methodology:** In this chapter the researcher explains the various methods that were used to generate data that elicited clear understanding of the topic under investigation. This study utilised both secondary and primary sources to understand the phenomenon of male rape/victimisation. The secondary sources provided data that had been generated by previous scholars. The findings they presented were integrated with the findings of the current study to arrive at in-depth conclusions and integrated perspectives about male rape. The qualitative approach assisted the researcher in exploring and explaining the issue of male rape while it also guided the methodology required to generate data to address the objectives and aim of the study.

**Chapter Five – Data Analysis:** This chapter presents the data and analyses the findings that emerged from the thematic data analysis process. The findings are integrated with those of earlier scholars as well as with the tenets of the two theories that framed the study.

**Chapter Six – Recommendations and Conclusion:** In this chapter, the researcher summarises the findings that emerged from the interview and focus group data. Moreover, recommendations to assist male rape victims are offered while suggestion are proposed on how society and law enforcement can be educated to respond appropriately to male rape victims. The challenges that were experienced and the limitations of the study are briefly discussed. The dissertation is concluded with some pertinent remarks about the dire need to address male rape and victimisation.

## **1.10 Summary**

Chapter one introduced the study by shedding light to the background and aim of the study. The researcher provided a general overview of the male rape phenomenon and highlighted the research objectives and questions that gave impetus to the investigation. The rationale of the study and its significance were also elucidated. The researcher briefly discussed the research methodology and design and explained that this study was an exploratory investigation. Brief definitions of key concepts were presented and an outline of each chapter was provided. The

following chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the literature that was reviewed to better understand the topic under study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature that addresses the topic under study. The minimal scholarly research that could be traced on the issue of male rape revealed that male rape is in fact prevalent in many countries around the world; however, in many societies it is still perceived as a taboo topic. Earlier literature on the issue of male rape and how communities respond to it is reviewed in depth in this chapter. The extensive literature review assisted the researcher in critically exploring the research topic and in identify gaps that required deeper investigation into how society treats men that are victims of rape. Knopf (2006: 3) states that a literature review "...summarises and evaluates a body of writings about a specific topic", arguing that "the literature review is an attempt to summarise the existing state of knowledge about a subject and, in research proposals, to frame the proposed research's expected contribution to knowledge".

This chapter therefore discusses the history of male rape, the legislative framework that guides the response to incidences of male rape, and the views of first and third world countries on male rape. The researcher explores the issue of male rape from a global and national perspective to further elucidate views on the issue of male sexual victimisation. In addition, male rape is defined, the justice system's response to male rape victims is explored, the psychological effects men experience due to male rape are highlighted, and communities' involvement in and response to male rape are discussed. This chapter essentially summarises existing scholarly understandings of the male rape and sexual assault phenomenon.

#### **2.2 History of Male Rape**

According to pre-2000 literature, men were the perpetrators and women the victims of sexual assault (Briere et al., 1988). In the early 1970s, rape was associated only with female victims as, at that time, it was believed that men could not be victims of rape (Davies, 2002). In the era after the 1990s, there were still gaps in the body of research on rape as not enough research had

been done on this issue (Davis, 2002). Research on male rape thus lagged behind the focus on female rape because the former was constantly ignored by academics (Davies, 2002). Even today, as in the past, the fact that society still perceives men as strong, masculine, and unable of sexual victimisation greatly affects male rape victims and contributes to their reluctance to report cases of sexual abuse or to seek assistance for the harm they experienced (Gear, 2007: 214). Gear states:

“Weeks (1985: 190) describes masculinity as being ‘precariously’ achieved by constantly warding off its threats, specifically by rejecting femininity and homosexuality. This helps to explain dominant responses to male rape: male rape evokes notions of both femininity and homosexuality. Because vulnerability is constructed within dominant notions of gender as a fundamental facet of femininity, sexual contact with another man (even unwanted) is associated with homosexuality through same-sex contact. This linkage therefore demolishes a male victim’s claim to ‘manhood’ (a notion built on the belief that ‘real men cannot get raped’).”

Previously, due to viewing men as the perpetrators of rape and never the victims, researchers were unable to fully interpret the extent of the issue of male rape because men were only viewed as the perpetrators of rape in many parts of the world (Turchik & Edwards, 2012). In an attempt to elucidate the prevalence of male sexual victimisation, earlier literature suggested that the majority of sexual violence and sexual assault cases against male victims was committed by men (Turchik & Edwards, 2012). Moreover, rape or sexual assault that was committed by women against men was usually overlooked or not taken seriously (Jina et al., 2020). This means that female-on-male rape has been under-studied to this day, which is generally as a result of male rape myths and definitions of rape that portray men as the perpetrators and women as the victims of rape. Society and academia have thus completely overlooked men as the victims of rape. In agreement with this argument, Javaid (2015: 284) states the following:

“Demirkan-Martin (2009) perpetuates male rape as solely a homosexual issue and believes that male rape is either incited by sexual deviance, sexualised aggression, or sexual lust/desire, instead of male rape being totally desexualised. This suggests that male rape does not affect heterosexual men and is essentially a sexual act whereby the offender is unable to control his aggressive and sexual impulses.”

Javaid (2015: 284) cites Lees (1997) who argues that male rape is usually committed “...by heterosexual men against other men and is not motivated by sexual gratification but, like female rape, by the desire for dominance, power, and the enhancement of masculinity”. However, if

these beliefs are misinterpreted, it could reinforce stereotypes and myths about male rape and sexual victimisation.

Although some research has been done on male rape, it is still not taken seriously as a result of socially constructed rules and the way society reacts to it, and male rape thus has a negative connotation among heterosexual and homosexual men (Davies, 2002; Jamel, 2014; Male rape still considered a joke in South Africa, 2015). According to Turchik and Edwards (2012), rape among men is largely associated with the homosexual community where it is assumed that male rape only happens to homosexual and not to 'straight' men. Turchik and Edwards (2012: 3) state the following:

“Additionally, sexuality is important to the discourse on male rape given that constructions of masculinity are so closely connected to heterosexuality. Because of these close connections, men who are raped are often assumed to be homosexual and less deserving of sympathy and assistance. This is consistent with research documenting that gay male victims are blamed more than heterosexual male victims, that men assaulted by women (compared to men) are judged to be more likely to have enjoyed the assault, and that homophobia is a significant predictor of male rape myth acceptance.”

The community often reacts more vociferously to the gender of the perpetrator and not the sexual offence. This makes it difficult for males to report a rape or sexual assault they experienced, especially in a society that has strong patriarchal customs. For example, from a young age boys are told that men do not show emotions, that they are physically stronger than women, and that men must go out to work (Jamel, 2014). Men are therefore ashamed when people start questioning their sexuality, especially if they were raped by another male (Rumney, 2009). They are also afraid that people will start questioning their masculinity if they show physical weakness or humiliation. If assaulted by a woman, they are ashamed to report it because their masculinity will be questioned as they were dominated and victimised by a 'weaker' female (Javaid, 2016b). In most cases, men try to hide or deny sexual victimisation unless they have serious visible physical injuries. Even then, when they have to explain the cause of these injuries, they are likely to lie about them or give very vague reasons, and most men refrain from explaining what happened (Chapleau, Oswald, & Russell, 2008).

Historically, it was commonly accepted that rape or any form of sexual violence was committed by an aggressive male perpetrator with a woman being the victim (Briere & Conte, 1993;

Mullins, 2009). However, recent studies have shown that both genders can be the victims or the perpetrators of sexual assault or rape, and both scholars and statistics have emphasised that sexual assault happens to both heterosexual and homosexual individuals as well as to men and women (Turchik, Hebenstreit & Judson, 2016; Shange, 2019).

Research on male rape is quite recent as it only became more prominent in the early 1980s. However, these studies tended to focus on male children (boys) and not on adult males. No evidence of research on rape prior to the 1980s could be traced either by the current researcher or Briere et al. (1988). This is assumed to be the case not because of a lack of victims, but because at the time it was never a priority as it was not illegal or against the law to ‘rape’ or ‘sexually assault’ men (LeGrand, 1973; Briere et al., 1988). However, during the 1970s, the first form of male rape that was recognised as problematic was male rape in prisons because a high number of inmates fell victim to rape during their incarceration. In this regard, Abdullah-Khan (2008: 17) states the following:

“Male rape within prisons can be viewed as an extension of power forcibly taken by the aggressors to dominate the victims both physically and sexually. The rape of inmates is not regarded sympathetically due to the common belief that a man cannot be forced to engage in anything against his will.”

Although male rape was a common issue in prisons, it was hidden until recently when scholars decided to do research on male victims of rape. However, the absence of authentic evidence made it difficult for scholars to conduct research on such victims because they were unwilling to report being raped, mainly because rape in prison had been ‘institutionalised’ was thus not taken seriously as a crime (Eigenberg, 1989). In fact, prison rape was usually overlooked by prison officers with the mentality that men could not be raped (Javaid, 2015).

Because male rape was first exposed in prisons, it led people to believe that it only occurred in prisons and not in the larger community. This became a problem, especially as male rape victims living in communities had no way of exposing the perpetrators and were ignored if they mentioned experiencing rape (Abdullah-Khan, 2008). Sweeping this reality under the carpet not only made communities believe that it did not happen, but it also led to the persistent belief that a man could not be a victim of rape. Moreover, any sexual activity between two males was seen as a consensual homosexual act, and this eliminated understanding of men being the

victims of rape despite their sexual preferences. Females were also perceived as incapable of perpetrating rape, particularly when male victims were involved (Javaid, 2015).

## **2.3 A Global Perspective on Male Rape**

### **2.3.1 Male Rape in the United States of America (USA)**

According to Sivakumaran (2005), research on male rape has always been limited, and the limited research that is available on the occurrence of rape may not have the correct statistics of male rape victims because male victims prefer not to be open and transparent about being sexually victimised. This situation is the result of how they are received in society and the criminal justice system when they attempt to seek assistance or report their cases. They are stigmatised as ‘homosexuals’, which is rooted in the issue of homophobia (Javaid, 2017). Homophobia has been prevalent in the USA and other societies for a long time, and in these societies, men are labelled as ‘gay’ when they have become victims of rape and sexual assault. This perception disregards their victim status and causes male rape victims to be ignored or ridiculed by society (Sivakumaran, 2005). Furthermore, male rape victims are less likely to be believed than their female counterparts when they attempt to report a rape incident.

Capers (2011: 1262) states that male victims, “both straight and gay, face the added risk of homophobia. Indeed, prior to the US Supreme Court’s 2003 decision in *Lawrence v. Texas* invalidating Sodom laws, those who came forward as rape victims risked being prosecuted as criminals in many states”. According to Capers (2011) and Stemple (2008), in the USA and globally, male rape is often associated only with prisons where it is expected because individuals join prison gangs for protection. It is thus believed that, outside the prison gates, male rape is not an issue, or that it does not happen as frequently as female rape. This is of course a fallacy. Capers (2011: 1272 - 1273) states:

“The most recent National Crime Victimization Survey, released in September 2009, indicates that 39 590 men reported being raped or sexually assaulted in 2008...A community-wide study in Los Angeles found that 7.2% of the men surveyed reported at least one incident after the age of 15 where they had been sexually assaulted. Other research, focusing on cases in hospital’s emergency rooms and rape crisis centres, indicates that between 4 percent and 12 percent of sexual assault victims seeking medical treatment are male.”

Laws that protect the victims of rape often do (or did) not include males in definitions of rape. In the USA, prior to the amendment of the definition of rape in 2013, the rape definition excluded men as possible victims (Nelson, 2019). According to a definition by the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR), rape was referred to as "the act of force on a female against her will". The UCR's definition of rape was amended on 1 January 2013 to include male victims and various ways an individual can be raped. The FBI's Uniform Crime Report (2013) now defines rape as: "Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration or by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim". Although the definition of rape has been changed to be neutral in order to accommodate male victims, the latter victims still face challenges when it comes to receiving help when reporting their victimisation to law enforcement officials (Rumney & Morgan-Taylor, 1997; Stemple, 2008).

### **2.3.2 Male Rape in the United Kingdom (UK)**

The definition of rape in the UK is not inclusive of men as victims, and insinuates that men can only be the perpetrators of rape and not victims of this crime. It further implies that women can only be victims of rape and never the perpetrators. The UK is not the only country that has a non-inclusive definition of rape. According to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 of England and Wales, rape is defined as:

- (1) A person (A) commits an offence if—
  - (a) he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis,
  - (b) B does not consent to the penetration, and
  - (c) A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- (2) Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B consents.
- (3) Sections 75 and 76 apply to an offence under this section.
- (4) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable, on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for life.



According to Javaid (2015) and Sitto and Lubinga (2020), this definition of rape not only reinforces the belief that men are the perpetrators and females can only be the victims, it also does not take into consideration the various objects individuals may use to achieve penetration that may be considered as rape, nor the various forms of sexual violence that an individual can fall victim to. This definition may discourage male rape victims to report their victimisation, therefore resulting in inconsistent statistics of male rape (Javaid, 2015). In this regard, Sitto and Lubinga (2020: 3) state the following:

“Given that male victims rarely report male rape the possibility is that the actual number of victims is higher. In the UK, 96% of male rapes go unreported, even though reports of sexual offences against men and boys have more than tripled in the past decade. Statistics show that there were 12 130 offences reported in England and Wales in 2016/17, compared to 3 819 in 2006/07. These statistics might show an increase because many of the male rape victims reported historical experiences.”

By excluding men as victims through the use of a gender-specific definition of rape, it only increases the misconception that male rape occurs rarely and contributes to beliefs in male rape myths and stereotypes.

### **2.3.3 Male Rape in China**

China is one of several countries that still have a gender-specific definition of rape and that considers only females as the potential victims of rape. According to Li and Zheng (2022), China’s lack of attention to male rape victims has only served to increase the belief in male rape myths, and thus male victims are blamed for their victimisation, resulting in these victims experiencing secondary victimisation. Wang (2022: 2699) states that, according to Article 236 of China's criminal law, “the crime of rape refers to the act of forcibly having sexual intercourse with women against women's will, using violence, coercion or other means, or deliberately having sexual relations with a young girl under the age of 14”. This definition not only infringes on the rights of male victims in terms of equality, but continues to exclude men from protection as male rape victims and undoubtedly highlights the neglect of male rape victims in China. Wang (2022: 2698) states:

“In today's society, there are numerous cases of men being forcibly assaulted, and the imperfect provisions of China's current criminal law on the crime of rape have resulted in men being raped and the perpetrators being punished only for ‘intentional assault’ or

‘indecent assault’. For the victim, this means that the criminal law does not fully and reasonably protect his legal interests. The current criminal law on rape makes the crime of rape theoretically inadequate, but also poses a dilemma for judicial practice. In theory, the neglect of the protection of men's sexual rights is contrary to the principle of gender equality.”

Li and Zheng (2020) affirm that the lack of research and reports on male rape victims in China means that men are not considered as possible victims of rape, only as offenders. As a result, male rape victims may experience severe psychological trauma as a result of victimisation experiences that are not acknowledged or attended to either by the CJS or the health care system (Nelson, 2019).

### **2.3.4 Male Rape on the African Continent**

#### ***2.3.4.1 Male Rape in Uganda***

Edstorm, Dolan, Shahrokh and David (2016) agree with other scholars that, from a global perspective, male victims of rape or sexual violence have received little to no attention. However, in more recent years, rape and sexual violence against males have been gradually receiving recognition. As stated previously, rape in many parts of the world has only been recognised as an issue that affects female victims, but now that male rape has been identified as an issue, it challenges the socially constructed gender rules of masculinity that argue that ‘real’ men cannot be raped and that male-on-male rape can only occur in homosexual communities (Edstorm et al., 2016). In this regard, Ndinda (2013) states the following:

“Often used as a weapon of war, rape against men is rarely spoken about publicly in Africa. African men are brought up to be strong people, the ones who provide security for their families. The mindset is often that when a man is raped, the deepest core of his existence, his emotional and physical might is crushed. Another rape victim, from Eastern DRC, decided to tell his wife he had been raped while in Congo. To this day, he regrets telling her the truth. ‘I told my wife what happened to me; as a result, I lost my strength as a man and I was unable to perform my conjugal duties like before,’ he said.”

According to Edstorm et al. (2016), in addition to the many ongoing struggles on the continent of Africa, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is seen as a predominant issue. This issue is still rife in African countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Chad, Sudan, Somalia, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to name a few.

The majority of the African studies that were reviewed focused on women and children as sexual abuse victims and survivors, and they therefore refer to a variety of facilities and care centres tailored to assist them as they navigate through their trauma after being victimised. The study by Zihindula (2017) is a noteworthy example of the brutal rape and struggle of women in the DRC. Women and children in African countries are offered health and psychological care to assist them physically and mentally after experiencing rape or sexual abuse (Sivakumaran, 2007; Edstorm et al., 2016). However, this is not entirely the case when it comes to male rape victims, as there are few to no facilities available to assist them.

Most African men experience embarrassment and humiliation when attempting to report a case of rape, and many are exposed to secondary victimisation as they face the challenge of not being able to openly seek assistance because they are blamed and ridiculed. Such experiences add to the emotional trauma that afflict male victims after being victimised because they are not able to receive the same care their female counterparts do (Sivakumaran, 2007). According to Edstorm et al. (2016), the perception exists that female victims will not be treated equally and with the same care should male victims of sexual violence be acknowledged. Male rape victims are thus deprived of gaining access to the facilities female rape victims can use and are still treated differently because of their gender. Based on a study that was conducted in Uganda, Edstorm et al. (2016: 23) state the following.

“A lack of understanding of the physiology related to men’s experience of sexual violence makes it challenging to get effective medical responses from hospitals and clinics. The discrimination and stigma attached to the status of being a male survivor of sexual violence is reinforced by health service providers. United Nations (UN) agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs) only fill a small part of the void in the services required by refugee survivors. This situation prevents refugees accessing basic services and justice from the Ugandan government and creates severe disenchantment with multilateral organisations and NGOs.”

Edstorm et al. (2016:23) further offer the following argument:

“A culture of hostility and disbelief towards male survivors and refugees...are further reinforced within the legal system. Specifically, repressive laws and policies in Uganda in relation to freedom of sexual orientation and gender identity play out in complex ways in the lives of male survivors of sexual violence.”

Although attributed to the Ugandan context, the above perspective highlights that many individuals do not understand the difference between homosexuality and being a survivor of male rape, and this results in male victims of rape being consistently exposed to hate, discrimination, and marginalisation.

According to Ndinda (2013), there is little to no dependable data that suggest the extent of the crime of male rape in Uganda. Due to a lack of support centres that cater specifically for male rape victims, a Refugee Law Project was launched to take in all male survivors of sexual violence where they would be provided with health care support and counselling services, and this creates an environment where men do not feel judged but where they are able to openly talk about their experiences, the hardships they encountered as victims of rape, and how it has affected their role as men in their families and communities (Ndinda, 2013). The Ugandan definition of rape, just like that of the majority of African countries, is gender specific. Abio discusses this definition as follows (2019):

“Uganda is not any different from England. An examination into the definition of rape in Uganda will reveal that rape is a gendered offence. The current legal definition of rape under the Uganda Penal code reads: ‘Any person who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl, without her consent, or with her consent, if the consent is obtained by force or by means of threats or intimidation of any kind or fear of bodily harm, or by means of false representations as to the nature of the act, or in the case of a married woman, by personating her husband, commits the felony termed rape.’”

For male rape victims to be advocated for and protected by law as victims, Ndinda (2013) argues that the definition of rape should be amended so that it fully includes men as victims as well. The latter author also argues that people have not been educated enough on the occurrence of male rape and victimisation. As a result, lack of knowledge and awareness causes communities, medical workers, social workers, and the police to be ignorant about ways to deal with such cases. Instead of assisting male victims without judgement, they tend to further victimise them by denying their ‘innocence’ and mocking their ‘homosexual’ status. The lack of education about male sexual victimisation has also perpetuated male rape myths. According Ndinda (2013), a victim in the study stated:

*“We don't want to go to court and be told no, we cannot handle you as a rape case because there is no such thing as male rape. We are also trying to get changes in the*

*educational curriculum. We want medical students to be trained to adequately deal with such situations.”*

#### **2.3.4.2 Male rape in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabwe is also one of many African countries that do not recognise females as the perpetrators of rape or males as the victims of rape. The definition of rape in this country is found in Section 65(1)27 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23] which states:

“Division B: Sexual crimes

Section 65 Rape

If a male person knowingly has sexual intercourse or anal sexual intercourse with a female person and, at the time of the intercourse

(a) the female person has not consented to it; and

(b) he knows that she has not consented to it or realises that there is a real risk or possibility that she may not have consented to it; he shall be guilty of rape and liable to imprisonment for life or any shorter period.”

An article by the International Commission of Jurists (2020) states that the many countries, including Zimbabwe, that do not have a gender-neutral definition of rape only perpetuate the discrimination against male rape victims. According to Gwarisa (2020), the Zimbabwean definition of rape emphasises that it is impossible for females to rape a man as rape is only referred to as penial penetration, which means that women cannot penetrate a male because this is biologically impossible. However, this definition denies the traumatic forms of rape where objects are used for penetration of the male body, usually the anus. Despite the fact that the Zimbabwean definition disregards male victims and perpetuates the discreet manner in which male rape is referred to in this country, some male victims have come forward to report their victimisation. Such an incident is cited by Akwei (2017):

“Police spokesperson Chief Superintendent Paul Nyathi told local media, *The Herald*, that the first incident occurred last Saturday when a 37-year-old man boarded a bus with two female passengers and a male driver. Another female passenger boarded the bus before the driver later changed his route to evade a police roadblock. One of the females forced the complainant to have sexual intercourse with her without his consent while another female accused forced the complainant to drink an unknown liquid which left the complainant unconscious.”

