PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY MALE STUDENTS IN THE PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL ABOUT INDEPENDENT SOUTH AFRICAN FEMALES

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation, I, declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I'm the owner of the copyright thereof and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Thirusha Mohabir

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Signature                          Date
Previous research has shown that in the past males generally had negative attitudes and opinions about gender equity and the development of female autonomy and emancipation. The present study aimed to explore the perceptions of male university students in KwaZulu-Natal about independent women. More specifically the researcher tried to investigate whether “new generation” South African males are more accepting of gender equity and the independence and emancipation of South African females. An interpretive perspective was employed. A total of 6 assenting male university students, 3 from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and 3 from the University of Zululand situated in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, participated in the present study.

In line with the researcher’s epistemology, the methodology was qualitative in nature and semi-structured interviews were used. All the participants were given a short biographical questionnaire and a one-on-one semi-structured interview was conducted thereafter. The research data was subjected to thematic analysis. The significant themes that emerged from the analysis are presented in the results chapter. The present study’s overall findings suggested that the “new” male generation of KwaZulu-Natal still generally hold negative attitudes and perceptions about gender equity and South African independent females. However, it was also found that the “new” South African male generation of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Zululand is more receptive to the independence of South African females than the “older” South African male generation.
In conclusion the present study’s contributions as well as shortcomings are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.
KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

In this section the concepts central to the present study are defined. These concepts include:

**Attitudes** – A person’s manner, disposition, feeling, position, etc., with regard to a person or thing; tendency or orientation, especially