This sexual assault event stresses that male rape occurs and requires attention, especially in countries that do not consider male sexual victimisation a serious crime.

#### ***2.3.4.3 Male rape in South Africa***

When statistics are considered, it is estimated that more than half of the South African population is exposed to some form of violence throughout their lifetime. In fact, South Africa is notorious for the extremely high rates of violence that are recorded here and is deemed the rape capital of world (Kaminer et al., 2008). Gender-based violence (GBV) in particular is a deep-rooted and highly prevalent problem in South Africa. Majola, Mkhize and Akpan (2022) argue that men are generally viewed as the perpetrators of GBV rather than the victims of such crimes. This means that men tend to be at a disadvantage as they are often ignored as the victims of GBV. GBV generally refers to incidences where men physically, sexually, emotionally, and financially abuse women because they want to instil dominance and authority over their victims, and thus overpower them physically. Moreover, because women are deemed to be incapable of using force to overpower a man, they are usually ruled out as possible offenders of sexual crimes. Majola et al. (2022:28) state that GBV “...reflects the unequal power relationships between the genders, which are entrenched in societies”. However, as far back as 1993, Briere and Conte (1993) suggested that men were exposed to rape or sexual violence more than anyone had thought, as their study found that a large number of men had experienced some form of sexual violence, either at a young age or as an adult.

To include all victims of rape, South Africa changed its gender-specific definition such as the one cited by McKibbin, Shackelford, Miner, Bates and Liddle (2011:343) which read: “Rape is the use of force or threat of force to achieve penile-vaginal penetration of a woman without her consent”. This definition disregarded the idea that men could also be victims of rape as it assumed that only men could only commit rape (Hedlund, 2012). However, Doherty and Anderson’s (2004), Denov’s (2004) and Hedlund’s (2012) studies exposed the fact that men are vulnerable to rape, whether their perpetrators are male or female. Research has also shown that both boys and men are potential victims of rape (Rosenfield, 1980; Jamel, 2014). Javaid (2014: 12) cited the following issues:

“Khan (2008) investigated counsellors who supported male rape victims, and the counsellors gave a variety of reasons why victims of male rape would not report to the police; for instance, some police officers can be homophobic, so they would inadequately deal, overlook, or disbelieve male victims. Other recent research found that police are

deficiently informed about male rape, which leads them to ignore male rape victims, pass them onto non-statutory agencies or manage them in a harmful way. In which case, secondary victimisation is formed, which refers to the police officers' attitudes and behaviours that are homophobic, insensitive, antagonistic, and victim-blaming, and can, thereby, be distressing for male rape victims."

Apart from the negative impact and stigma associated with male rape, the ignorance of police officers about the issue makes men even more reluctant to report the crime because they are immediately judged and not assisted. They are questioned about their sexuality and masculinity and are told that only homosexual males can be raped by homosexual males, and therefore heterosexual males cannot be victims of rape (White & Yamawaki, 2009). Such beliefs exacerbate the fears of male rape victims who are also exposed to homophobic comments and reactions by people around them. For instance, male rape victims have been blamed for the incident and some have been asked why they did not defend themselves as they are men and should have been able to do so (Davies et al., 2008).

In South Africa, male rape victims tend to be questioned about their sexual history to prove their innocence when they report their victimisation. They also tend to be questioned whether or not they verbally consented to having sexual intercourse. Javaid (2014: 11) cites the following findings:

"Another attempt to discredit the victims can involve an allegation of prior homosexual intercourse, particularly when victims assert to be heterosexual; usually due to the 'shame' they think they will bring to their friends and families if they confess to be homosexual. Moreover, misconceptions that all victims of male rape are homosexual can additionally harm the credibility of the male victim; homophobic jurors, barristers, judges or those confounded by the idea of male sexuality or male rape can be simply led by culture and social myths within courts where there might be intent to exaggerate any prejudice held already."

Studies have suggested that male victims of rape experience the same judgemental treatment as women during a rape trial, as they may be accused of having 'asked for it', or 'the victim did not say no, so he allowed it', or 'the victim may have led the perpetrator on' (Javaid, 2014).

Researchers had argued for a long time that the South African rape law should be gender-neutral (LeGrand, 1973), and this was finally achieved in 2007. In South Africa, according to the

Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act of 2007 (Republic of South Africa, 2007), the definition of rape now includes both females and males as either victims or perpetrators (see section 1.2).

However, Javaid (2015) argues that it is still difficult for males to report their cases in South Africa, which is evidenced by low statistical records of male rape victims. SAPS statistics tend to record a minimum instances of male rape, which may be attributed to fear, denial, mockery, and ignorance. According to Shange (2022), recent crime statistics released by police Minister Bheki Cele “revealed that 42 men were raped between October and the end of December 2021”. South Africa is known for high rates of sexual offences such as rape, sexual assault by penetration, sexual assault and sexual harassment involving both women and men, but the majority of reported cases are still of female victims, which explains why female sexual victimisation is given higher priority than male sexual victimisation. According to the SAPS (2021) crime statistics, the total number of sexual offences recorded in 2019/2020 was 53 293. This was an increase of more than 3 000 cases reported in the 2017/2018 period when 50 108 cases had been reported.

Although sexual offences have increased in South Africa at an alarming rate, the focus is still on women and minor victims while male victims are overlooked (Jina, Machisa, Labuschagne, Vetten, Loots, & Jewkes, 2020). This clearly reveals that research on male sexual victimisation has been limited and that, in some areas, male rape is still considered taboo or unheard of (Mlambo, 2020). As was cited earlier, du Toit (2022) argues that men are up to 10 times less likely than women to report sexual violence cases in South Africa.

## **2.4 Male Rape Myths and Stereotypes**

Walfield (2018: 6394) defines rape myths as: “Prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists”, arguing that such myths result in a rape-supportive climate that is hostile to victims. Walfield (2018: 6394) continues: “Socially constructed rules fuel the belief of male rape myths making it more challenging for male victims to express themselves or seek assistance as a result of their sexual victimisation”. In the context of rape myths, Petrak (2002: 5) states the following:

“There are many rape myths, misconceptions, and stereotypes that impact on how society and the legal and medical system approach the management of sexual assault. Rape myths



will also affect the perception of the survivor, the availability of social support and, inevitably, how an individual copes with the emotional and psychological consequences.”

According to Walfield (2021), while men are highly likely to be the perpetrators of rape and/or sexual assault according to the rape reports provided by crime statistics and studies done on rape, scholars have not fully captured the entire scope of sexual violence as they simply depict men as the offenders and women as the victims. Hine, Murphy and Churchyard (2021) state that this increases the belief in male rape myths instead of addressing and eliminating them. Moreover, people’s belief in male rape myths and stereotypes only promotes disbelief in male rape victims’ stories, and this silences male victims and makes their plight even worse. Communities also do not fully understand the complexity of sexual abuse, rape, and sexual violence, especially when it comes to male victims (Walfield, 2021). There are a number of male rape myths and stereotypes that have become prominent in society, and these contribute to the prevalence of male rape and sexual assault. Javaid (2015: 273) cites these myths as follows:

“(1) Men cannot be raped; (2) Only gay men are victims and/or offenders of male rape; (3) ‘Real’ men can defend themselves against rape; (4) Men are not affected by rape; (5) Gay and bisexual men deserve to be raped since they are deviant and immoral; (6) Male rape only occurs in prisons; and (7) If a victim physically responds to rape, he must have wanted it.”

These rape myths have emerged as a result of the socially constructed gender roles that society has been assigned to children, and these impact our adult lives. Socially constructed gender norms and rules regarding masculinity and male sexuality have thus led to the misconception that men cannot experience rape or various forms of sexual violence. As a result of toxic masculinity, male rape myths and stereotypes have caused male victimisation to be marginalised and invisible in many countries (Hine et al., 2021). According to Sitto and Lubinga (2020), toxic masculinity is responsible for the attenuation of male rape as a social issue, as toxic masculinity is one of the many factors that hinder men from wanting to speak out about their victimisation. The consistent presence of toxic masculinity has therefore led many societies to believe that the occurrence of male rape is absurd and impossible and, as a result of this belief, limited research has been conducted on male rape. The lack of attention given to male rape victims and difficulties in addressing male sexual victimisation are actual

issues in many parts of the world that do not receive the attention they deserve (Sitto & Lubinga, 2020).

Men and women are expected to live by specific gender norms, and men are often associated with being tough, aggressive, independent, and dominant. Because of these traits that men are associated with, if they portray any other traits, such as showing emotions and being open about their mental health, their masculinity is questioned. Turchik and Edwards (2012: 213) state that socially constructed notions of masculinity “are consistent with constructions of the rape victim as feminine, weak, and defenceless, [thus] ‘real men’ cannot be raped”. Furthermore, because masculinity is largely associated with being heterosexual, male rape victims are often accused of being homosexual, therefore they receive limited attention and assistance when they fell victim to rape (Turchik & Edwards, 2012; Javaid, 2015).

The prevalence of male rape myths has not only minimised the issue of male sexual victimisation, but has also had a negative impact on male rape victims. In addition, the belief that male rape victims are ‘willing’ or ‘enjoy’ sexual intercourse has had a great impact on male victimisation because this has only amplified the rape myth that men always want to have sexual intercourse and can therefore not be sexually victimised (Jina et al., 2020; Sitto & Lubinga, 2020). According to Sitto and Lubinga (2020: 9), a topical issue is whether “male rape victims’ pleasure manifest[s] through ejaculation [as there is debate] whether male ejaculation is a consequence of pleasure or a physiological function (or both), and whether such victims are willing participants”.

Although it is recognised in some parts of the world that a man can be forced to physically penetrate a woman against his will, questions on how this is possible still arise as a result of male rape myths (Cleaver, 2022). Females’ use of coercion, blackmail, persuasion, and verbal pressure against men is also often overlooked (Jina et al., 2020). Weare (2018: 115-116) explains coercion as follows:

“Coercion, as discussed here, refers to nonphysical sexual pressure, namely ‘persuading another individual to engage in sexual acts that he or she would not engage in otherwise through the use of deceptive or threatening psychological manipulations’. This could include being worn down by someone who repeatedly asked for sex or showed they were unhappy; feeling pressured by being lied to; being told promises that were untrue; having

someone threaten to end a relationship; spread[ing] rumours; and sexual pressure due to someone using their influence or authority.”

Researchers such as Vanderlaan and Vasey (2009) and Weare (2018) view the coercion of male victims as a common and aggressive tactic used by women to force men to penetrate them. Weare (2020: 116) cites the narrative of a victim who was coerced in the form of sexual victimisation:

*“I was 17 and dating a much older woman. I went to her apartment to break up with her and she....said that if I did she would kill herself. I was naive and fell for it and blamed myself for her deluded way of thinking and fell into her manipulations. She said she would kill herself if we didn't f\*\*k right then, to prove I still loved her and wanted her. I was young and thought that if I didn't do this I'd essentially have someone's blood on my hands. I couldn't get it up naturally, but after a while she got me erect and then she climbed on top of me.”*

According to Weare (2018: 116), another victim disclosed that he had been manipulated and assaulted when he did not want to continue having sexual intercourse with his girlfriend:

*“I visited my girlfriend after drinking with guy friends. She was horny and I wasn't. We had sex once, but I was hit and yelled at when I wanted to leave without doing it again. I made her happy, waited for her to fall asleep or pass out, and left...She got me drunk and persuaded me. I had told her previously that I didn't want to have sex until I was married. She apologised the next day.”*

In addition to coercion, verbal pressure and manipulation are used as aggressive strategies. The intoxication of male victims can also lead to forced penetration by women against their will. When male victims are intoxicated, they may not be fully aware of what is occurring, and this makes it easier for their perpetrator to force them into having sexual intercourse against their will (Jina et al., 2020; Weare, 2018). Weare (2018: 117) cites the following example:

*“The limited research conducted into compelled penetration highlights the frequency with which intoxication of the victim as a result of alcohol or drugs is used as part of aggressive strategies by female perpetrators. A study found that 3.8 per cent of their male participants reported unwanted sexual intercourse with women using alcohol or drugs. Similar findings were documented by Krahé et al. (2003b, p. 226), who found that 5.6*

per cent of women used ‘exploitation of a man’s incapacitated state’ to force him into ‘oral sex, sexual touching, and sexual intercourse’.”

Apart from the use of coercion and taking advantage of men who are intoxicated to achieve forced penetration, male victims also experience physical violence and restraint by their perpetrators. This is a serious issue for male victims as they usually do not admit to being physically abused before being sexually assaulted or raped because of their fear of stigma and ridicule, especially if the perpetrator was a woman (Jina et al., 2020; Cleaver, 2022).

## **2.5 Communities’ Perceptions of Male Rape**

The manner in which masculinity has been defined and portrayed in global societies is one of many factors that contribute to men’s reluctance to report sexual victimisation and why they remain silent about it (Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020). Most male rape victims have a negative experience when they report their victimisation, which discourages them and makes them reluctant to persist with the complaint (Mgolozeli & Duma, 2020). These negative experiences include being stigmatised, victim blaming, having their sexuality questioned, their victimisation not being taken seriously, and having their manhood ‘stripped away’ as a result of being victimised and ridiculed (Sitto & Lubinga, 2020). Male rape victims from the homosexual community are usually shamed not only because of their homosexuality, but because they are not perceived as ‘real men’ and are thus deemed deserving of the rape (Javaid, 2017). The credibility of male rape victims from the homosexual community is also often questioned by family and friends, society, and the criminal justice system. In this context, Javaid (2017: 4) argues as follows:

*“As far as sex equality is concerned, the consequence is the perpetuation and encouragement of gendered power inequalities that refuse a non-assimilated gay male sexuality and that make sure that sexism and homophobia stay intact. It can be argued that such perpetuation and encouragement may maintain myths, stereotypes, and negative attributions associated with male rape; for instance, ‘gay men enjoy being raped’ or ‘gay men asked for it’.”*

Because of the prominent male rape myths that still exist in society, it becomes more difficult for homosexual male rape victims to freely narrate their experience of sexual victimisation without the fear of feeling disregarded, humiliated, and unheard.

## **2.6 Motives for Male Victims to Report Sexual Victimization**

Although male rape victims have a number of reasons for not reporting their victimization, there are a handful that do report such incidences despite how they are perceived by the police, their families, and the community because they seek justice (Hine et al., 2021). Despite the negative reaction they may receive when reporting their cases, some male rape victims are motivated enough to report the case so that they may also receive protection from the police. Such men attempt to diminish the chances of re-victimization either by a different perpetrator or the same one. Male victims who are heard and whose stories are taken seriously feel a sense of safety as they may not be further harmed or threatened by the perpetrator (Nelson, 2019).

Just like any other victim of crime, male rape victims want to report these incidences in the hope of receiving justice because it is the moral and legally mandated duty of the police to ensure that the public is safeguarded and receive assistance promptly. It may be argued that increased rates of male rape reporting will release more information on male rape and will, in turn, create awareness and educate not only vulnerable males, but the community at large (Rumney, 2009). Moreover, male victims who receive moral support from male rape victim organisations, their friends, and their families may be more inclined to take the step to report their cases. By exposing the perpetrators, they will start a healing journey and may even be able to assist other male rape victims later (Sitto & Lubinga, 2020).

### **2.6.1 Barriers to reporting incidences of rape to the police**

As mentioned above, there are a number of reasons why male rape victims are reluctant to report their perpetrators to the police. However, other barriers also exist that prevent men from exposing their rape experience. One such barrier is the fear of living with the stigma of being a male victim of rape as society tends to be intolerant of the plight of male rape victims (Nelson, 2019). They are therefore questioned about their sexuality, accused of ‘wanting’ sexual intercourse, and viewed as effeminate because they could not ward off the attack (Depraetere, Vandeviver, Beken & Keygnaert, 2020). As a result of entrenched homophobia in society against the gay community, individuals still believe that if male rape occurred, it was an act between two or a group of gay men. This perception marginalises male rape victims as they always have to explain their sexuality and defend their ‘manhood’ or ‘masculinity’, and this process is often an insurmountable barrier to receiving justice.

### **2.6.2 Negative experiences when reporting rape to the police**

When male rape victims attempt to report their cases to the SAPS, many face severe challenges that make them reluctant to pursue the case and/or openly talk about the incident. Research has shown that male rape victims experience secondary victimisation from the police when they approach them to report incidences of rape (Mgolozela & Duma, 2020). Furthermore, they experience victim blaming as police officers tend to question their masculinity, and if the perpetrator was a female, they are met with disbelief and shame. If the perpetrator was male, they are questioned about their sexuality and are then ridiculed. Curry (2019) argues that when male rape victims report sexual victimisation, the gender of the offender/s should not be more important than their actual victimisation.

Questioning the sexuality of male rape victims seems to stem from a deep-rooted homophobic attitude against the gay community because it is expected that male rape will only occur among members of that community; hence, when an incident of rape is reported by a male victim, it is often assumed that he is homosexual. In such instances, the police often delay their response to the reported crime, fail to communicate with the victim about the progress of the case, and when the male victim reports frustration at such a delay, the lethargic attitude of the police discourages him and he may eventually simply give up (Akpan, Majola & Mkhize, 2022).

## **2.7 The Impact of Rape on Male Victims**

### **2.7.1 Family and society**

Society's failure to accept the reality of male rape and sexual victimisation negatively affects raped male individuals (Depraetere et al., 2020). Sensing rejection and disbelief, these victims often fail to disclose their victimisation to their nearest and dearest, which reduces their chances of receiving the necessary help or support they require. Sitto and Lubinga (2020: 1) state that many societies "still fuel the male rape myth and related nondisclosure by failing to treat victims with dignity", and they fail to acknowledge the event and to put the necessary systems in place to assist male victims of sexual assault. According to an article in *Saferspaces* by October (2018), male rape is disregarded in many communities because men are perceived as being incapable of becoming sexual abuse victims because they are strong and cannot be overpowered by a perpetrator. It is perceived that a man can only be the perpetrators of rape

and never the victim and, when a man reports such a case, his 'manhood' is questioned. In this regard, Sitto and Lubinga (2020: 3) offer the following advice:

"In patriarchal societies, where male victims of sexual abuse are often ridiculed, discreet support services could better provide much needed privacy, which would encourage disclosure by male victims. Discreet support will enable male victims to find services for their mental, emotional and physical health...if male rape victims feel that they will lose social capital due to cultural influences or processes, the social risks are higher, and the pressure not to disclose the greater."

Male rape victims are ridiculed by society and often also by family and friends, and many are questioned about their sexuality because it is commonly believed that male rape and sexual assault only happen amongst homosexual individuals. Du Toit (2022) cites the following incident:

"In a 2017 news report, an anonymous victim says he tried to tell his closest male friends about being raped. They laughed and said, 'What, are you gay now?' and he responded, 'I am not gay, I was raped'. He then withdrew from them."

Some feminists are unwilling to acknowledge the issue of male rape or sexual victimisation because they feel that it may potentially compete with or undermine the research done on female rape victims. Stemple (2008: 607) cites the following rape statistics:

"One analysis of 120 prevalence studies concluded that 3% of men worldwide have been raped in their lifetime (as children or adults), in contrast to 13% of women. The World Health Organisation gives a higher estimate for males, asserting that between 5% and 10% of men throughout the world reported a history of childhood sexual abuse, while acknowledging that most studies have been conducted in developed countries. In prevalence studies conducted in developing countries, the findings were 20% in Peru, 3.6% in Namibia, and 13.4% in the United Republic of Tanzania."

Although statistics exist of male rape incidences, they do not fully reflect the prevalence of male rape and the number of male victims, particularly as a result of men being reluctant to report their cases (Stemple, 2008). Studies have shown that victims minimise the impact of their victimisation or choose to deny it in an effort to forget about being raped or sexually assaulted as they accept that no support will be forthcoming (Nelson 2019; Wright, Zounlome, & Whiston, 2020). In addition, male rape victims repress their experience because of how society will respond to them, and the psychological issues that they develop after the

victimisation are often untreated (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Police officials and even friends often treat male rape victims with disbelief, mockery, and disdain and they therefore experience secondary victimisation as they are questioned about their sexuality. Furthermore, many are held responsible for the rape incident. Male rape victims often revealed that they were compelled to suffer in silence because they were not able to report the crime or, if they did, they were not believed or treated with disdain (Thomas & Kopel, 2023). Such reports suggest that male rape victims feel they are failed by the criminal justice system and that they have no voice (Jina et al., 2020).

### **2.7.2 Psychological effects in male rape victims**

According to Williams, Williams, Stein, Seedat, Jackson and Moomal (2007: 845), trauma due to sexual abuse “is deeply rooted in South African society”. Most victims of rape suffer severe psychological effects or even long-term emotional damage because of their victimisation, and anything that reminds them of their victimisation only makes it worse. One issue that affects long-term suffering is how the victim, whether male or female, is treated after the experience of rape (Mitchell et al., 1999). Limited research has been done on male rape victims and the psychological effects of this experience on them, and some scholars had to use whatever data were available from counsellors dealing with male rape victims (Walker et al., 2005). When men were counselled about their sexual victimisation, they described it as an aggressive, dehumanising, and embarrassing experience.

Scholars who did research on both genders as rape victims and the psychological effects they experienced began to see close similarities between men and women (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). However, it appeared that men suffered more intensely of psychological effects than women, such as long-term post-traumatic stress disorder as the victims experienced intense flashbacks or relived the traumatic experience. They also suffered from depression, insomnia, and personality disorders. Male victims often became hostile and angry, had a low self-esteem because of their victimisation and not being able to report it, experienced extreme anxiety, considered suicide, succumbed to alcohol and drug abuse, and experienced sexual dysfunction (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Kaminer et al., 2008; Davies et al., 2008; Chapleau et al., 2008). In this regard, Sitto and Lubinga (2020: 2) state:

“Health experts have reported on the multitudinous consequences of untreated male rape victims and the risks they face. Victims bear psychological, emotional, sexual and



physical health risks if they are not helped. In many countries, male rape victims are ridiculed by officials from state departments...when reporting the crime, while others are stigmatised by health officials meant to treat them. Male victims could face more specific health risks, such as sexual anxieties, sexual dysfunction and possibly impotence, and systemic barriers because most health services are geared toward females.”

These psychological effects have been noted not only in adult male rape victims, but also in boys who were sexually molested or raped as kids and who grew up with these psychological effects. Kaminer et al. (2008: 1592) state that, for men, “detention and torture are the forms of violence most strongly associated with PTSD, followed by domestic violence in the form of childhood physical abuse or physical abuse by an intimate partner”. Studies have also revealed that, after their interviews, a large number of men suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of recalling the victimisation that had occurred as adults and as minor males. Briere and Conte (1993: 24) state the following in this regard:

“A total of 267 of 450 subjects (59.3%) reported not having remembered their abuse at some point after it occurred but before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Discriminant function analysis revealed a significant multivariate relationship between abuse characteristics and history of amnesia regarding one’s abuse.”

In addition, men who suffered some physical effects of rape were also affected psychologically because they would experience triggers that would remind them of their victimisation (Davies et al., 2008). Moreover, many male rape victims tend to turn to substance abuse as a coping mechanism to deal with the effects of their victimisation (Thomas & Kopel, 2023). According to research, many male and female victims were raped by perpetrators who were known to them, while only a small percentage were raped or sexually assaulted by strangers (Doherty & Anderson, 2004; Javaid, 2015). Furthermore, some heterosexual participants admitted to being raped by homosexual individuals, and these victims were accused of being homosexual themselves and were therefore blamed for their own victimisation (Whatley & Riggio, 1993; White & Yamawaki, 2009). Research has also found that homosexuals who had been raped were immediately disregarded because of the belief that any sexual relation with another male was what they wanted, which was untrue (Sivakumaran, 2005; Rumney, 2009). This belief disadvantaged these victims as they could not report their victimisation or find recourse for the crime committed against them.

## 2.8 Conclusion

Male rape myths, stereotypes, and gender roles still prevail in many societies and in many countries. Research on male rape and sexual victimisation has commenced in the hope that a better understanding of this phenomenon will cause the eradication of male rape myths. In-depth understanding of the causes and consequences of male rape is vital as both genders are susceptible to this crime and suffer equally from a number of both physical and psychological consequences. It is evident that a number of countries still do not have a legal framework that recognises and supports male victims of rape, and the idea that men can only be the perpetrators of rape has persisted for a long time. The perceptions that 'real' men cannot be raped, that men should be able to fight off their offenders, that a man who was raped is homosexual and no longer perceived as masculine, and that male rape only occurs within the homosexual community are myths that still prevail in prejudiced and predominantly patriarchal societies.

Moreover, the belief that the forced sexual penetration of a male is not rape as men always enjoy or are always willing to engage in sexual intercourse prevents such victims from finding justice in the legal system. In fact, there is evidence that such victims were blackmailed, manipulated, coerced, and verbally pressured by both male and female perpetrators. Furthermore, it is evident that, in the absence of a gender-neutral definition of rape and laws that protect male rape victims, male victims of this crime will have to continue to suffer in silence regardless of the psychological and physical trauma they suffer. Moreover, if law enforcement agencies, societal structures, and the state do not see the need to provide the necessary legal support, care centres, and medical treatment for male rape victims, men will continue to be discouraged to speak up about their victimisation and they will refrain from reporting crimes of sexual abuse to the authorities.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

According to Graham (2006), research on sexual violence has caused quite a stir in social literature, but these studies have predominately focused on female victims. The perspectives of the feminist view have dominated research on sexual violence as they have emphasised the gendered nature of this form of violence as a social issue that predominantly impacts females. Because there is a lack of authentic qualitative literature on male rape and sexual violence, it has made it difficult for scholars to develop suitable theoretical framework on the issue of male rape that definitively explains male rape as an actual concern and not only as a theory and gendered phenomenon that insinuates that rape only affects females and not males as well (Javaid, 2016a). In this context, Graham (2006: 2) argues as follows:

“...conceptualizing men as offenders and women as victims assumes that a clear distinction can be made between victims and perpetrators of crime. This distinction makes male victimisation difficult to understand, as the existence of male victims directly challenges dominant understandings of victimisation that often problematize men’s sexuality.”

For the purpose of this study, the gender theory and the feminist theory were used to explain the issues of male rape and sexual assault in depth. Combined, these two theories were effective in eliciting in-depth understanding of the issue of rape and sexual assault. Due to the lack of theories that explain male rape, combining the gender theory and the feminist theory assisted in better understanding the rape not only of female victims, but of male victims as well, which was the key purpose of the study.

#### **3.2 The Feminist Theory Approach**

According to Zeigler (2009), the history of the feminist theory originated in the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. She advocated powerfully for liberal feminism which argues that women should be able to equally enjoy the same rights as men, such as political and monetary rights, freedom of speech, the right to political expression and alignment, and religion. The feminist

theory stemmed from the perception of feminism and combats entrenched gender inequality perceptions and practices that have existed in societies for a very long time. It further explores the social roles of men and women and focuses on discrimination, patriarchy, and the objectification of women, amongst others. Barnett, Sligar, and Wang (2018: 3-4) state that the feminist theory “is concerned with the fundamental inequalities between men and women, as well as the sense of patriarchy it entails”. The use of the feminist theory is thus pertinent in understanding rape myths and society’s acceptance of patriarchy and male dominance, which are themes that are present in most religious and social systems. Barnett et al. (2018: 3-4) further explain this as follows:

“Radical feminism is a branch of feminism that focuses on male oppression, or patriarchy as the cause of gender inequalities, the emphasis being violence, both physical and psychological, as perpetrated by male dominated institutions against females...[It] states that patriarchy is the system of domination, which legitimizes the oppression of the weaker sex/gender by the more powerful one and is rooted in the hierarchal idea of men over women, as well as the marginalization of women.”

The feminist theory is supported by various schools in sociology, anthropology, and media studies. However, for the purpose of the study, it was used to explain the issue of male sexual victimisation (McPhail, 2016). Davies (2002: 203) states that, since the 1970s, “feminists have done much to publicise the plight of rape victims, and many support services have been developed for women who are coming to terms with the effects of rape”. According to McPhail (2016) and Davies (2002), during the 1970s, when the second wave of the feminist movement was at its peak, more women started to share their experiences of sexual assault and, as a result, there has been a rise in the number of centres where women volunteer to assist female victims to recover from the physical and psychological harm caused by the sexual violence they experienced (Javaid, 2014; Maxwell & Scott, 2014; McPhail, 2016). There has also been a concomitant rise in radical feminism, which posits that sexual violence is not so much about the pleasure of sexual gratification, but more about rape as an act to assert power over the victim. To illustrate this notion, McPhail (2016: 3) states the following:

“During the 1970s, as part of their critique of patriarchy, feminists developed a set of theories about rape; they soon replaced psychologists as the recognized experts on its causes and motivations. Since feminists were the frontline workers in rape crisis centers [sic], they became responsible for educating the public about sexual assault dynamics and prevention. Therefore, the mantra ‘rape is about power and control, not sex’ became widely adopted; becoming, in fact, conventional wisdom.”

Because of the exposure of female rape in the media and on other platforms, this phenomenon became less of a personal experience and more of a political matter as it shifted the perspective from rape as a merely individual experience to the view that it is a systemic issue that needs to be urgently addressed (Davies, 2002; Chafetz, 2004; Canan & Levand, 2019). Reflecting on the earlier feminist perceptions of rape, McPhail (2016: 2) explains it as follows: “The act of rape was seen not as an end in itself, but as a means of enforcing gender roles in society and maintaining the hierarchy in which men retained control. Rape was no longer viewed as an outcome of an individual deviant, but a product of a larger rape culture that condoned and excused male violence”. The feminist movement gained momentum, and by 1973 it had implemented a radical feminist theory that did not fully correlate with the beliefs of liberal feminists. Javaid (2014; (2016b) argues that radical feminists sought to diminish the socially constructed gender norms and hierarchies instilled by patriarchy, whereas liberal feminists sought to make changes within existing social structures. McPhail (2016: 2) states:

“Frontline feminist activists developed new theories, advocated for legal reforms, and provided victim services, [and] feminist researchers in the academy began building empirical knowledge. Their research revealed that rape was not the relatively rare event it was once thought to be but was instead quite common, that rape was less likely to be perpetrated by a stranger than a person known to the victim, including a husband, and that a percentage of ordinary men said they were likely to rape if they could go undetected.”

The feminist approach is adamant to correct the myths about rape, change the way the police react to rape cases, address and alter societies’ perception of rape, and shift the way cases and statistics of rape are handled by law enforcement agencies (Flax, 1987; Gregory & Lees, 1999). According to Javaid (2018), the normalisation of rape by society can be attributed to the adherence to various rape myths by people who know no better. The term ‘rape myths’ refers to misleading beliefs that warp perceptions and understanding of rape, sexually victimised and/or raped individuals, and the discrimination against and marginalisation of rape victims. In this regard, Barnett et al. (2018: 3) state:

“Rape myths are culturally based, used to explain an important cultural phenomenon, and justify cultural arrangements. In addition, rape myths place the blame onto the victim while exonerating the rapist. Rape myths appear to affect not only societal perceptions of rape but also the victim’s perceptions of rape. Rape myth acceptance has been found to predict men’s sexual violence, and overall, men are more likely to endorse rape myths than

women. Rape myth acceptance is associated with hyper-masculinity, hostility toward women, and homophobia.”

Similarly, a large body of literature that is available on male rape and sexual violence emphasises prominent male rape myths that continue to promote the stereotypical views that individuals project on male rape victims, resulting in victim blaming and the secondary victimisation of these victims (Javaid, 2016a). The empirical research conducted by feminists on the existence of rape myths has supported the view that male rape does exist, and these research studies have highlighted the impact rape myths have on victims of sexual assault and rape. These investigations have also highlighted that both genders are exposed to and impacted by rape myths (Javaid, 2016b; Barnett et al., 2018). In addition, reference to rape myths in feminist theory illustrates that male rape victims suffer as much as their female counterparts as a result of rape myths that have been condoned because of the socially constructed gender norms we have come to know (Burt, 1980).

As an extension of feminism, radical feminism became prominent in the 1970s and 1980s and was introduced by a well-known feminist scholar, Catherine MacKinnon (Eisenstein, 1990). Radical feminists strongly believe that rape does not occur because of the offender’s motivation to receive sexual pleasure and gratification, but that it is an act of aggression and violence to instil fear in their victims and assert dominance over them (McPhail, 2016). Similarly, Hare-Mustin and Marecek (1988) argue that rape is more about gendered power dynamics than sexual pleasure. Majola, Mkhize and Akpan (2022: 31) agree, stating the following:

By theory, legally, and through societal standards, incidents of sexual violation are exclusive to women. According to the feminist theory, sexual victimisation is the result of socially constructed male power and privilege being used to subordinate women...Furthermore, there is a concept that argues for and sees male aggression as part of male masculinity. For instance, where women are investigated as perpetrators, feminist activists advance a gendered ideology that justifies women perpetrating violence under the guise of self-defence rather than abuse, and this assumes a generalisation that women perpetrate crime for their own protection.”

The theoretical focus that argues that an individual’s need for sexual intercourse is motivated by power instead of pleasure also explains how female victims are treated when their

victimisation is made known. The focus on victim blaming has therefore shifted, although not comprehensively enough (Maxwell & Scott, 2014).

Although research that utilises the feminist theory focuses on the sexual victimisation of females and is incrementally useful for female victims of rape, there is a dearth of feminist research on the plight of male rape victims, which is ironic as feminists seek to promote gender equality (Javaid, 2014; Canan & Levand, 2019). McPhail (2016: 3) states that, “while the radical/liberal feminist theory proposes to offer a comprehensive theory of rape, it instead offers a limited focus on cultural and social factors, which classifies it as a single-factor theory”. The latter researcher adds that radical/liberal feminists claim that ‘the notion that all men have power over all women is an oversimplification and fails to acknowledge male diversity.’

For the purpose of this study, the feminist theory was pivotal as it highlights the gendered nature of rape. In addition, it was important to focus on the radical feminist theory in particular, as it argues that men rape other men for the very same reasons men rape women, which is to exert power and assert their dominance and control over their victims (Stanko & Hobdell, 1993).

### **3.3 The Gender Theory Approach**

Gender is a term that is used in multiple disciplines that analyse gender identity. It is widely used in gender studies but is also found in psychology, anthropology, sociology, and media studies (Goldie, 2014). According to Goldie (2014), the term ‘gender’ was first coined by a sexologist by the name of John Money who explored human sexuality in the quest to advocate sexual liberation amongst people. John Money was a leading proponent of the idea that human sexual orientation develops through learning and gendered socialization, and his controversial views on sexual liberation made him a target of ridicule and denouncement, especially by individuals who were conservative and did not believe in sexual freedom. Goldie (2014: 3) states that his theories at the time “were at the cutting edge of changing views on intersex, transsexuals, homosexuality, and all aspects of sex and gender”.

According to Whatley and Riggo (1993), the gender theory essentially analyses how victim blaming plays a role in how victims are impacted. Whatley and Riggo (1993: 503) state:

“...people will blame the victim to ensure that such an event could never happen to a good person, such as themselves. Considering that the victims in all of these studies have been female, it is difficult to know if the tendency toward greater victim blame among males will occur in instances where the rape victim is male, although preliminary studies with male rape victims seem to indicate this trend.”

In addition, empirical research that was embedded in the gender theory set out to determine if victim blaming was treated differently between males and females. It was noted that the gender of the victim played a role and that different reasons drove male and female rape and sexual assault (Whatley & Riggo, 1993).

The gender theory has been viewed as highly effective in explaining male rape. This approach explains the different forms of sexual assault and rape and does not exclude the possibility of males falling victim to rape and it provides a platform for in-depth analyses of different forms of sexual violence (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988). Furthermore, this theory assists in critically explaining male-on-male sexual violence due to gender power dynamics. It posits that acts of rape and sexual violence are committed to destroy the balance of power between the sexes; this means that sexual violence creates the desired imbalance so that the perpetrator is perceived as more powerful than the victim (Krekula, 2007; Hedlund, 2012). The theory can also be used effectively to provide a clear explanation of the gender roles that exist in society, particularly those that prompt the victimisation of men. Because socially constructed gender rules are so deeply embedded in most societies, a large number of men still believe that it is their duty to maintain power in all aspects of their lives because it affirms their masculinity and superiority. Once that authority is threatened, most men believe that they need to restore the order by reclaiming and maintaining power (Hedlund, 2012). Therefore, in fear of ‘losing’ their masculinity or manhood, male victims of rape are often reluctant to report their cases, and very few speak openly about the sexual victimisation they experienced, while even fewer seek help (Thomas & Kopel, 2023).



### **3.4 Summary**

A combination of the feminist and gender theories was applied in this study in an attempt to gain in-depth understanding of rape in general and the issue of male rape in particular. This investigation was prompted by the dearth of research on male rape, and the study thus relied on these two theories to explain male rape because more advanced and updated theories that illuminate male rape have not been developed or proposed. Therefore, due to the nebulous and incomplete nature of society's understanding of male rape, this study aimed to fill this gap in scholarly discourse. The two theories that were selected assisted the researcher in obtaining various perspectives to better understand the issue of male rape and the sexual assault of males. More specifically, the study was able to understand society's treatment of male victims and the persistent prevalence of rape myths. The literature proposes that both male and female rape victims experience victim blaming, but argues that the nature of this blame is not always the same for the two genders and that the prevalence of rape myths is evident in both male and female victimisation incidences. By utilising both theories, the researcher was able to explain why rape is perpetrated to instil fear and to exert power over the victim rather than for sexual pleasure and gratification.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodologies that were used to collect, analyse, and interpret information so that the aim and objectives of the study could be achieved. The term ‘methodology’ refers to the collective use of various techniques to collect, handle, and analyse information (or data) about a particular topic or concept (Snyder, 2019). This study adopted the qualitative research methodology. Merriam (2002: 5) states that qualitative research seeks “to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions therein”. The analysis of qualitative data thus strives for depth of understanding of a topic under investigation. The methodology that was employed in the current study guided the researcher to evaluate the causes, effects, common factors, and impact of rape on male victims. The researcher was also able to understand how male rape myths and stereotypes influenced the targeted community’s perceptions of male rape and the victims that fall prey to such perpetrators. As stated earlier, the study focused on Umlazi township near Durban.

This chapter outlines the research design, research approach, and the empirical methods that were used to achieve the study objectives. Furthermore, the sampling method that was used to recruit the participants are described and the manner in which the data were generated is discussed. The convenience sampling technique was used and individual interviews were conducted during which open-ended questions were posed to the interview participants. A focus group discussion was also conducted involving community members of Umlazi who had been selected purposively for the study.

The data were analysed thematically and the findings were correlated with those of earlier studies on rape in general and male rape in particular, and the theories that guided the study were also incorporated with the findings. The chapter also describes the study location and discusses the ethical considerations that the study adhered to.

## 4.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is “a collection of particular thought patterns or ideas from scholars when looking at research methodologies and theories that may contribute to the field of study” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A paradigm can also refer to one’s point of view or perspective of distinct ideas, concepts, assumptions, or philosophies pertaining a particular field of study (Bahari, 2010). When engaging in research, it is vital to establish a paradigm as it assists in exposing various beliefs, ideas, and theories that may influence researchers in their respective fields. For scholars to select the most appropriate research methodology, they must have an in-depth understanding of all possible research paradigms that could form the foundation of the research endeavour. A paradigm assists one to discover how knowledge is formed and to learn what is valuable in that field of study. A paradigm thus refers to the methodological perspective of a researcher’s thought patterns that have a significant impact on how information is processed and how this may influence their choice of research methodology and research tools and techniques (Kornai, 2000). This is why it is vital for scholars to ensure that they make known what beliefs, ideas, and assumptions are important to them. When one understands a paradigm, it allows for a better understanding when it comes to the processing of the nature of the research questions that a study needs to address, the use of particular research methodologies, the manner in which data are collected for that study, and how the data will be analysed and interpreted (Mertens, 2012). When a suitable paradigm is employed, scholars are able to fully understand and critique their own research and interpret the results so that the findings will contribute to that particular field of study. According to Žukauskas, Vveinhardt, and Andriukaitienė (2018), a paradigm can also be referred to as a theory that is able to give direction to the particular process of research.

Three paradigms are commonly used as a foundation for research, namely the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of research. The ontological paradigm refers to the kind of universe that researchers explore while also investigating the nature of existence within the construction of reality. Ahmed (2008: 2) states that this paradigm “is concerned with what kind of world we are investigating”, while ontological assumptions are “those that respond to the question ‘what is there that can be known?’ or ‘what is the nature of reality?’.” The second paradigm is the epistemological assumption, which is how researchers seek to get close to their research participants during a study. The researcher needs to collect information based on individuals’ views, and this is how knowledge is passed on based on people’s

experiences. Ahmed (2008: 3) states that epistemology “is a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know, [while it is] also concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate”. The last paradigm is the methodological assumption, which Ahmed (2008: 6) defines as follows: “Methodology is the strategy, plan of action, or process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes...It aims to describe, evaluate and justify the use of particular methods”. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017: 28) define methodology as “the broad term used to refer to the research design, methods, approaches and procedures in an investigation that are well planned to find out something”. It is used to ensure a scientific analysis of the methods, tools, and principles that are utilised during a study. There are three methodological approaches that are used in research, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted the qualitative research methodology.

The interpretive paradigm that is often associated with qualitative research is also referred to as descriptive-interpretive research, or hermeneutics. The interpretive approach in this qualitative study was applied to better understand the phenomenon under study. According to Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011), “one of the main distinctive features of qualitative research is that the approach allows the researcher to identify issues from the perspectives of selected participants [and to understand] the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events, and objects”. The interpretive paradigm seeks to gain in-depth understanding of the world by exploring the subjective experiences of individuals, and it therefore allows the researcher to explain the subjective reasons and meanings that drive social action.

By employing this research paradigm, the researcher was able to obtain in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of members of the Umlazi community regarding the issue of male rape. Utilising the interpretive research paradigm, the researcher’s understanding of the topic under investigation was expanded as she was able to gather information related to people’s authentic understandings and experiences of male rape. The methodology that was employed included observation of the participants, focus group discussions, and a series of open-ended one-on-one interviews that elicited qualitative interpretations.

### 4.3 Research Approach

The qualitative research approach focuses on critically understanding social phenomena based on an individual's authentic experiences. It allows a detailed explanation of societal phenomena and provides answers to why things happen the way they do. Information is generally obtained by administering a questionnaire that contains a series of open-ended questions and/or engaging in case studies and interviews during which individuals (singly or as a group) can fully explain their experiences. Knowledge of prior studies is an advantage as the researcher will understand the background to the problem and can then ask pertinent questions (Marshall & Gretchen, 1995; Maxfield & Babbie, 2016). The qualitative research approach is effective when a researcher wants to obtain in-depth understanding of what has happened or is currently happening in societies or a particular society.

Based on Javaid's (2014) advice, the qualitative research approach was adopted for this particular study because it allowed the researcher to generate in-depth data to understand the issue of male rape and sexual abuse in the study area. In the context of this study, Javaid (2014: 24) states:

“The qualitative approach can discover police officers' reasons as to why they think men do not report, and examine officers' underlying, subjective beliefs about male rape in a rich, comprehensive manner, which quantitative research is unable to do. Analogously, qualitative research allows the researcher to engage within the research procedure instead of standing on the sideline. ”

The qualitative research approach was also used to critically explore and evaluate previous literature that was available on male rape. This review allowed the researcher to obtain a broad perspective on what male rape victims experienced during and after their victimisation. The qualitative research approach was also useful in these earlier studies as the researchers were able to obtain in-depth knowledge about male rape victimisation as an under-studied topic in social research. By employing the qualitative approach, participants in the current study could be selected to provide first-hand knowledge of experiences of sexual assault and rape in Umlazi, with particular focus on the issue of male rape.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

An exploratory research design explores a research idea or phenomenon that has been under studied so that it will be better understood from a scholarly perspective (Stanko & Hobdell, 1993). When using the current exploratory research design, the researcher utilised ideas that stemmed from previous literature to acquire new knowledge concerning the research topic (Jensen & Karpos, 1993). In addition, this particular exploratory research may serve as a foundation for future studies that may explore different perspectives and stimulate new research topics and ideas regarding male rape and victimisation, as proposed by Javaid (2014). The exploratory research design was used as an outline to guide the researcher during the data collection and analysis processes. It elucidated understanding of the type of data required for the study, the methods of collection that would be best suited, and how the data should be analysed to best answer the research questions (Hedlund, 2012). Not only was the study able to explore the issue of male rape in depth, but it also shed light on the response of the community to male rape victims and the prominence of male rape myths and stereotypes in the study area.

##### **4.4.1 Study population**

The study population is the broad population that may be knowledgeable about the topic under investigation, but as it may be very large (such as the entire Umlazi community), it is not possible to include the entire population as study participants. Therefore, a sample of the population is selected to represent the rest of the general population (Majid, 2018). For the purpose of this study, the sample population consisted of community members residing in W section in Umlazi township in KwaZulu-Natal, and this sample adequately represented the community of Umlazi.

##### **4.4.2 Study site**

Umlazi is recognised as the fourth largest township in South Africa after Soweto, Tembisa, and Katlehong. This township is the only township in the country that has its own vehicle registration number plate, namely NUZ. Umlazi is divided into a total of 26 sections from A to Z. The letters I, O, and X are replaced by AA, BB, and CC. Umlazi comprises a total area of 47.46 km<sup>2</sup> and had an estimated population of 404 811 people in 2011 (Xaba & Mgutshini,

2023).

The researcher used a safe venue in section W to conduct the interviews and discussions. Individuals of the community of Umlazi were identified and recruited to elicit their interpretations on the issue of male rape and sexual victimisation. Prior to the study, the researcher's attention had been drawn to the undesirable prevalence of male rape in Umlazi by a news article by Mlambo (2020), who stated that 42 289 rape cases were recorded in KwaZulu-Natal during the 2019/2020 financial year, with Umlazi recording the second highest rape case record at 293. The majority of these cases had involved women and children, but it was evident that some had been perpetrated against males. This stirred the researchers concern, and Umlazi was thus identified as the location that might elicit new insights into male rape and victimisation.

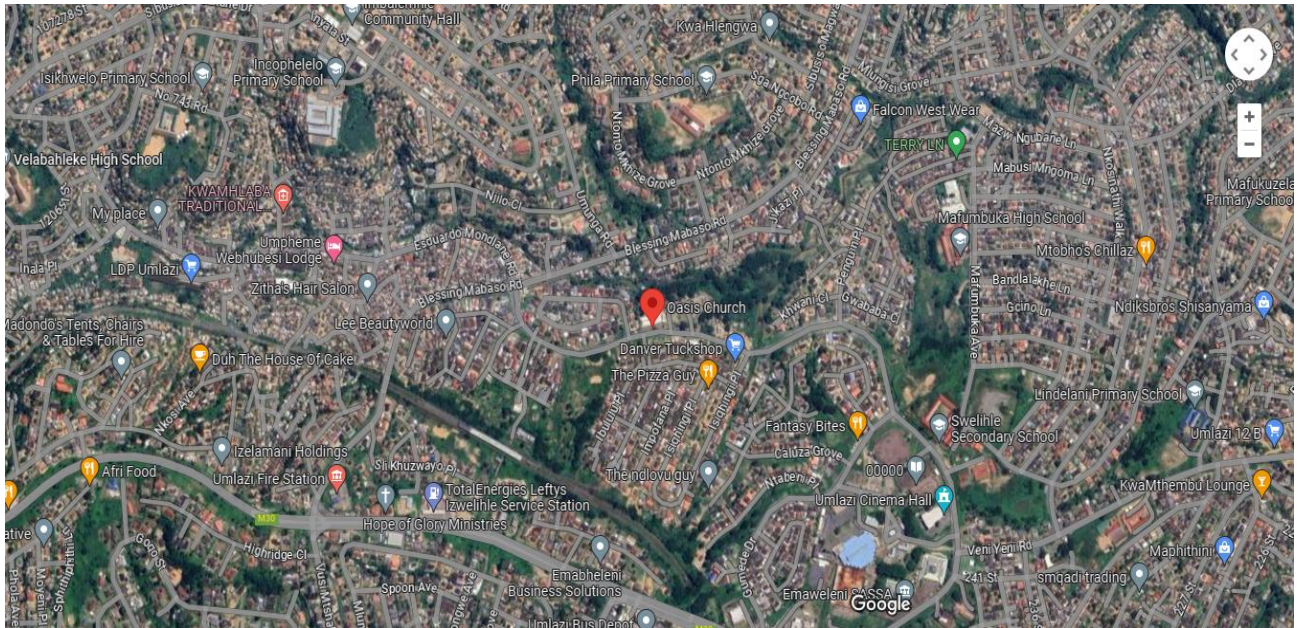
### Location of the study



**Figure 1: Map of Umlazi township in the eThekweni Metro area**

Source: <https://d3i71xaburhd42.cloudfront.net/0b5e42f6182c15e01cbf7c85c05b985a4bbad61c/26-Figure1.1-1.png>

To highlight the denseness of the dwellings in Umlazi and the location of W section, a partial Google map of the area is presented below.



**Figure 2: Aerial map showing the location of W section in Umlazi township**

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Oasis+Church/@29.957042,30.8919222,2481m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m6!3m5!1s0x1ef6535591fad365:0x5366051d55630cac!8m2!3d-29.957042!4d30.8919222!16s%2Fg%2F11c5j4998c?hl=en&entry=ttu>

#### 4.4.3 Participant selection

A letter was written by the researcher to the Umlazi section W Ward Councillor seeking permission to conduct the study in the area and among residents. Permission was granted in writing (Annexure K) and the researcher approached potential participants that met the inclusion criteria. These criteria were the following:

- Participants had to reside in Umlazi W section in Ward 95;
- They had to be involved in the community; and
- They had to be aware of sexual crimes in the area.

Various potential participants were identified. Members of the Community Police Forum were identified and approached. Once some had agreed to participate, snowball sampling was used to recruit other suitable participants from the community who met the inclusion criteria. A well-known church leader was also approached and recruited.

The researcher met with the willing participants to explain the purpose of the study to them. They were furnished with a voluntary consent form which also included information about the nature and purpose of the study as well as the information that their participation would be



completely voluntary and that they could withdraw any time they chose. It was also suggested that their participation in the study would be beneficial to the community as it would expose an issue that could possibly be addressed and eradicated. Upon the residents' agreement to participate, dates and times that were convenient to them were arranged for ten one-on-one interviews and two focus group discussions.

The study sample consisted of 20 participants from Umlazi W section. This sample size sufficed as the goal of this study was to attain in-depth knowledge about the issue of male sexual victimisation and rape in order to raise awareness of this issue in the study area and to add to the scholarly pool of knowledge on rape, and male rape in particular. Malterud, Siersma and Guassora (2016: 4) argue that a study "will need the least amount of participants when the study aim is narrow, if the combination of participants is highly specific for the study aim, if it is supported by established theory, if the interview dialogue is strong, and if the analysis includes longitudinal in-depth exploration of narratives or discourse details". The sample was purposively selected because it was believed that these individuals would provide quality, in-depth information that would be relevant to the study aim and objectives.

The participants were identified and recruited according to the study criteria and were requested to participate voluntarily. The researcher explained the purpose of the study in detail and each willing participant read and signed the informed consent form. The researcher read through and provided clarity on every aspect contained in the informed consent form so that the participants would understand their rights and agree to participate voluntarily. The participants were also assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their identities and were informed that they were able to withdraw from the study at any point. Furthermore, the participants were informed that they had the right not to answer any questions that caused emotional discomfort. The sample consisted of 20 male and female participants aged 30 to 35. Most of the participants that the researcher approached were members of the Community Police Forum who are commonly in this age range, this is because individuals in this age group are active in the CPF and have first-hand experiences and in-depth knowledge of the crimes that occur in Umlazi. It must be acknowledged at this point that the researcher was unaware if any of the participants had actually been victims of male rape during the recruitment process.

#### **4.4.4 Sampling technique**

The convenience sampling technique was used to collect the required data from research participants who were selected specifically and not at random because they would provide vivid information. For this reason, the researcher was able to gain deep insight into the opinions and knowledge of community members' insights into male rape and sexual abuse. Etikan, Musa and Alkasim (2016: 2) state that "convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study". This sampling technique was appropriate as the researcher was able to recruit knowledgeable participants whose responses assisted her in answering the research questions.

The researcher chose to first conduct the focus group discussions as they would help her gain insight into the shared experiences and understandings of the research topic in a group setting. As there were 20 participants, each focus group discussion was attended by 10 participants. According to Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick and Mukherjee (2018), the optimal size of a focus group is between 8 to 12 people to allow the group to engage and in-depth conversations during which they share their views, opinions, and experiences while listening and often responding to those of others.

Individuals from the Community Police Forum (CPF), the community, and a church leader were identified. There were 15 males in total, consisting of 10 community members, 1 church leader, and 4 members of the community that were part of the Community Police Forum (CPF). Five (5) females participated in the study, and they consisted of individuals who also resided in W section. The researcher deliberately selected more male than female participants so that the study could create a platform for men to openly but safely speak about male rape victimisation.

In addition to the focus group discussions, the researcher recruited individual interview participants from the 20 original participants. These were male participants only, comprising of 4 members of the CPF and 6 members of the Umlazi community. These interviews elicited

further insights into male residents' individual views, thoughts, and feelings regarding the issue of male rape.

Key aspects that were explored were the following: Did the participants believe that male rape occurred in their area? Was it an issue that required more attention? If men were victimised, how did it affect them emotionally and physically? What were their overall thoughts on men being victims of rape or sexual assault? Did male rape or sexual assault only happen to homosexual men? How would they feel and react if a victim were to confide in them? The responses of the participants to these and other probing questions ensured that accurate information was collected about what the community knew and thought about the issue of male rape.

#### **4.5 Data Collection Procedure**

All the research participants were informed that the aim of the study was to analyse their thoughts on male rape and male rape victims (Davies, 2002). To collect the required information from the participants, the researcher used data from both focus group discussions and individual interviews, which provided the researcher with useful contextual feedback and allowed her to better understand the participants' true feelings and attitudes about the research topic. Furthermore, these two methods ensured that the researcher understood the viewpoints, experiences, and the perspective of the participants. Before the start of the focus group as well as the individual interviews, the participants were informed that the questions they had to answer would be posed in English and/or IsiZulu. They were therefore able to answer in the language in which they were more comfortable. In addition, the participants were made aware that both the focus group discussions and individual interviews would be recorded with their permission. None refused to be voice recorded, so a recorder was used which also facilitated accurate data transcription and translation, where necessary.

##### **4.5.1 Focus group discussions**

Focus group discussions are usually used in qualitative research to gather data from knowledgeable research participants (Gammie, 2017). Eliciting data from focus groups is essential in gaining a detailed understanding of a particular social issue in a particular society.

This data collection method gathers information from a group of individuals who have been purposely selected as the sample.

Two focus group discussions were conducted by the researcher at Oasis Church in W section. Each group consisted of 10 participants. The 20 participants of the focus group discussions consisted of 15 community members, 4 Community Police Forum (CPF) members, and 1 church leader. The focus group discussions were guided by a series of open-ended questions that allowed the participants to offer detailed information during the discussions. The two groups of 10 participants each were interviewed over two days to accommodate their time schedules. In each group there were community and CPF members as well as males and females. A church leader participated in one of the groups. The use of focus group discussions allowed the researcher to obtain both individual and collective perspectives on the issue of male sexual victimisation and rape. Each focus group was allocated an hour to an hour and a half so that all the participants would have ample time to engage in the discussion.

#### **4.5.2 Individual one-on-one interviews**

Thereafter, 10 individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with the most willing and knowledgeable of the original 20 participants. The 10 interview participants included 4 CPF members and 6 community members. Individual (one-on-one) interviews involve intensive interviews with individual participants to explore their perspectives of the study topic (Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2013). This data collection method was beneficial to the study as the participants were able to openly express their views outside the focus group context. The use of individual interviews also allowed any individual who had been a victim of male rape or sexual assault to be able to be more open in the interview than in the focus group setting. Only such victim emerged, and his story is discussed in Chapter five.

As stated earlier, only 10 of the 20 participants were selected to take part in the individual interviews, which were guided by an interview schedule. Each interview lasted 25 to 35 minutes. The individual interviews involved 6 male community members and 4 members of the CPF. This was to get even more detailed information of the opinions and perspective of the participants on the issue of male sexual victimisation where they were able to speak more openly and were most comfortable.

## 4.6 Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used thematic analysis. Alhojailan (2012: 40) states that thematic analysis is the most appropriate for any study that investigates a social phenomenon using human interpretations. It is a systematic manner of data analysis that allows the researcher to associate any emerging codes or themes with the whole set of data. It further ensures accuracy of the analysis process and enhances the validity and the meaning of the findings. In the current study, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to determine the correlation between various ideas regarding male rape and to compare these with existing literature (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

The qualitative research approach required the collection/generation of various bits of information from various participants, and the use of thematic analysis allowed the researcher to synthesise these loose bits and to gain rich and in-depth understanding of the research topic, as proposed by Alhojailan (2012). The participants' perspectives on the treatment of male rape victims generated themes and findings that can be used to educate the community and police officials about the causes of this crime, the reasons why male victims are reluctant to report these cases to the police, and the psychological effects this form of victimisation has on them (Gill & Tutty, 1999).

The study used a combination of methods to generate and critically analyse the data and to better explain the male rape phenomenon. The thematic analysis process consisted of the following phases, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006):

- (a) *Becoming familiar with the data*: In this phase the researcher read and reread the raw data from the interview and focus group discussion transcripts. She also repeatedly listened to voice records of the data which assisted her to become familiar with the data and to recognise pertinent messages.
- (b) *Generating initial codes*: Identifying initial codes is a process in which the 'building blocks' of the data are recognised and highlighted. The identification of codes assisted the researcher to identify data that would potentially be relevant to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- (c) *Searching for themes*: Braun and Clarke (2012: 63) state that a theme "captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions and represents

some level of patterned response or meaning with the data set”. The researcher was able to construct themes from the codes that emerged.

- (d) *Reviewing potential themes:* In this phase the researcher reviewed the developing themes in relation to the coded data. This was done to check the quality and ensure that the themes were pertinent to the data. In this process, some initial ‘themes’ were discarded as their relevance was insignificant, or they were duplicates of already established ideas and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012).
- (e) *Producing the report:* In this phase the researcher was able to conduct a thorough analysis of the extracted codes and emerging themes to determine how they related to the research questions and the literature. Having selected the most relevant themes, the researcher commenced writing this comprehensive report in which the findings are presented, analysed, and discussed (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

According to Leavy (2017), all researchers must adhere to ethical requirements as research involves all types of individuals. It is the qualitative researcher’s responsibility to take the rights of human participants into account and to understand the social and other differences that exist among them before commencing the research. The researcher must ensure that no participants are harmed in any way during the research. A list of ethical considerations usually serves as

guideline for the researcher to determine what may and may not be focused on in a study (Raune, 2016). Heeding this requirement, the researcher ensured that:

- The participants' informed and voluntary consent was obtained prior to primary data collection;
- The human rights of all individuals were protected during data collection and in the subsequent report;
- The participants' identities would remain protected during and after the study and that they would remain anonymous;
- None of the participants, or the people the cases they referred to, were psychologically or physically harmed during data collection or in the aftermath of the study;
- The well-being of the participants was ensured at all times due to the sensitive nature of the research.

#### **4.7.1 Protection from harm**

Because the issue of male rape and sexual assault is a very sensitive subject, the researcher ensured that the participants were protected. Some participants, particularly those who could actually have experienced physical assault of a sexual nature, were highly likely to be reminded of the physical and psychological trauma they experienced during their victimisation (Javaid, 2015). The researcher also needed to be aware that the research participants could experience secondary victimisation when they were interviewed and that it could trigger an episode of post-traumatic stress disorder (Whatley & Riggio, 1993; Javaid, 2014). Participants were thus reminded that, if any of the questions triggered a negative sensation, they had the right not to answer the question. They were assured that their participation was voluntary, that the study did not intend to expose or harm them, and that they could leave at any point.

#### **4.7.2 Permission letter**

Ethical clearance (HSSREC/0006232/2023) was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal before officially conducting the study.

#### **4.7.3 Voluntary consent and anonymity**

To ensure that participation was voluntary, the researcher issued the participants with a voluntary consent form to read and sign, as proposed by Nueman (2014). This form included the necessary information about the study, such as the participants' understanding that their participation was voluntary, that they would not be financially rewarded or remunerated, that they had the right to leave the study at any given point, that they did not have to answer any questions that made them feel uncomfortable, and that they gave permission for voice recordings during the interviews and focus group discussions. The participants also signed that they understood the purpose of the study and that their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information they provided would be safeguarded to the extent that it would not be possible to trace any information or findings back to them as individuals (Gray, 2014). According to Whelan (2007), anonymity is the constant reassurance of participants that all the information they provide will remain anonymous or confidential throughout the study and even in its aftermath. They were informed that the raw data would be kept strictly private and protected at all times. Each participant was therefore allocated a pseudonym which will be impossible to trace back to the original individual (Whelm, 2007).

#### **4.8 Achieving Trustworthiness**

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the issues of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability were addressed, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012).

##### **4.8.1 Credibility**

Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:3) state that “the credibility of a study is determined when co-researchers or readers are confronted with the experience and they can recognise it. Credibility addresses the ‘fit’ between respondents’ views and the researcher’s representation of them”. Credibility is maintained in a study when credible research strategies are included such as consistent observation, lengthy engagement, and data collection and research triangulation. Credibility can also be achieved by testing the findings. To adhere to these requirements, the researcher generated data from the one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions and aspects of agreement with those of earlier researchers were also highlighted. The researcher also spent time with the participants to the point of data saturation, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012). The findings were also referred back to a core group of participants for verification.



#### **4.8.2 Dependability**

It is important to achieve the reliability of a study, particularly in terms of the manner in which it is conducted and the instruments used for data generation. Thus, if the study is repeated in the same manner using the same methods and research participants, the results may be similar to those of the initial study (Stahl & King, 2020). This means that the research should be traceable, logical, and clearly documented. All these required steps were followed to achieve dependability. For instance, well documented qualitative data generation and analysis research methods were used as was described earlier. Participants who were knowledgeable of the topic under investigation were also purposively recruited.

#### **4.8.3 Transferability**

This process involves the manner in which the results of qualitative research can be successfully transferred to other perspectives that will have other participants. Stahl and King (2020:3) state: “This proposition is somewhat tricky, given that, by design, qualitative research does not (cannot) aim for replicability. Yet, qualitative researchers maintain that patterns and descriptions from one context may be applicable to another”. Again, the nature of the data and the manner in which the information was extracted, analysed, and reported ensured the transferability of the study.

#### **4.8.4 Confirmability**

Nowell et al. (2017:3) state that confirmability “is concerned with establishing that the researcher’s interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached”. The researcher thus ensured that the findings and the conclusions that were reached pertained to the data and not the researcher’s own perspectives or preconceived ideas. The findings are therefore not biased but reflect the authentic views of the study participants. Furthermore, confirmability was achieved by accomplishing the credibility, dependability, and transferability of the study.

## **4.9 Summary**

This chapter reflected on the use of the qualitative research approach and the various techniques that were used to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives and aim of the study. The geographical profile of the study location was described to provide an overview of why this particular location was chosen. Furthermore, the sampling techniques that were used to select the research participants and the data collection procedures were discussed. This chapter explained that the data were thematically analysed according to well-documented steps. The ethical considerations that were adhered to were also listed and it was explained that the trustworthiness of the study was achieved. The challenges that were experienced were briefly referred to and the study limitations were acknowledged.

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## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Male rape and the sexual abuse of men is an issue that is still viewed as taboo in many societies. However, both anecdotal and literature evidence suggest that it does occur in numerous communities in South Africa. In this chapter, the prevalence and common causes of male rape and sexual victimisation are explored using authentic data based on focus group discussions and individual interviews with community members residing in section W in Umlazi township near Durban. The aim of the study was to explore the nature of male sexual victimisation and the perceptions of the community of Umlazi pertaining to this phenomenon.

The responses of the research participants are presented verbatim to underline the authenticity of their views. The participants were allowed to answer in their preferred language, and the majority responded in IsiZulu. These responses were translated accurately into English by the researcher. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of the participants. The purpose of this chapter is to paint a comprehensive picture of the collective insights and experiences of the members of the community of Umlazi regarding male rape and victimisation. The data are also integrated with the literature to reveal both corresponding and contradictory findings. Based on an in-depth literature review, four imperative research questions guided this study, namely:

- What is the extent of the prevalence of male rape in the Umlazi area?
- What are the factors that lead to male rape?
- Do male victims refrain from reporting cases of male rape, and why?
- Does the response of the criminal justice system have an impact on male rape victims?
- What strategies could be used to enhance awareness of the issue of male rape?

The discourse explores the common factors that prompted male rape and attempts to determine if the responses of the criminal justice system (CJS) and community impacted male sexual victimisation. The data are presented and discussed under the themes that emerged from the data.

## **5.2 Themes Emerging from the Focus Group Discussions**

### **5.2.1 Defining rape**

The findings revealed that all the participants from section W in Umlazi who participated in the focus group discussions were aware of male rape occurring in the community. Although most had experienced covert sexual victimisation in the form of inappropriate touching and attempts of unwanted sexual coercion, one of the male participants who later participated in a one-on-one interview admitted to having been a victim of rape and attempted rape. His narrative is presented and analysed in a later section. The focus group participants (two groups of 10 each) were able to share their understanding of rape and sexual assault in general and then further shared their insights on what they understood male rape or sexual assault was by providing a definition of it based on what they had experienced or seen in their community. Some argued that rape or sexual assault could be defined as rape when a man forces himself on a woman ‘without her consent’. This definition obviously suggests that the participants commonly attached a gendered perspective to rape as their definition did not include the rape of men. A similar gendered definition is also provided by Tracy, Fromson, Lond and Whiteman (2012: 5), who state that rape is “carnal knowledge (male penile of female vaginal penetration) with the use of force beyond the rape itself and ‘against her will’.”

Based on the responses, rape and sexual assault was defined as the use of force to engage in sexual intercourse with a person or inappropriately touching a person without their consent. In addition, it was acknowledged by the participants that when rape occurs, force or coercion is used, making force a common factor during the occurrence of rape or sexual assault. Tracy et al. (2012: 1) also state that “issues of force and consent continue to change but clear trends in the evolution of the law are identifiable. The definition of force is broadening beyond overt physical force to include other modes of coercion”. According to Kilpatrick (2000), the more traditional definitions of rape and sexual assault indirectly excluded male victims from this form of victimisation because of how they were worded, thus implying that the possibility of men becoming victims of rape was deemed unlikely. As a result of definitions like the one by Tracy et al. (2012), it has led to the belief that male rape cannot occur, and that men are the perpetrators and not the victims of rape.

### 5.2.2 The prevalence of male rape in the study area

In response to the first objective of the study (i.e., to explore if male rape is experienced in the area of Umlazi) and the first question (*What is your understanding of sexual violence?*), it was found that the two focus groups were able to clearly express their understanding of sexual violence. The participants agreed that male rape in fact occurred in Umlazi and that it was an issue that was overlooked or ignored by the community who tended to ‘turn a blind eye’ to this crime. The participants all knew of cases of males and young boys having been raped by men and women in their community. The following are some excerpts from their responses regarding their understanding of sexual violence and the issue of male rape in the Umlazi area:

*I think maybe, rape for a child like them, how can I explain... maybe...according to my understanding, maybe there is an uncle at home who maybe has anger issues, maybe he can't solve his problems, maybe with his woman, and that may lead to him maybe raping his woman or maybe he ends up raping a child because of his own anger issues. Yeah, that might be sexual violence. (Peter)*

*A woman...maybe a woman who has not been intimate with their partner for a long time, and now she may not enjoy sex with their partner, and maybe she would think that she would enjoy sex more with a younger man or child than an adult, and he can give it to her, and he can see that. (Chuck)*

*In my opinion, it would be a man who has no morals. If you rape someone, you are out of character. (Lizzy)*

*Sexual violence is when someone is being abused sexually, forced to indulge in sexual activities without their consent and permission and also when they are made to indulge in sexual activities without knowing what is happening and being unconscious. (Patrick)*

*According to my understanding, sexual violence is defined as the intention to impose harm on a person using sex and this is done without consent. (Samantha)*

These responses emphasised the belief that sexual assault or rape victims were predominantly female or sometimes children, while the perpetrators were believed to be male. The respondents' references to both women and children as victims of rape correlated with SAPS crime statistics (SAPS, 2019/2020) that sexual assault was most commonly committed against women and children. In corroboration, the definitions of rape provided by the participants exonerated men as the 'victims' and positioned them as the perpetrators.

Some focus group participants mentioned that they had knowledge of or had experienced a form sexual assault in their lifetime. The sexual assault they referred to occurred in the form of inappropriate touching by members of the opposite sex or same sex, being the victims of an individual who had attempted to drug them, sexual harassment, and attempted rape. They further shared that they knew of many other individuals in the community who had also experienced at least one form of sexual assault. To understand the sexual assault the participants had experienced, the definition presented by Majola et al. (2022) was applied: "Sexual violence or assault refers to any individual that uses force or manipulation to engage in unwanted sexual activity without consent".

In terms of male rape, it was considered something that did not happen or, if it did, it did not happen as frequently as the rape of women and children, and therefore the community did not view it as an issue. However, some participants admitted that cases of male rape had occurred in the community as far as they knew, but these cases were unreported. In response to the question if male rape occurred in the community, the following responses were offered:

*As much as we do not hear about it much, I believe that it does happen, and the victims are too scared or not comfortable to come out. (Sam)*

*There are some things that you will not know of, if they are not reported or spoken about like this issue of male rape, but it does happen. And to say that you have been raped by a woman, you know the police will laugh at you for reporting something like this. (Becka)*

*Uh, according to my knowledge it is possible. Because we have seen or heard a lot, it is something that a person can't just get out of, but it happens. (Bob)*

The respondents collectively agreed that male rape did in fact occur in their community, but that it was not spoken of. They also iterated the fact that it was not recognised as an issue as male victims tended not to report such cases or tell others about their experience. Their responses led to the following question to find out if the sexual violence of men was an issue in Umlazi, and the following answers were offered:

*Well, I think that maybe in cases like that, most of the time, men are afraid to report things like this because a person will think of how he will be looked at in their community, and then hides the fact that something like that happened to him. So, there is also the fact that a person would rather keep what has happened to them to themselves and the longer he has keeps it to himself it will reach a point where he will 'explode', and in him 'exploding' maybe it will lead to him doing a number of bad things as a way of releasing what is inside him. We men don't talk a lot, even if something has happened, now other people would look at you and say "Ahh, he's just a fragile boy," if we speak about such things, and that stops us men. You find that the person ended up not coming forward because he was just afraid of what the people of the community would say. I believe that that can be why male rape happening in our communities is an issue. (Chris)*

*It is an issue. I think that...I think that the reason why male rape may not be seen as a big problem is because they don't show up easily. They [victims] hide themselves and when they report their case at the police station, they don't attend... they don't attend them properly, in the right way. I think that maybe that's what is causing the problem, how the police stations attend to the victims. It should start from there! It should be them who have a way to attend to those cases correctly. And the person should be able to appear anonymously when reporting, and there must be a be a trained specialist for male victims, to get help with that case. (Jack)*

*Maybe amongst homosexual men yes, as they are treated in a manner that is not acceptable. As people don't accept them, they then abuse and violate them sexually. (John)*

The participants agreed that male rape was an issue in their community, but argued that male victims would not voluntarily open up about their sexual victimisation and implied that it was

thus an issue that was mainly swept under the carpet. This ‘silent suffering’ resulted in people assuming that, because of the low rate of reported cases, male rape rarely occurred and was not a topic that was spoken of much and therefore did not require attention. An interesting point that was raised by one of the participants was that male rape should be identified as an issue occurring in the homosexual community because of how homosexual men were perceived and treated.

According to Javaid (2015), it is important to take note of societal attitudes that have perpetuated stereotypes and misconceptions about sexual assault. These misconceptions have contributed to the belief that male victims of rape do not exist or that any sexual activity between two males is consensual. However, it is important to recognise that rape can occur regardless of the gender or sexual preferences of the individual, meaning that rape can and does occur between heterosexual or homosexual men.

The findings also revealed that the community members collectively believed that rape predominantly occurred between male and female. However, one of the participants did mention that sexual assault or rape could occur between individuals of the same sex. It may be argued that the belief that rape occurred only between male and female stemmed from the deeply embedded societal belief that prompted definitions of rape that refer to male-female and not same-sex rape (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

### **5.2.3 Common factors that may promote male rape**

The discussion proceeded to consider the question pertaining to the second objective, which was to identify what factors resulted in male rape. According to the literature, factors that could lead to male rape are the environment, social status, economic background, and power dynamics (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). The issue of power dynamics was discussed in Chapter three, where it was argued that the feminist theory posits that men will rape other men to maintain dominance and power over their victims. Both the feminist theory and the gender theory address the imbalance of power based on gender, societal expectations, and stereotypes that impact sexual assault or rape victims. As it is known that men can also be victims of rape, it was important for the current study to explore the participants’ perspectives on the factors that could contribute to the sexual vulnerability of males (Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Factors



such as social status, societal expectations of masculinity, and the stigma attached to male victimhood can discourage men from reporting sexual assault or seeking help. Chapter three highlighted that the gender theory analyses how traditional gender roles may discourage men from reporting or seeking support for sexual violence and how societal attitudes towards male victims can impact their experiences of trauma and recovery (White & Yamawaki, 2009; Majola et al., 2022; Akpan et al., 2022). Secondly, certain environments such as prisons or conflict zones, where power dynamics are skewed and violence is prevalent, can increase the risk of sexual victimisation for men. Thirdly, vulnerability to sexual violence can be influenced by economic factors such as poverty and homelessness that may force individuals into situations where they are at high risk of victimisation. Lastly, perpetrators of sexual assault can be acquaintances, intimate partners, or even family members, which highlights the importance of healthy relationship dynamics and consent in the quest to avoid sexual violence and coercion (Du Toit, 2022).

The participants stated that a number of factors could lead to the rape of males, and they equated these with factors contributing to the rape of female victims. The participants stated:

*I'd say yes there are factors that contribute. For I believe that with every action there's an underlying drive that forces the person to do such. (Justin)*

*Well, I can say that there are many things that can be considered as sexual violence. One thing that can contribute to sexual violence is poverty. So, if maybe the girl who does not come from a well-off family or background, the boy would know that he is powerful or has the upper hand and knows how to use that to his advantage to be able to do anything to a woman just because he has money and everything. In other cases that are similar to this, maybe using alcohol as a way to 'buy' the girl, and then the guy will feel that because he has bought the girl alcohol, or any other thing for that matter, he uses that to his advantage. He will feel that because he has spent money on the girl, she will have to do anything for him, and in most cases, the men want sex in return. He will go as far as saying, "You have been enjoying my money, so let's go do what I want to do now." When it comes to men being victimised, it is harder to believe, but there are women that do the same thing, where they will spend money on a man, hoping for sex in return, and if a man is*

*intoxicated it is easier for a woman to overpower a man, and it does happen. (Craig)*

*You will get that in households where the woman is the bread winner there is an imbalance of power in their relationship because it is known in society that the man is the provider. In a relationship like that the man feels 'useless' or powerless and feels like he has no say since he is not the bread winner, that would lead to the female taking advantage of the male emotionally, and she could end up emotionally blackmailing her partner into having sex. (Elizabeth)*

*There is this thing of being in a relationship with someone who is older than you. You will get that a young man or child is in a relationship with an older woman where young men or children are sexually groomed and do not even realise it. The older woman may be able to convince the male that they enjoy what they are doing, whatever sexual activity that they are engaging in, when there has not been any consent given. But because the woman was able to 'blackmail' or convince the male, he will make as if he has agreed to it in the moment, but deep down he knows that he does not want to engage in sexual intercourse. (Chris)*

*You know, women walking late at night by themselves are at high risk of getting raped and other things happening to them. You would be surprised that men also experience the same thing. We have heard of instances where a guy will be out late, and they will get mugged and then raped and left naked in a bush and found a few days later after being reported missing. (Sadie)*

*There are also instances when in a household the bread winner is the boyfriend of the mother, or the uncle of the child, or even the father, and the child will be sexually victimised by the male figure. And should the child report it, because of their situation...looking at the fact that if they lose this source of income they will have no food and other necessities...the parent may not end up doing anything about the sexual victimisation of the child so that they will continue to have the basic needs. We have heard of situations like this where young boys and girls were sexually victimised as a result of their situations at home. (Sam)*

The participants were then asked if they thought that, in cases where young children had been abused, they would attempt to report the incident to a parent or guardian. They were asked to comment if they thought that the social environment and power relationships contributed to the abuse of boys and girls and their unwillingness to talk about it. They were also asked if such children were supported and, if not, if they questioned and told that they were lying, or if their situation was just ignored. One participant offered the following insights:

*Yeah, it does contribute. It contributes a lot because there if a parent finds out that the child is being abused by maybe their uncle and that uncle is the bread winner, the parent will be afraid to do anything about it because that is the person who supports them at home. And should he get arrested, they will have no one to provide for them. In the end, it may not be possible for the child to get help. Also, it does not only have to be young children but teenagers as well, whether they are a boy or girl, they also go through the same situations. They grow up hating their parent for 'allowing' the sexual abuse to happen. (Hannah)*

Rape is a serious crime that can occur regardless of gender. The feminist theory approach that was discussed in Chapter three encompasses a range of perspectives that analyse power dynamics and gender inequality. In relation to male rape, feminist theorists acknowledge that rape can happen to anyone regardless of their gender, and they emphasise the importance of addressing all forms of sexual violence. It is important to acknowledge that both men and women can fall victim to sexual assault, while both men and women can also be perpetrators. It is therefore a travesty to ridicule or categorise male victims of sexual assault based on their gender or sexual orientation. In many cases, men are ridiculed if raped by a female and are questioned about their sexual orientation if it is known that their perpetrator was male (Davies, 2002). One of the participants did mention taking into consideration that it was not only women who raped men, but that men raped men as well. This view was highlighted by the respondent as follows:

*We must be careful of making the assumption by focusing too much on a woman who rapes a man, as a man knows how to rape a man, although their reasons for raping them would be the same as a woman who would rape a man; but how it happens would be different, but for a topic like this it is important to look at it from all angles and not just one. (Elizabeth)*

In addition to the participants being able to identify some underlying factors that could lead to the sexual victimisation of men, they were also asked if male rape should be a topic that is spoken about more openly to identify some of the common factors that lead to male rape. The participants responded as follows:

*Yes, it should be discussed more so that it's a topic that no longer remains as a taboo subject. (Hannah)*

*Yes, I do. As we all still do not know precisely what leads to it, because it is not spoken of. We still are unsure if the same factors that contribute to females being victimised necessarily apply to males being victims of rape. (Jake)*

*Male rape is still a topic that is pretty deep, and I feel some people are still not ready to speak openly about it, but I hope that the more it is spoken of, the more people will be comfortable talking about it. (Sonny)*

It is important to have open and honest discussions about male rape in order to raise awareness, provide support to the survivors, and identify common factors that may contribute to this crime. By breaking the silence and addressing this issue, it will be possible to work towards understanding the underlying causes, initiate interventions, and offer appropriate resources for those affected (Graham, 2023).

#### **5.2.4 Unwillingness to report male rape or victimisation**

The next theme that emerged responded to the third objective, which was to investigate and evaluate why male rape victims tended not to report their cases. The literature reveals that several factors could contribute to the underreporting of male rape, such as stigma, stereotyping masculinity, fear of not being believed, being blamed, and the perception that reporting may further harm their reputation or emotional well-being. In addition, some men may not identify their experience as rape or may feel ashamed or embarrassed to come forward (Hedlund, 2012). The participants' responses included the following:

*Males are afraid to face scrutiny and have their manhood questioned. Toxic masculinity has enforced this idea that men have to always be tough and hide their pain, and so as man how are you able to fight off a woman or reject her sexual advances. (Sam)*

*It's because of how they get treated after they report or come out. They are not protected and cared for, so they become ashamed of their victimisation and are mocked and ridiculed. (Hector)*

*For a male person...it is difficult for anyone to see a man going through something like this because naturally, men do not speak much about their feelings and if they are not okay. When a man has been sexually victimised, the chances of him reporting it are very low, because we do hear of instances where a male victim tried to report and was not taken seriously and was laughed at. So, if I were a victim of sexual assault, why would I go to report knowing exactly how other male victims have been treated? (Sonny)*

*The problem is that there is unfair treatment of victims. If a woman goes to report, they are always attended to and receive assistance; however, if a guy goes to report, you will get that one officer will go fetch another officer and make you repeat your case only for them to laugh at you and tell you that it cannot be true. And then you are met with a lot of follow-up questions to a point where, as a man, you even regret going to report your case. (David)*

To probe for more in-depth insight, the researcher asked if having someone they could trust would encourage them to report sexual victimisation, or at least share their experience with that close friend or family member. David commented:

*I can say that it will help telling a close friend or family member, especially if that person is able to understand where you are emotionally rather than having someone who will laugh at you. That person will be able to go as far as trying to assist you in ensuring that you seek help and will do follow-ups and make sure that you are okay. (David)*

Society's response to male rape victims does indeed contribute to men being reluctant to report their experiences of male sexual victimisation. Society often holds assumptions about male victims' sexual preference, stereotypes, and false beliefs about masculinity, while rape myths are rife and create a barrier for male victims to come forward (Sitto & Lubinga, 2020). According to Turchik et al. (2016), the gender theory explains how society constructs and enforces notions of gender. In relation to male rape, gender theorists explain how societal expectations and stereotypes surrounding masculinity can affect the experiences of male rape survivors. Most fear being disbelieved, ridiculed, or stigmatised due to societal expectations of male strength and invulnerability, and lack of awareness and support for male victims can further discourage reporting (Hedlund, 2012).

### **5.2.5 The community's response to male rape victims**

The community's response to the plight to male rape victims can either have a positive or negative impact on them, especially when the victim seeks help and wants to find healing after the experience. Some positive aspects include victim support and expressions of empathy towards the male victim. In such cases the role that the victim's friends and/or family members play is vital. For instance, they need to show understanding and compassion should the victim decide to speak out about the victimisation. It is also necessary that they create a safe space where the victim can share the experience without being judged. Secondly, believing and validating the feelings of the victim will help him to feel more comfortable when sharing his emotions. It is essential to believe and validate male rape victims and to avoid showing scepticism or disbelief due to entrenched societal misconceptions. A positive community response involves acknowledging their experiences and offering reassurance. Male victims should, just like female victims, have access to proper resources and support structures such as counselling and health care services that specifically focus on assisting male rape victims. Access to support groups for men and legal assistance will also help male victims on their journey to healing (Javaid, 2017). In this regard, Sonny commented as follows:

*I think maybe it would help that when a male victim tries to go report his case that there be a section at the police station that handles male rape cases, preferably someone who is trained on how to actively deal with male rape victims and provide*

*the necessary resources. Then after reporting, they could have someone counsel them or direct them to support groups. (Sonny)*

Hector agreed, and shared her insights:

*Yes, I think that would help a lot. I think something like that will really help with men becoming less reluctant to report. I also think that men should start their own support groups in communities just for men where they can meet on a regular basis, maybe once a month. For us as men, to speak openly about such issues like being victims of sexual abuse and physical abuse, safe space for men where we can speak openly and share whatever our mental health issues are important. (Hector)*

Another participant commented as follows:

*You will get that in a setting such as this one, there is a chance that one of us is in fact a victim of rape or sexual abuse, but we will not know and when topics like this are spoken of, they will most likely stand up and leave because the conversation keeps bringing back the thoughts and experience of being victimised. So, I really think having support groups and other resources solely focused on male victims will definitely help. (Becka)*

Conversely, some communities as a whole, or certain members of a community, respond to male rape victims in a negative manner, and this may impact these victims in various ways. Negative community responses involve stigmatising or blaming male rape victims, reinforcing harmful perceptions, and questioning their masculinity. This can create additional trauma and discourage victims from seeking help. Secondly, ignoring or downplaying the issue of male rape can perpetuate a culture of silence and hinder awareness and support (Javaid, 2016). It is important that communities address the issue openly and educate members of all ages and both genders about male sexual victimisation. Lastly, the inability to access support, legal, and health services can exacerbate the trauma male rape victims experience. Community leaders such as ward councillors, church leaders, educational experts, law enforcement managers, and other community groups should ensure that support is available and accessible to all male victims of rape (Hine et al., 2021).

The participants were asked during the group discussions to comment on how they felt the community received male rape victims and to comment if their attitude contributed to the reluctance of male rape victims to report the incident to a confidant and/or to law enforcement. The following are some of the most pertinent responses:

*Yes, because law enforcement does not take cases of sexual violence reported by men seriously, neither do we as a society, so men would rather keep quiet and not report the incident. (Samantha)*

*It does contribute a lot. Men cannot even talk about their feelings openly without being made fun of. We are 'taught' in society from a young age that, as a boy, you do not cry or show emotions because that makes you seem 'weak'. So, growing up with that mentality, it really does affect you as an adult because anything that you go through, you find it difficult to share those experiences. If we cannot share something that has hurt us emotionally, how much more will we avoid opening up about being sexually victimized as a man? (Peter)*

Male rape victims can experience significant mental, emotional, and physical trauma which can be further exacerbated by the community's response to their plight. First, male rape victims may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and feelings of shame, guilt, or self-blame and many may also experience flashbacks, nightmares, and difficulty trusting others (O'Brien, Keith, & Shoemaker, 2015). The experience of rape can also lead to intense emotions such as fear, anger, sadness, confusion, and self-doubt. The lack of understanding or support from the community can amplify these feelings and contribute to a sense of isolation (Kaminer et al., 2008). Secondly, physical injuries resulting from rape can vary in severity and may include bruises, lacerations, fractures, or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These injuries can cause immense pain, discomfort, and long-term health issues for the victims and can have an impact on the mental and physical health of male victims because they are not able to be honest about how they received the physical injuries and therefore do not access proper care and support (Kaminer et al., 2008). Lastly, the marginalisation and stigmatisation that male rape victims experience result in them socially isolating themselves from their friends, partners, and family members to avoid having to share information about the sexual abuse.



### 5.2.6 Male rape and the justice system

In exploring male rape victims' experiences of the CJS, it is essential to consider the potential impact of ridicule and rejection on these individuals as they may face various challenges that can affect their well-being and access to justice. Due to the fear of not being believed, societal pressure to conform to traditional masculinity norms, or concerns about their sexual orientation being questioned, it is unlikely that most male victims will not report the crime to the police, and underreporting consequently results in a lack of vital data and resources that could have been specifically tailored to address their needs (Jina et al., 2020). The literature argues that, because the CJS is plagued by ingrained bias and the inadequate implementation of policies and procedures to address the unique circumstances of male rape victims, it causes a lack of understanding, insensitivity, and disbelief during many investigations, trials, and court proceedings involving male sexual abuse victims (Javaid, 2015). This notion was corroborated by the participants who unanimously argued that, based on perceptions and anecdotal evidence, male victims of rape and sexual abuse did not receive the required care and treatment from the justice system. The participants were aware that such victims were often rudely dismissed by the police when reporting a case while their victimisation was downplayed and not taken seriously, which resulted in male victims not receiving the proper attention. This is supported by the literature which states that because male victims' cases are generally treated with disdain, they are not informed of the resources that could facilitate their healing, resulting in male rape victims experiencing emotional and psychological challenges (Jina et al., 2020).

When the participants were asked if they thought that the justice system's response to male rape victims resulted in their reluctance to report their cases, the following responses were offered:

*Yes, it does have an impact. Males' cases of sexual violence are not investigated with the same sense of urgency as female cases of sexual violence. As they are aware of this pattern, male victims may feel as though they may not receive assistance from law enforcement. (Jack)*

*Yes, as they do not show that much care as they would to female rape victims. They do not protect male victims and do not fight for them as much [as they fight for female victims]. (Sam)*

*There are cases that you will find that uhh...a typical example, the case of the singer Pitch Black Afro who was physically abused by his wife, and when he went to go try report his case they questioned him, saying "How can you get hit by your wife?". When he chose to retaliate and hit his wife back, he got arrested. So, when looking at the issue of rape, let's say for example I get raped by a female and you call the police and they come to you, one of the first things they will say is, "How can you get raped by such a beautiful woman?" and they laugh at you and leave you, saying that you are playing with them or wasting their time. No one stands up for men in situations like this. But should a woman report she was raped and calls the police, there will be a whole team of police sent out just to arrest me because as you know, society tells us that a man is more than capable of raping a woman because he can easily overpower her because he is stronger, and she cannot do the same to him. (Peter)*

*It is not because men do not want to report their victimisation, I think it is because they already know that they will not get any help from the police and do not have resources to help them heal, whereas for women...I am not saying that it is easier for them, but it is different because there are women who have gotten help and received proper care and counselling after their victimisation and they are able to see that there is hope. (Chris)*

*Because police do not take male rape cases seriously, you will find that after you have gone to report, those police will share your case with other policemen, and because in communities like this we know each other, your name will become a joke and now you cannot even live in peace because there will be people mocking and reminding you, all because the police failed to help you and instead chose to discuss your case with other people. (Bob)*

It was evident that the participants believed that if male rape victims felt that they would not be taken seriously or supported by the police or justice system, they were unlikely to come forward and report their experiences of sexual abuse. It is therefore vital that law enforcement agencies provide a safe and supportive environment for all victims regardless of gender, and to ensure that experiences are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. By creating an

atmosphere of trust and understanding, more male rape victims will be encouraged to come forward and seek justice, thus reducing the reluctance amongst men to report sexual victimisation (LeGrand, 1973).

When the participants were also asked if they thought that male rape victims experienced secondary victimisation by the police when attempting to seek help, the following comments were forthcoming:

*Yes, they do. The minute you go into the police station to report something like this, you are met with judgmental comments, made fun of, and even blamed for your own victimisation when all you were trying to do is seek help. You are left with the regret of even attempting to report your case. (Bob)*

*Yes, because the SAPS has not really been trained to deal with matters like this, so law enforcement officers may see the incident as a joke rather than provide assistance. (Lizzy)*

*I think how police respond to male victims does cause men not to report their cases, and they then bottle up the feelings of that experience. Many commit suicide or are left mentally disturbed so that they no longer live life the same way. (David)*

*Yeah, they get bad mouthed, they are shamed, humiliated, and made feel less of a man. (John)*

According to Turchik (2016), male rape victims do experience secondary victimisation when attempting to report their cases. Secondary victimisation refers to the negative experiences and attitudes that victims encounter when seeking support or reporting their cases. These reactions include disbelief, blame, and insensitivity by authorities, friends, family members, and even the justice system. While it is true that both men and women can face secondary victimisation, men often face additional challenges due to societal stereotyping and misconceptions about masculinity and the reality of victimisation. These factors can make it more difficult for men to come forward, be taken seriously, and receive the support they need. Therefore, it is important that the community and the justice system collaborate to combat the barriers faced

by male rape victims to ensure that all victims, regardless of their gender, can access justice and support. The South African legal framework includes all categories of rape victims in a gender-neutral definition of rape that does not show prejudice against men, and this definition categorically denies the assumption that they can commit acts of sexual assault but cannot fall victim to it (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2017).

### **5.3 Themes Emerging from the Individual Interviews**

#### **5.3.1 Defining male rape**

To facilitate triangulation of the data and delve even more deeply into the male rape phenomenon, ten participants were selected to take part in the individual interviews based on their responses and demeanour during the focus group discussions. This part of the study consisted of a series of questions that required the participants to give more detailed and in-depth responses regarding their knowledge and possible experiences of male rape. Based on the first question in the interview schedule, they described their perceptions of sexual violence/abuse as follows:

*Sexual violence/abuse is when someone is being forced to do something sexual with someone without their permission and consent. Also, it is when someone does sexual things with someone without the person understanding what is going on; for example, a child who does not have an understanding of what is happening. (Sam)*

*What comes first to mind, is that when two people have sex without one agreeing or giving consent to the other. (Sadie)*

*It is using force to touch a person in an inappropriate way against their will... maybe they have their own reason for wanting to force someone to have sex with them, maybe to spread a disease (because the person would not agree to have sex knowing that the other person is sick), or they use it as an outlet of whatever personal thing that person is going through. (Hector)*

*Sexual violence is something that is very painful to experience. It is when a person forces themselves on you, for example if you are in a relationship you go visit your*

*partner and you are not in the mood to have sex, but they force you to. It is an experience that is hard to move on from, especially if you reported the case and now have to keep seeing the person. (Hannah)*

These responses corroborated McLean's (2013) view that sexual violence or abuse refers to any form of unwanted sexual activity or behaviour that is forced upon an individual without their consent. It encompasses a wide range of acts, including but not limited to rape, sexual assault, molestation, harassment, and exploitation. Sexual violence can occur in various settings such as within relationships, families, institutions, or it can even be perpetrated by strangers. It often involves the exertion of power and control over the victim and commonly causes physical, psychological, and emotional harm (Jewkes & Abrahams, 2002; McLean, 2013).

### **5.3.2 Comparison between the experiences of rape of males and females**

The individuals were asked if they believed that there was a difference in what men and women experienced as a result of sexual violence, and they commented as follows:

*Yeah, there is a difference. With a woman, some people are able to pick up based on their behaviour that they have been through something traumatic. Physically she will not be okay, maybe mentally as well. She may not behave the same way she did before getting raped. Whereas for a man, you would not be able to notice because he would not show any sign of emotional distress. He will not report it [the incident], but instead he will feel ashamed and opt to keep it to himself. (Chris)*

*There is not much of a difference, they both experience somewhat the same thing. They experience abuse, shame, hopelessness, and violation. It is just that the female might end up getting pregnant and the male does not. (John)*

*There may be a difference, but I would like to think that if a person is a victim – male or female – it is possible for them to experience similar things. Like for example, they will try to report it at home and they will not get the support they wanted, so it affects them mentally. Sometimes you will get that the victim's family*

*will use their victimisation as a reason to shout at them, and again that will disturb the victim mentally. (Elizabeth)*

*Emotionally I would say they could go through the same things; experience is where men and women differ. A woman can experience rape several times, whereas a man could experience it maybe once in their lifetime. You can also get that a woman experiences it once and, because of that, she lives in fear of experiencing it again and she would feel like a target. And for a man, even after the experience, he will rather ignore it and try to let go. (David)*

The participants argued that women and men often experienced sexual violence differently due to various factors. For instance, the participants argued that, while both women and men can fall victim to sexual violence, women were disproportionately affected by it as they might experience higher rates of sexual violence compared to men. However, the lower rate for men may be as a result of men's reluctance to report their cases, so it may be logical to assume that women tend to experience higher rates of sexual assault than men (Maxwell & Scott, 2014), but this assumption may not necessarily be correct. The participants argued that the impact of sexual violence may be the same for women and men as they may face the same challenges such as victim blaming and the fear of not being believed when they come forward to report an incident or rape, but the literature argues that societal attitudes and stereotyping of masculinity seem to make it far more difficult for male victims to disclose sexual abuse experiences (Mgolozele & Duma, 2020). In essence the participants argued that men also experience feelings of shame, confusion, and isolation, but they seem to process these emotions internally and hide them from society more readily and effectively than their female counterparts, to the point that male rape is still an undisclosed and unrecognised phenomenon in society. Research has also shown that men and women may suffer from the same long-term psychological and emotion consequences or rape, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, and a low self-esteem (Mason & Lodrick, 2023).

### **5.3.3 The community's understanding of male rape**

The interview participants were asked to reiterate their understanding of male rape, and they responded as follows:

*Male rape is real, even though we might not be exposed to it that much, but it is something that happens more often than we think. (Sonny)*

*Male rape happens. We may not know of all of the cases, but it does happen. (Justin)*

*I think that it is something we are more likely to hear about involving little boys because they are more likely to say something about it. (John)*

The comment that male rape was prevalent in the study area and occurred more often than society thinks is noteworthy. Male rape is a deeply distressing and serious issue that deserves attention and support. It is important to recognise that sexual violence can happen to anyone, regardless of their gender. Like all forms of sexual assault, male rape is a violation of personal autonomy and can have profound physical, emotional, and psychological effects on the victim. It is crucial to provide support, resources, and a safe space for survivors to come forward, seek help, and receive appropriate care. Society should work towards creating an environment where all survivors are believed and supported and where justice is served regardless of the gender of the victim (Javaid, 2015).

#### **5.3.4 The community's awareness of male rape and sexual violence**

The participants were asked if they thought people in their community were aware of male sexual violence. They were also asked to comment on how the community tended to respond to male rape as it had always been taboo topic. The following statements were offered:

*I think...I think the community is not aware. Instead, we will hear rumours of a guy being raped but not much will be done or said in the community about it because in some places it is still an issue that is unheard of. With how the community responds, people are not the same. Some communities may take it seriously and stand up and fight against it to ensure that that person who committed the rape is punished and arrested, whereas some may take it as a joke and laugh at the victim and think he is lying. This has an impact on the victim because they will feel discouraged by not getting enough support. (Chris)*

*I do not think they are aware. In a black community they do not speak about these things much. They do not respond very well. The victims are not taken seriously as they are shamed, humiliated, and made to feel less of a man for being a victim of male rape. (Craig)*

*I think that the community is well aware, it is just the belief that men should be strong and show no emotion that leads people ignoring it. (Sadie)*

*I think they are aware, it's just that those who may know of it may not fully believe it because it is such a rare topic that it can create doubt. (Sam)*

Although the participants felt that awareness of male rape was still very nebulous in the community where it tended to be swept under the carpet, the literature argues that awareness of male rape and sexual victimisation has increased over time, thanks to efforts by advocacy groups, survivors, and various awareness campaigns (Mutizira, 2022). Therefore, while awareness may vary across different communities, there has been growing recognition of the importance of addressing this issue and supporting survivors of all genders, especially because in some communities both residents and victims are now willing to speak out about the issue of male sexual victimisation. Education, open discussions, and promoting empathy can contribute to a more informed and supportive community response (Shange, 2019).

### **5.3.5 The response of the police to male rape cases**

The participants were asked to comment on how rape cases were handled in general by law enforcement, and then more specifically how male rape cases were addressed. Their comments were as follows:

*Most of the time when I hear of the police handling cases, they do not handle them well. If a man reports that he has been raped, he is already at a disadvantage because as soon as he reports he is met with questions that will ridicule him. They go as far as saying, "How did you allow yourself to get raped? Maybe you wanted it to happen." So I think the police take male rape lightly. (Chris)*



*They [cases] are not handled in a way that they should be handled. These are serious cases which involve mental and physical abuse. But the police do not care, and they don't give the attention and care that these cases deserve. That is why such cases take place and people get away with it [male rape]. (David)*

*How the police handle cases [of rape] is not the same. If a woman reports it, it's easier to believe them, but when men do it instantly becomes a joke. When it comes to cases of children, they will look at many factors that may have led to it. Even with adults, if a man reports they will want to find reasons and ask questions like, "How could you have been raped by your partner? You are in a relationship with him [or her]." (Jake)*

The participants saw a clear distinction between how the cases involving males and females were handled, with female victims being advantaged and male victims being treated with suspicion and disbelief. Ideally, law enforcement should treat all reported cases of rape with sensitivity, responsiveness, and professionalism. It is important for the police to conduct thorough investigations, collect sufficient and valid evidence, and provide victim support throughout the legal process (Jina et al., 2020). However, challenges such as underreporting, blaming the victims for their victimisation, and inadequate resources seem to affect the way these cases are handled (Javaid, 2015). It is up to the justice system to improve police response to sexual assault, and it should consider the specialised and ongoing training of police officers and the establishment of specialist units to handle cases of male rape with the same dedication that female cases are treated (Javaid, 2017). Moreover, a special unit should operate in each police precinct to assist males in particular, as proposed by some of the respondents.

### **5.3.6 The inclusivity of male rape victims**

Some participants felt that the justice system and support centres were inclusive of male rape victims, whereas some argued that rape centres and laws did not include men, which they felt resulted in many male victims not receiving the help they needed. This was articulated in the following responses:

*Not really. As much as they may say that they are but in reality, they have not gone out of their way to include male victims the right way. (Sam)*

*The law may include men but that is not shown when they have to handle male rape cases. I am not too sure if there are enough places that are there to assist male victims, but I would think that they would treat victims the same in any centres that are there to help victims. (Chris)*

*I am not sure, but I think they should be treated the same because a male is also a victim that needs help, as much as a woman. (Hannah)*

*With the law, children have more rights than adults, so a young boy that has been victimised would get help whereas for an older man it is different. With centres...I believe they should all seek to serve one purpose, which is to help all victims despite their gender. The law is not against any victims so they should all receive the help they need. (Hector)*

For many years, laws on rape and sexual assault have not been inclusive of male rape victims, resulting in them being at a disadvantage when seeking justice. However, in recent years there has been increasing recognition of male victims of rape and sexual assault, which is evident in some laws and definitions of rape in South Africa that are now inclusive of male victims. Many countries have expanded their legal definitions of rape to include male victims, acknowledging that anyone, regardless of gender, can be a victim of sexual violence. However, enforcement and implementation of these laws can still vary (Javaid, 2017). Regarding rape centres and support services, according to Davies (2002) there has been some progress in providing assistance to male survivors. Some organisations and crisis centres offer specialised services for male victims of sexual violence. However, the availability and extent of these services may vary depending on the location and resources in each community (Graham, 2023).

### **5.3.7 Raising awareness about male rape victims**

The participants felt that the issue of male rape was indeed an issue that more people in different communities should raise and discuss. According to the participants, the more the issue of male

rape and victimisation is discussed, the more people will become aware of the issue. This will result in advocacy which will, in turn, encourage the formulation of strategies on how to assist male rape survivors. These ideas were expressed in the following responses:

*Yes, as it is something that happens out there whether we like it or not. And for it to be dealt with it should be confronted. (Elizabeth)*

*I do believe it should be something that is spoken about more because that would help someone speak up if they have ever been victimised. (Justin)*

*Yeah, it has to be. I can make an example that is similar to AA support groups, but for male rape victims, in a place like...uhh...King Zwelithini Stadium where men can gather and just talk about issues such as male rape. We did have a support group like that at the Councillor's office and we spoke about a lot of things like abuse against men, and there were guys that ended up testifying about their own cases and that allowed more men to be open, even the ones who were scared at first. This allowed men to get one-on-one sessions with trained experts to further speak about their victimisation. So, something like this would help a lot of male victims. For example, for myself, I found it healing being in a setting like that because we never got opportunities like that, and you can take away something positive from an experience like this one. (Chris)*

The researcher also sensitively probed if any of the interview participants, who were all males, had ever been sexually victimised and, if so, if they had reported it or spoke to anyone. The researcher reminded them that they did not have to answer the question if they did not want to. A few of the male participants commented that, if they were ever victimised, they would not report or share information about it. Two men thought that, although it would be hard, they would eventually attempt to share information about their victimisation with a close friend. One of the male participants volunteered information about a rape incident in which he had been involved. He responded as follows:

*I would share information about victimisation, why would I not? Uh...can I get personal? Okay, there was a time, I think 2013 or 2014...2013 if I'm not mistaken.*

*Let me see...when I met this girl...let's say 2014. So, we went clubbing, then we came back and when we came back, I was down and out. So, when I woke up in the morning, I realised that my clothes had been taken off and I was naked, and as a person you can tell if something has happened, but my memory could not recall that it was something that I had done. But it was clear that something had happened. So, when I questioned the lady I was with at the time, she just laughed at me. I then called one of my friends to come over and I explained to him, "No brah, like, I feel as if this girl did something to me and I do not remember us agreeing to have sex because I got into the house first and slept and she came into the house after me." And when she explained what had happened she spoke about it jokingly. You see, sometimes even if you did not give verbal consent, you take into account the person's body language; for instance, you cannot undress me while I am sleeping, you must be able to see that, "No this person is sleeping, maybe I should just leave them." Even if you are in the mood to have sex, you have to respect your partner, especially in a situation like this, and not take advantage of them. So, I let it go because when you are in a relationship with someone, you will let go of some things just to avoid arguments, but when you are by yourself it is things that you think of. (Chris)*

*I had another instance this year when it was attempted rape, if I can put it liked that, when we were out with my friends and this lady kept buying me drinks at the tavern we were at, but she would not show herself. Then after some time we decided to leave, and she took me to her place. When we got there my mind remembered that "No, we had other people that we were with," and I asked her where they were, and she said that they were coming. A few seconds later she started getting naked, telling me, "Come on dude, let's have sex," and I told her I was not in the mood and I had to force myself out of her room and I went to go look for our other group of friends. When I got to them, they asked me where I had been and I found it difficult to even try to explain what had just happened to me. The next day I phoned my friend and explained to him what had happened, and it shook him because he thought that it was someone I knew since she had acted friendly around me, and I told him that she had been trying to invite me to her place. (Chris)*

Discussions about male rape are important in raising awareness and addressing this issue. As the participants proposed, encouraging open conversations, providing education about the prevalence and impact of male rape, promoting survivor-centred resources, and challenging societal stereotypes that may hinder reporting or support for male victims are important. The feminist theory challenges traditional gender norms that perpetuate harmful stereotypes about masculinity and femininity and advocate for a more inclusive approach to understanding sexual violence that recognises the experiences and needs of male survivors (Simpson, 1989). Therefore, if victims share their stories and communities advocate for comprehensive support systems, it will help break the silence surrounding male rape (Davies, 2002).

#### **5.4 Measures to Enhance Awareness of Male Rape**

The participants were asked to offer suggestions for enhanced awareness of the issue of male rape and they recommended the establishment of a helpline, counselling, education and improved training, improving public awareness, and an improved legal support system.

- Supportive helplines: Establish helplines that are specifically dedicated to supporting male survivors of rape and sexual assault and that will provide them with confidential and non-judgmental assistance.
- Counselling services: Increase the availability of specialised counselling services that are tailored to the unique needs of male rape survivors. These services should be provided by professionals who were trained in trauma-informed care.
- Education and training: Implement comprehensive educational programs in schools, workplaces, and communities to raise awareness about male rape and challenge harmful stereotypes and myths surrounding it.
- Public awareness campaigns: Launch public awareness campaigns that highlight the prevalence of male rape, emphasise the importance of support, and encourage survivors to come forward without fear of stigma or judgment.
- Legal reforms: Advocate for legal reforms that ensure equal protection and access to justice for male victims of rape, including appropriate legal definitions, reporting procedures, and punishment for perpetrators.

- Support groups: Establish safe spaces and support groups specifically for male survivors where they can share their experiences, find understanding, and receive emotional support from others who have experienced similar traumatic situations.
- Healthcare services: Train healthcare professionals to recognise and respond sensitively to the needs of male rape victims. These victims should have open access to medical care, forensic examinations, and appropriate follow-up support without fear of judgement and ridicule.
- Media representation: Encourage accurate and responsible media representation of male rape survivors by showcasing their stories with compassion and respect to challenge harmful stereotyping and misconceptions.
- Collaboration and funding: Encourage collaborating among organisations, government agencies, and philanthropic foundations to allocate resources and funding for initiatives supporting male rape victims.

The participants were confident that if these strategies were implemented, more male rape victims would receive the help that they need to heal. They also suggested that such steps would lead to more victims coming forward to share their experiences openly, arguing that it would break the stigma of being a male victim of sexual violence and encourage more men to come forward.

## **5.5 Summary**

In this chapter, the data were presented and interpreted. Various findings emerged that adequately addressed the objectives of the study, and these findings were discussed and analysed using thematic analysis. The themes that emerged highlighted the key factors that result in male rape, the prevalence and awareness of male rape and victimisation, the community's response to this frequently hidden issue in society, and the impact the justice system has on male rape victims. Based on the experiences shared by the research participants, it was evident that they clearly understood the male rape phenomenon although their initial definitions of rape were still gender-based in that they overlooked men as the victims of rape and rather saw them as the perpetrators, or as sexual partners in homosexual relationships. After in-depth group and individual interview discussions, the participants unanimously agreed that male rape was an issue that required much attention in their society. The findings also

corroborated the literature by affirming some common factors that contribute to male rape. The findings also agreed with those of various scholars about the aloof and often mocking manner in which the community and law enforcement respond to rape victims, arguing that these attitudes and entrenched societal bias have a direct impact on the reluctance of male rape victims to report and discuss their cases. This chapter also highlighted that male rape victims often experience secondary victimisation by various people when attempting to speak about their experience. The next chapter concludes this study by providing an in-depth discussion on the key findings and offering pertinent recommendations.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This study was conducted to explore the nature of male sexual victimisation in a selected section in Umlazi township. The purpose was to discover common factors that result in male rape, the impact the community has on male rape victims when attempting to be open about their sexual victimisation, the response of the criminal justice system to male rape victims, and how this behaviour has an impact on the number of reported male rape cases. This chapter summarises key literature and data findings on the issue of male rape and sexual victimisation. In addition, recommendations are offered based on the suggestions by the participants and findings in the literature and by the researcher. The researcher critically reviews the findings discussed in Chapter five, integrates these findings with the literature and the theoretical framework, and reaches conclusions with emphasis on the study objectives.

#### **6.2 Overview of the Study**

The first chapter focused on the background to the study. A general overview of the study was thus presented and the problem statement and rational for the study were discussed. In addition, the aim and objectives of the study were presented while the research questions that directed the study were also listed. The researcher reflected on the significance of the study and briefly outlined the research methods and design. The chapter was concluded with a brief summary of the structure of the study report.

The second chapter provided an in-depth review of related literature. The discourse focused on the history of male rape, the male rape phenomenon from global and African perspectives, and the nature and prevalence of male rape. Furthermore, male rape myths and stereotypes were discussed and issues such as the manner in which communities tend to respond to male rape victims, how the police respond to such victims, and what the victims experience in various aspects of their lives as a result of their victimisation were explored.



Chapter Three focused on the two theories within which the study was embedded, namely the feminist theory and the gender theory. These two theoretical frameworks were discussed in detail as they were used successfully to explain the various aspects associated with the male rape phenomenon. The feminist theory was used to explain that men tend to be raped or sexually assaulted by both men and women for virtually the same reason, which is generally to exert dominance over the victim. The gender theory was used to explain the impact on victims when they are blamed for their victimisation. The application of these theories assisted the researcher in better understanding the nature, causes, and impact of male rape and victimisation.

Chapter four focused on the research methodology that was employed to execute this study. The research paradigm, research approach, and research design were expounded. The study area, namely section W of Umlazi township, was also described and the text was augmented with maps to visually locate the township of Umlazi in the eThekweni Metro. In addition, the sampling, data collection, and the thematic analysis processes were discussed.

Chapter Five presented the data and the findings based on the thematic data analysis process. After participant narratives and views had been collected by means of focus group discussions and individual interviews, they were transcribed and translated and themes were developed that related to the aim and research objectives. These findings and themes were explained in relation to the literature and the theories that framed this study.

## **6.2 General Conclusions**

In terms of the research objectives of this study, the following main conclusions were reached:

- Male rape is a prevalent but a hidden phenomenon in section W in Umlazi.
- Various factors that are also described in the literature cause male rape in the study area.
- There is a serious prevalence of underreporting of male rape cases in the study area.
- The CJS has a negative impact on male rape victims as the negative manner in which they are treated and the mockery of male rape victims are the main causes of male rape underreporting.

The researcher therefore achieved the aim and objectives by exploring the nature of male rape in the township of Umlazi, analysing the factors that resulted in the perceived rape and victimisation of males, and determining how community and law enforcement attitudes affected male rape victims in the study area. By analysing the data thematically, various themes emerged that corresponded with the research objectives as well as earlier findings by reputable scholars, resulting in the research questions being comprehensively answered. The main conclusions are discussed below.

### **6.2.1 The prevalence of male rape in Umlazi**

This first objective was achieved as it was concluded that sexual victimisation did in fact occur in the study area in Umlazi and that the majority of the community was aware of the issue. The study found that the people living in Umlazi understood the nature of sexual violence and agreed that it was a prevalent (yet hidden) and challenging issue that needed to be addressed. A number of participants admitted that they had experienced some form of sexual victimisation in their lifetimes or knew of someone who had been victimised sexually. In addition, they initially attached gender-based definitions to sexual violence by excluding men as victims, and they attributed this crime predominantly to the sexual victimisation of women and children, arguing that it had become ‘normal’ to view women and children as the victims of rape while men were exonerated in this regard. When probed, the participants agreed that male rape actually does occur in their community, but admitted that it was underreported due to various factors such as societal stigma, fear, and lack of support. Furthermore, the participants agreed that, as a result of underreporting, male rape was not perceived as a societal issue but, because of its hidden nature, it required immediate intervention.

In offering recommendations to curb the crime of male rape and to eradicate underreporting, the participants agreed that an environment should be created in the community that will allow male rape victims to be able to speak openly and report their victimisation. The participants argued that male rape victims were afraid to report their cases of sexual victimisation because they were afraid of how they would be treated by law enforcement officials and viewed in their community, hence they would rather keep it hidden and try to move on in silence. They also explained that men in general did not reveal or speak of their feelings because they could then be referred to as ‘fragile’, ‘unmanly’, or ‘too emotional’. One male participant argued that male

rape was probably more commonly perpetrated against men associated with the homosexual community as gay men were ill-treated as a result of their sexual orientation. He argued that, in some communities, gay men would be targeted as sexual violence victims because their sexual orientation was not condoned by common societal norms. In Chapter two, it was highlighted that sexuality plays a significant role in the male rape discourse as societal constructions of masculinity are often closely associated with heterosexuality, which can lead to harmful assumptions about and bias against male victims of sexual assault. Research by Turchik and Edwards (2012) has shown that gay male victims face higher levels of blame compared to heterosexual male victims, and there is a tendency to question their credibility and their right to deserve sympathy and assistance.

The study also revealed that the majority of the participants believed that male rape is a male-female phenomenon as they defined it as a woman being sexually assaulted by a man. This corroborated traditional literature that also attributes sexual assault and rape to male-on-female abuse, as discussed in Chapter Two where it was mentioned that communities usually react vociferously to the gender of the perpetrator and not to the fact that a sexual offence has occurred.

### **6.2.2 Factors that cause male rape**

Four themes emerged that addressed this objective, namely social status, the environment, economic status, and relationships. Due to societal expectations of men that have been socially constructed and normalised according to gendered rules (see Chapter Two), men are referred to as strong individuals that should be able to fight off their perpetrators. Men are perceived as aggressive, sexual beings who should not show emotion as it is a sign of 'weakness'. These views have been feeding into the culture of toxic masculinity that prevents men from dealing with their emotions and finding healing after an incident of rape. The prevalence of several rape myths, as discussed in Chapter Two, also exacerbates false beliefs and stereotyping about male rape which makes it difficult for victims because they are judged according to these misconceptions. Furthermore, male rape victims find it difficult to speak openly about their victimisation as they fear that they will be ridiculed, shamed, and marginalised, so they would rather internalise their victimisation than seek help. Therefore, because of gendered 'norms' and expectations of manhood, the rape myths that state that men cannot be victims of rape, that

‘real’ men will know how to defend themselves against rape, that women cannot rape men, that only homosexual men can be raped and, if they are, they deserve it, and that if a man was raped he allowed it to happen as he wanted it to happen, exacerbate the plight and marginalisation raped men (Javaid, 2015).

As mentioned in Chapter Five, several environments facilitate male rape. One sub-theme that emerged in this regard is that male rape is likely to occur in communities where there is unequal power dynamics. Rape is viewed as an act to assert power over the victim and, in instances where a man was raped by another man, it occurred because the perpetrator wanted to exert supremacy. This notion was echoed in Chapter Three, as the feminist theory states that rape is not about sex but about enforcing power and control. Radical feminists argue that, because of the unequal power dynamics in societies, forced sex is an act of aggression to instil fear in the victim, and men rape other men as they want to maintain their authority and dominance over the other (McPhail, 2016).

Similarly, the second sub-theme revealed that in environments such as male prisons men rape other inmates to assert a physical and psychological position of power over them. Rape in prisons is problematic as a high number of inmates are raped during their incarceration and it is an issue that is commonly acknowledged but is still relatively ignored by prison authorities and society (Abdullah-Khan, 2008). This is partly due to the notion that if men are raped they are homosexual, and partly to the notion that men cannot be raped as they are sexual beings who want sex. In environments where notions of toxic masculinity prevail, it is very difficult for male rape victims to be open about their victimisation. The literature argues that most communities or environments are not conducive for men that have been sexually victimised or raped (Depraetere et al., 2020), and the participants in this study agreed, arguing that until male sexual victimisation has been addressed in such environments, male survivors will never feel supported and recognised and their plight will continue to be an issue that is overlooked despite its dire consequences.

The third theme that emerged related to the economic status of males and how this can lead to their victimisation. The key sub-theme of poverty emerged quite clearly. The study found that the financial status of a male can render him vulnerable to sexual victimisation as poor individuals are forced into situations where they are at high risk of being sexually victimised.

For instance, if ‘a guy’ offers to ‘spoil’ a girl with money by buying her things or even alcohol when they are on a date, a poor girl may unknowingly put herself in a situation where the man will feel that he now has the right to demand sex because he has spent his money on her.<sup>1</sup> Men are exposed to similar situations, but the participants pointed out that it is hard to believe that men are offered drinks and money for the opportunity to sexually abuse them.

The participants also mentioned the scenario of a woman being the breadwinner in a household while the man is unemployed. This scenario generally takes a toll on the mental health of the man because he should, by societal norm, be the provider. The man then feels incompetent and incapable of making financial decisions for his family and he feels powerless and vulnerable. In such instances, the female partner may take advantage of the man by emotionally bullying him and blackmailing him for physical intimacy.

The final theme that addressed this objective is the sexual victimisation of men in intimate relationships or by individuals they know. The belief that men cannot be raped contributes to the ongoing issue of male rape in South Africa (Walfield, 2021). Chapter two of this study explained that the misconception that men ‘always’ want to have sex or are ‘always’ willing to engage in sexual activities, and this has fuelled the notion that ‘real’ men cannot be victims of rape, only homosexuals. It was mentioned that the belief prevails that men in intimate relationships cannot be forced or coerced into rape, meaning that women cannot force men to penetrate them against their will. This is because blackmail, verbal pressure, mockery, and coercion are often disregarded as female’s ‘weapon’ to instigate sexual interaction with an unwilling man. Based on the literature and the participants’ views, the study concluded that the sexual assault of men can and will occur due to refusal of sexual intercourse in an intimate relationship, the use of verbal coercion and persuasion, sexual assault or rape to assert power and superiority, and alcohol or drug abuse that renders the male victim incapable of either refusal or consent.

The male participants felt that male rape victims were always at a disadvantage in addition to the many challenges they face as rape survivors. First, it is hard to believe that a man can be raped by their own intimate partner, and this is the reason why many such male rape victims would rather keep the experience to themselves than speak about it. Furthermore, men would

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<sup>1</sup> Note: This situation the girl is in is not akin to prostitution.

rather not report or mention such an incident or ask their partner about it because they are in a relationship with them and feel that it will cause conflict as the female partner may deny abusing or victimising the male, laugh it off as a joke, and disregard the matter.

In light of the nebulous and hidden nature of the sexual abuse of males, the participants felt that it should be a topic of open discussion so that society will be more aware of male rape and the common causative factors of this phenomenon so that discussions will lead to actions that will, in turn, address the plight of male victims of rape and victimisation.

### **6.2.3 Causes of victims' reluctance to report male rape**

Four sub-themes emerged that addressed this objective, namely: stigma, stereotyping, victim-blaming, and men's reputation. According to the findings in the literature and the participants' perceptions, men who were victims of any form of sexual assault or rape are targets of societal stigma and shame. In Chapter two it was highlighted that the stigma and shame associated with male rape and that prevail in communities prevent them from coming forward and reporting the crime. This reluctance is exacerbated by the strong societal notion that men should always be strong and invulnerable, making it difficult for male rape survivors to disclose their experiences. The study also found that there are socially constructed stereotyping and gender norms that assume that men are always willing to partake in sexual activity make it difficult for men to be taken seriously or believed when reporting their rape or sexual assault case. In addition, male survivors fear being disbelieved, ridiculed, or blamed for their victimisation should they decide to disclose their experiences. The gender theory explains how and why people blame the victim for their own victimisation, what impact it has on their well-being, and how the gender of the victim contributes to the extent the victim is believed and blamed for the victimisation incident.

It was also revealed that men fear that their reputation as 'men', and hence their manhood, will be tainted if they should reveal that they were raped. Moreover, most men feel that they will be perceived as weak and cowardly should they disclose sexual victimisation against them.

#### **6.2.4 The impact of the justice system on male rape victims**

The literature argues that, when addressing the issue of male rape and the response of the justice system to this phenomenon, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential consequences that mockery and disbelief have on affected individuals (Whatley & Riggio, 1993). Men who were raped may encounter multiple obstacles that can negatively impact their well-being and hinder their ability to seek justice. Factors such as the fear of not being believed, societal expectations to adhere to conventional masculine ideals, or concern about having their sexual orientation scrutinised can deter male victims from reporting the crime. This reluctance to come forward contributes to a scarcity of data and resources specifically designed to cater for the unique interventions that sexual victimisation demands. Furthermore, as was discussed in Chapter two, the justice system exhibits prejudice and insufficient policy and protocol implementation measures and thus fails to address the unique circumstances faced by male rape victims. Consequently, investigations, court proceedings, and hearings lack understanding, sensitivity, and even belief in male victims' real stories (Shange, 2019; Jina et al., 2020).

The participants believed that the CJS does not furnish male rape victims with the appropriate care and support they require. A case in point is the experience of one participant who had obviously been sexually abused against his will and without his consent by a female, but he refrained from reporting this incident as he expected no result and thus resolved to forget it and move on. This victim was fortunate in that he had suffered no pain or injuries, which is not always the case in rape incidences. Rape victims are reportedly often dismissed by police officers when attempting to report their cases and such incidences are often not taken seriously (Javaid, 2017). As a result, male victims are denied the necessary assistance and support and they are subjected to secondary victimisation because a traumatic experience of rape is deemed a joke and is even disclosed to and mocked by the community. Inadequate reporting also means that they are unaware of the available resources and centres that are there to aid them on a path to healing. To the participants' knowledge, male rape cases were not treated with a sense of urgency, which left them with the perception that the gender of the male victim mattered as they felt that female victims were more readily assisted than males.

As the participants believed that the police were not trained sufficiently to handle male rape cases and did not know how to respond to male victims, the unfortunate conclusion was reached

that the police continue to mishandle male rape victims regardless of a human rights-based legal framework and a definition that no longer ignores males as victims of sexual abuse. To address this marginalisation, the participants proposed that each police precinct should employ trained professionals that are there to solely deal with men that have been sexually victimised. They argued that access to such facilities would encourage men to report individuals who raped and dehumanised them.

## **6.3 Challenges Experienced and the Limitations of the Study**

### **6.3.1 Challenges**

Studies that require personal information from victims themselves experience challenges and limitations. In terms of the challenges that this study experienced, it was at first difficult to recruit participants who were willing to be involved. Some potential participants also withdrew from the study as they felt that the topic was too sensitive. The following initial challenges were fortunately overcome:

- Because of the nature of the study, some participants were at first reluctant to participate in the focus group discussions as they felt that their answers would not be sufficient or of any value to the study. The researcher encouraged the participants by reminding them that they had been purposively chosen for this study because their input would contribute to understanding male rape and sexual abuse. As the more outgoing participants started to respond to the questions, the rest began to feel comfortable and also took part enthusiastically.
- Because the venue was near a main road, it was difficult to hear the participants during the focus group discussions and interviews, and the researcher had to ask the participants to pass the recording device around when they responded. The participants were asked to speak closer into the microphone. Some of the background noise is heard in the recordings.
- Those participants who had experienced rape and other forms of victimisation found it difficult at first to open up, and some also feared that society would question their masculinity and that they would be exposed to secondary victimisation. However, the sensitive nature in which the researcher addressed their concerns and the rapport that



was established between the researcher and these affected victims resulted in frank and honest narratives of their experiences and perspectives.

### **6.3.2 Delimitations and limitations of the study**

Although the Umlazi township is quite large and is divided into 26 sections, the study was delimited to only one section (section W) and 20 participants. This small scope limited the extent of the sample, but a sample size of 20 is acceptable in qualitative studies of this nature (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

An important limitation was that the study could not identify and recruit actual male victims of rape and victimisation in the study area. This was impossible due to the community's denial of this phenomenon and an absence of data at health clinics and police stations in Umlazi. The sample did, however, include a majority of males who acknowledged that male sexual victimisation existed in the community and they were also aware of or knew victims who had been affected but who had not come forward with a complaint of rape.

Moreover, the rich data that were generated adequately answered the research questions and addressed the objectives. However, the researcher acknowledges that the study was limited in scope and that the findings may not be generalised to the entire Umlazi population.

### **6.4 Recommendations**

Upon reflection on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

- Introduce more support services and victim support structures where male rape victims will be able to receive proper assistance to deal with the trauma they experienced. This will generate deep awareness of male rape among therapists, social workers, and counsellors as the first step in the right direction to develop a reliable service for male rape victims. Such facilities should focus specifically on the needs of male rape victims and the treatment of such victims that suffer from both mild and severe physical and/or psychological effects because of their victimisation. It will also demonstrate that society

is aware of the importance of the well-being of male victims of rape as is their constitutional right.

- Establish dedicated helplines to provide confidential and non-judgmental assistance to male survivors of rape and sexual assault. This is a way to enable male rape victims to confidentially or openly express their needs without the fear of being judged. Call agents should be professionally trained individuals who should be able to respond empathetically to the needs of male victims of sexual abuse.
- Implement comprehensive educational programs in schools, workplaces, and communities to raise awareness of the male rape phenomenon, challenge harmful stereotyping, and dispel myths surrounding this crime. If male rape is extensively incorporated in educational programs, many people will be exposed and gain awareness of this scourge from a young age, which will engender proper understanding and empathy for victims. Such programmes should run in conjunction and not in competition with programs involving female victims to shed light on a topic that is under-studied and an issue that may be rife but hidden in many communities.
- Launch public awareness campaigns that emphasise the prevalence of male rape and the importance of support to encourage victims to come forward without fear of stigma or judgment. It is believed that if victims start to come forward, others will also because they will feel safe in a community that they know will offer them support and care as they heal.
- Advocate for legal reforms that will ensure equal protection and access to justice for female and male survivors. Also formulate appropriate definitions, reporting procedures, and punishment for perpetrators. This will ensure that male rape victims feel recognised and acknowledged by the justice system knowing that their victimisation is not overlooked. It will also change people's perspective that men cannot be victims of rape and sexual assault, which is a view that has been prevalent in the South African society for far too long. Knowing that they will find justice will encourage many men to open up and report their cases.
- Create safe spaces and support groups specifically for male survivors to provide them with opportunities to share their stories so that they will find understanding and emotional support from others who had similar experiences. This will give recognition to the voices of men who survived sexual abuse and rape so that they will heal and move on. It will also give men a space where they will not only feel free to open up

about their victimisation, but where they will also be able to share the other challenges they experienced.

- Train healthcare professionals to sensitively recognise and respond to the needs of male victims of rape and ensure that they have access to medical care, forensic examinations, and appropriate follow-up support. This will allow men to be more comfortable and honest with health professionals should they need any treatment following sexual victimisation, or if they have contracted STIs or HIV as a result of rape.
- Promote accurate and responsible media representation of male rape survivors by allowing them to share their stories. Treat these stories with compassion and respect and challenge harmful stereotyping and misconceptions. The mass media has a huge impact on human actions and behaviour, and if men are represented in a negative light it may fuel misconceptions of stereotypes and male rape. If various media provide insightful and helpful information about the issue of male rape, it will help society to better understand it and to treat affected men with empathy.
- Foster collaboration with and secure funding from organisations, government agencies, and philanthropic foundations to support male rape victims. If agencies buy into this concept, it will ensure that sufficient resources and facilities are available to assist male survivors on their journey towards healing.
- Encourage research on male rape to gain more in-depth understanding of its prevalence, effects, and barriers to reporting. Such credible information will inform policy changes and improve support services. The more research is done on male rape, the more it will fill the gap that exists in current literature. Scholarly-based initiatives such as magazine and newspaper articles, television programmes, stage productions, workshops in schools, and social media posts should be used to provide society with in-depth information that will inform communities about the issue of male rape and how to deal with and combat it.

## **6.5 Summary**

This research was executed to critically evaluate the prevalence and nature of male rape victims in a selected township context in South Africa. The study argues that both heterosexual and homosexual men are exposed to male rape and victimisation, yet they are marginalised and discarded by the justice system and by society due to entrenched patriarchal and normalised

perceptions of males and manhood. Research and this study have shown that the beliefs and attitudes towards male rape have a negative impact on the victims of this crime. It is evident that negative attitudes and myths about male rape persist in society and the justice system judging by how the police and community members treat male victims of rape. Academic research has exposed that myths and misconceptions of male rape persist regardless of a human rights-based definition of rape that implicates both males and females as victims and perpetrators of this crime. Why male rape is therefore still viewed by many communities as taboo, a phenomenon that does not exist, or a reason to mock victims as homosexual men can be attributed to the predominant focus on female and children being the victims of this crime and men being the perpetrators.

The study highlighted the different manner in which female and child victims and male victims are treated by law enforcement and society. Moreover, the negative experiences of male rape victims have resulted as a consequence of the way society judges homosexuals and homosexuality. This prejudiced view has not only affected homosexual males, but has also affected heterosexual men because they are accused of being gay when they speak of their victimisation. Furthermore, the study corroborated the findings of earlier researchers by affirming the dire consequences of victim blaming and the physical and psychological trauma that male victims of rape experience as a result of secondary victimisation when they approach the police for assistance, but are then mocked and blamed for their plight.

Earlier research studies have highlighted the importance of communicating empathetically with victims, believing them, and setting out to investigate their complaints without preconceived ideas or a judgemental attitude. The importance of making society and the justice system aware of the need to educate and train police officials on how to deal with male rape victims was also emphasised. Interventions should therefore be devised and implemented to address and eradicate rape myths from society's collective consciousness and to challenge the ignorant beliefs, misconceptions, and stereotyping surrounding male rape and abuse. This study thus offers a heartfelt plea that society and the justice system should change how male rape is perceived to prevent gendered stereotyping, to eradicate the perception that male rape does not exist outside jails and the homosexual community, and to improve the manner in which male and female rape victims are treated.

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## ANNEXURE A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH



### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS SHEET:

1. Introductions
2. Discuss questions.

#### Objective 1:

To explore if male rape is experienced in the area of Umlazi.

#### Questions:

1. What is your understanding on sexual violence?
2. Do you think that male rape occurs in Umlazi?
3. Do you think that sexual violence among men is an issue in Umlazi, if so, how?

#### Objective 2:

To identify what factors may result in male rape occurring.

#### Questions:

1. In your opinion, do you believe that there are factors (e.g. environment, social status, economic, relationships etc) that may result in male rape occurring?
2. Do you think male rape should be spoken more of to help identify some of the common factors that may lead to it?

#### Objective 3:

To investigate and evaluate why there may be a lack of reported cases when it comes to male victims.

#### Questions:

1. What do you think may be the cause of male victims being reluctant to reporting their cases?
2. Do you think how male victims are responded to in society may contribute to the lack of reported cases?

#### Objective 4:

To understand the impact in which the Justice System may have on victims when responding to or dealing with male victims.

#### Questions:

1. Do you think how the Justice System responds to male rape victims may have an impact on them? (How?)
2. Do you think that male victims may experience secondary victimisation from individuals that work in the Justice System when seeking help? (How?)

## ANNEXURE B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS IN ISIZULU



### ISHIDI LEMIBUZO YEQEMBU LE-FOCUS:

1. Izingeniso
2. Xoxani ngemibuzo

#### Inhloso 1:

Ukubheka ukuthi ngabe abantu besilisa bayadlwengulwa yini endaweni yaseMlazi.

#### Imibuzo:

1. Kuyini ukuqonda kwakho ngodlame locansi?
2. Uma ucabanga, amadoda ayadlwengulwa eMlazi?
3. Ucabanga ukuthi udlame locansi kwabesilisa luyinkinga eMlazi, uma kunjalo, kanjani?

#### Inhloso 2:

Ukuhlonza ukuthi yiziphi izinto ezingaholela ekudlwengulweni kwabesilisa.

#### Imibuzo:

1. Ngokubona kwakho, uyakholelwa ukuthi kunezinto (isb. indawo, isimo senhlalo, umnotho, ubudlelwano njll) ezingaholela ekudlwengulweni kwabesilisa?
2. Ucabanga ukuthi ukudlwengulwa kwabesilisa kufanele kukhulunywe ngakho kakhulu ukuze kutholakale ezinye zezinto ezivame ukuholela kukho?

#### Inhloso 3:

Ukuphenya kanye nokuhlola ukuthi kungani kungase kube nokuntuleka kwamacala abikiwe uma kuziwa kwabahlukunyezwa besilisa.

#### Imibuzo:

1. Ucabanga ukuthi yini engaba imbangela yokuthi izisulu zabesilisa zibe manqika ukubika amacala abo?
2. Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi indlela izisulu zabesilisa eziphendulwa ngayo emphakathini ingaba nomthelela ekushodeni kwamacala abikiwe?

#### Inhloso 4:

Ukuqonda umthelela uHlelo Lwezobulungiswa okungenzeka lube nawo kuzisulu lapho liphendula noma lisebenzelana nezisulu zabesilisa.

#### Imibuzo:

1. Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi indlela uHlelo Lwezobulungiswa oluphendula ngayo izisulu zokudlwengulwa besilisa ingaba nomthelela kuzo? (Kanjani?)
2. Ingabe ucabanga ukuthi izisulu zesilisa zingase zibe izisulu zesibili ezivela kubantu abasebenza oHlelweni Lwezobulungiswa lapho befuna usizo? (Kanjani?)

## ANNEXURE C: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH



### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS SHEET

- Introductions
  - Discuss Individual Interview questions.
- 
1. Can you describe what sexual violence/abuse is?
  2. Do you think that there is a difference on what women and men experience as a result of sexual violence? If so, how?
  3. What is your take on male rape?
  4. In your community, do you think that people are aware of the issue of male rape and sexual victimisation?
  5. How do you think communities respond to male rape victims?
  6. Do you think how the community responds may have an impact on male victims not being more open about their victimisations?
  7. What is your take on how police handle rape or sexual assault victim cases?
  8. Do you think that victims may experience secondary victimisation when attempting to report their cases or open up about their victimisation?
  9. Do you think our laws and rape centres are inclusive of male victims? If so, how?
  10. Do you think that male rape should be spoken more of? If so, how?



## ANNEXURE D: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ISIZULU



### ISHIDI LEMIBUZO YOMUNTU EMIBUZO

- Izethulo
- Xoxa ngemibuzo Yezingxoxiswano Ngamunye.

1. Ungakwazi yini ukuchaza ukuthi buyini udlame/ukuhlukumeza ngokocansi?
2. Ucabanga ukuthi kunomehluko kulokho abesifazane nabesilisa ababhekana nakho ngenxa yodlame locansi? Uma kunjalo, kanjani?
3. Uthini umbono wakho ngokudlwengulwa kwabesilisa?
4. Emphakathini wakini, ucabanga ukuthi abantu bayalwazi udaba lokudlwengulwa kwabesilisa kanye nokuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi?
5. Ucabanga ukuthi imiphakathi isabela kanjani kwabesilisa abadlwenguliwe?
6. Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi indlela umphakathi osabela ngayo ingaba nomthelela ekutheni izisulu zabesilisa zingaphumeleli kabanzi ngokuhlukunyezwa kwazo?
7. Uthini umbono wakho ngendlela amaphoyisa asingatha ngayo amacala okudlwengulwa noma okunukubezwa ngokocansi?
8. Ingabe ucabanga ukuthi abahlukunyezwayo bangase babhekane nokuhlukunyezwa kwesibili lapho bezama ukubika amacala abo noma bavule isifuba ngokuhlukunyezwa kwabo?
9. Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi imithetho yethu kanye nezikhungo zokudlwengula zibandakanya izisulu zabesilisa? Uma kunjalo, kanjani?
10. Ucabanga ukuthi ukudlwengulwa kwabesilisa kufanele kukhulunywe ngakho kakhulu? Uma kunjalo, kanjani?

## ANNEXURE E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN ENGLISH



### HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Date: 15 September 2023

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

My name is Andiswa Naledi Zondo, student number 217069480 from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, currently doing my Master's degree, in Criminology and Forensic Studies. The title of my research is: *The Silent Victim: An explorative study on the nature of male sexual victimisation in the selected area of Umlazi, KwaZulu Natal*. My contact details are [217069480@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:217069480@stu.ukzn.ac.za) and 084 718 9659.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the possible occurrence of male rape or sexual victimisation. The aim and purpose of this research is to get the communities perspective on the issue of male rape victimisation and if it requires more awareness. The study is expected to enroll 20 participants at Oasis Church in Umlazi W section. It will involve the following procedures interviewing you to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter, furthermore, to engage in a focus group discussion on the subject matter. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the

study is expected to be over a period of two days where day one will be the focus group discussions and day two will be individual interviews. The study is funded by myself.

The study may involve emotional discomfort where some of the questions may be personal. We hope that the study will create the following benefits, which is bring an increased awareness on the issue of male rape and male sexual victimisation. The study will provide no direct benefits to participants.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00006232/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at (provide contact details) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

Participation in this research is voluntary and as a participant you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point should you feel overwhelmed. Should you choose to withdraw, there will be no penalty.

- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The recordings as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.

---

## CONSENT

I \_\_\_\_\_ have been informed about the study entitled *The Silent Victim: An explorative study on the nature of male sexual victimisation in the selected area of Umlazi, KwaZulu Natal* by Andiswa Naledi Zondo.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 084 718 9659 or 217069480@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

**Additional consent, where applicable**

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

---

**Signature of Participant**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature of Witness**  
**(Where applicable)**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature of Translator**  
**(Where applicable)**

---

**Date**

## **ANNEXURE F: INFORMED CONSENT FORM IN ISIZULU**



### **IKOMIDI LEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO LEKOLISHI LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI (HSSREC)**

#### **ISICELO SOKUGUNYAZWA NGOKWEZENQUBONHLE**

##### **Okocwaningo olusebenza ngabantu**

##### **OKUKULEKELELA EKWAKHIWENI KWEFOMU LOKUVUMA**

Okumele kuqashelwe abacwaningi: Noma kubalulekile ukutholakala kwemiphumela enembayo ngokwesayensi futhi esemthethweni, kumele kwenziwe konke okusemandleni ukuze kukhiqizwe umbhalo wokuvuma oqondakalayo ngokolimi futhi ocacile kakhulu ngaphandle kokushiya imininingwane ebalulekile njengoba kubaliwe ngezansi. Izihumusho ezigunyaziwe zizodingeka uma sekugunyazwe umbhalo wesiNgisi.

Kunezimo ngqo lapho invume ngomlomo efakazelwe yamukelekile, nalapho invume yomuntu ingeke idingwe yi-HSSREC.

Umbhalo Wemininingwane Nokuvuma Ukubamba Iqhaza Ocwaningweni

Usuku: 15 kuMandulo 2023

Othintekayo,

Igama lami ngingu-Andiswa Naledi Zondo, umfundi ongunombolo 217069480 waseNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal, eHoward College, njengamanje owenza iziqu zami zeMasters, kwiCriminology and Forensic Studies. Isihloko socwaningo lwami sithi: The Silent Victim: An explorative study on the nature of male sexual abuse in the selected area of Umlazi, KwaZulu

Natal. Imininingwane yami yokuxhumana ithi 217069480@stu.ukzn.ac.za kanye no-084 718 9659.

Uyamenywa ukuba ubambe iqhaza ocwaningweni olumayelana nokwenzeka kokudlwengulwa kwabesilisa noma ukuhlukunyezwa ngokocansi. Inhloso nenjongo yalolu cwaningo ukuthola umbono wemiphakathi mayelana nokuhlukunyezwa kwabesilisa futhi uma kudinga ukuqwashisa okwengeziwe. Lolu cwaningo kulindeleke ukuthi lubhalise abantu abangu-20 ebandleni i-Oasis esigcemeni sakwa-W eMlazi. Kuzobandakanya lezi zinqubo ezilandelayo zokuxoxisana nawe ukuze wabelane ngolwazi lwakho nokuphawulile ngesihloko, ngaphezu kwalokho, ukuze ubambe iqhaza engxoxweni yeqembu okugxilwe kuyo ngesihloko. Isikhathi sokubamba kwakho iqhaza uma ukhetha ukubhalisa nokuhlala ocwaningweni kulindeleke ukuba sibe ngaphezu kwezinsuku ezimbili lapho usuku lokuqala kuzoba yizingxoxo zeqembu okugxilwe kulo futhi usuku lwesibili kube yizingxoxo zomuntu ngamunye. Ucwaningo luxhaswe yimina

Ucwaningo lungaba nalobu bungcuphe noma ukungaphatheki kahle. Sithemba ukuthi ucwaningo luzoletha lezi zinzuzo ezilandelayo okuletha ukuqwashisa okwengeziwe ngodaba lokudlwengulwa kwabesilisa kanye nokuhlukunyezwa kwabesilisa ngokocansi. Ucwaningo ngeke lunikeze izinzuzo eziqondile kubahlanganyeli.

Lolu cwaningo luhloliwe ngokwenqubonhle lwagunyazwa i-UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (inombolo yokugunyazwa HSSREC/00006232/2023).

Uma kunezinkinga noma imibuzo/ukukhathazeka ungaxhumana nomcwaningi lapha (nikeza imininingwane yokuxhumana) noma i- UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, kulemininingwane elandelayo:

**EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI  
LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI**

Ihhovisi LezoCwaningo, iKhempasi i-Westville

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Ucingo: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

I-imeyili: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kungokuzithandela futhi njengomhlanganyeli unelungelo lokuhoxa ocwaningweni nganoma yisiphi isikhathi uma uzizwa ukhungathekile. Uma ukhetha ukuhoxa, ngeke kube khona inhlawulo.

- Imibono yakho kule nhlolekhono izokwethulwa ngokungaziwa. Igama lakho noma ubuwena ngeke kudalulwe nganoma iyiphi indlela ocwaningweni.
- Okurekhodiwe kanye nezinye izinto ezihlobene nenhlolekhono zizobanjwa efayeleni elivikelwe ngephasiwedi elifinyeleleka kimina kuphela nabaphathi bami. Ngemuva kweminyaka emi-5, ngokuhambisana nemithetho yenyuvesi, izolahlwa ngokusikwa nokushiswa.

---

## UKUVUMA

Mina \_\_\_\_\_ ngazisiwe ngocwaningo olunesihloko esithi  
*The Silent Victim: An explorative study on the nature of male sexual victimisation in the selected area of Umlazi, KwaZulu Natal* luka Andiswa Naledi Zondo.

Ngiyakuqonda okuphokophelwe nokuyimigomo zalolu cwaningo.

Nginikeziwe ithuba lokuphendula imibuzo mayelana nocwaningo futhi ngithole izimpendulo ezingigculisayo.

Ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ukubamba kwami iqhaza kulolu cwaningo akuphoqeleke futhi ngingayeka noma yinini nokuthi lokho ngeke kube nomthelela kwengikuzuzayo engijwayele ukukuthola.

Ngazisiwe ngazo zonke izinxephezelo noma ukwelashwa okutholakalayo uma ngilimala ngenxa yokuphathelene nocwaningo.



Uma ngineminye imibuzo/ukukhathazeka noma kukhona engidinga kucaciswe mayelana nocwaningo ngiyakuqonda ukuthi ngingathintana nomcwaningi ku 084 718 9659 noma 217069480@stu.ukzn.ac.za.

Uma nginemibuzo noma ukukhathazeka ngamalungelo ami njengobambe iqhaza, noma ngikhathazekile nganoma yiluphi uhlangothi locwaningo noma abacwaningi ngingathintana nabe:

**EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI LEZESINTU ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI**

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Ucingo: 27 31 2604557 - iFeksi: 27 31 2604609

I-imeyili: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Ukuvuma okwengeziwe, lapho kudingeka khona

Ngiyavuma ukuthi kwenziwe lokhu:

Kuqoshwe ingxoxo yami/yeqembu YEBO/CHA

Kuqoshwe ngevidiyo ingxoxo yami/yeqembu YEBO/CHA

Kusetshenziswe izithombe zami ngezinhloso zocwaningo YEBO/CHA

---

**Ukusayina kobambe iqhaza**

---

**Usuku**

---

**Ukusayina Kowufakazi**

---

**Usuku**

**(Uma kunesidingo)**

---

**Ukusayina Kohumushayo**

---

**Usuku**

**(Uma kunesidingo)**

## ANNEXURE G: GATEKEEPER'S LETTER



### Councillor

Mezzanine Floor Shell House  
Cnr. Anton Lembede & Samora Mcheli Street, Durban, 4001  
P O Box 1014, Durban, 4000  
Tel: 031 322 7030, Fax 031 311 3827  
www.durban.gov.za

Our Ref :

Your Ref: Cllr K.P.M. Cele

Enquires: 076 438 5357

Date: 28/08/2023

### PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH

Dear Madam/ Sir

This letter is serving to grant Zondo Andiswa Naledi, ID Number 990331 1020 081 is residing at 19 Mountain Mews, 44 Holzner Road, Pinetown 3610, Ward 16. She is a student at UKZN (Howard College), student number, 217069480.

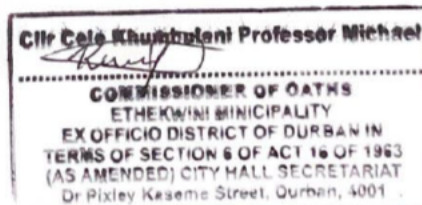
She will be conducting an explorative study on the nature of male sexual victimisation, in the selected area of Umlazi, G section.

I therefore request your co-operation whilst she is conducting her research.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,

[Redacted Signature]  
(Ward - 79)  
EThekwin Municipality



## ANNEXURE H: ETHICAL APPROVAL



30 October 2023

Andiswa Naledi Zondo (217069480)  
School of Applied Human Sc  
Howard College Campus

Dear AN Zondo,

**Protocol reference number:** HSSREC/00006232/2023

**Project title:** The silent victim: An explorative study on the nature of male sexual victimization in the selected area of Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal

**Degree:** Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 25 September 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

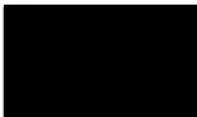
Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 30 October 2024.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: [hssrec@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hssrec@ukzn.ac.za) Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

## ANNEXURE I: EDITORS LETTER



lindac@skytec.co.za | 083 344 0706

SARS Income Tax No. 9249355208; CC Founding Statement No. CK94/16841/23 SARS; Tax Clearance Certificate No. 1994/016841/23  
SACE REGISTRATION NUMBER: N.D. COERTZE – 1082433 (2003)

### DECLARATION OF PROOF-READING

#### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Nicolina D. Coertze, declare that I meticulously perused the Master's dissertation referred to below for language editing and proof-reading purposes. I identified and corrected linguistic and stylistic inaccuracies to the best of my knowledge and ability. Using the *Word Tracking* system, I kept track of the changes that I made. I also offered additional annotations for consideration by the author should she deem it necessary to address areas that I considered might need attention. I declare that I adhered to the general principles that guide the work of a language editor and that I remained within my brief as had been agreed with the author of the manuscript.

**TITLE:** The Silent Victim: An Explorative Study on the Nature of Male Sexual Victimisation in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal

**NAME OF CANDIDATE:** Andiswa Naledi Zondo  
**STUDENT NUMBER:** 217069480  
**PROPOSED QUALIFICATION:** Master of Social Science in Criminology and Forensic Studies  
**DEPARTMENT:** Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences School of Applied Human Sciences  
**TERTIARY INSTITUTION:** University of KwaZulu-Natal

**Manuscript submitted on:** 30 November 2023

**(MRS) N.D. COERTZE**  
**LANGUAGE EDITOR**

*DISCLAIMER: The Editor was not responsible for the final presentation of this manuscript. It was the author's/supervisor's prerogative to format the manuscript and to make additional changes after editing without referring the document back to the language editor.*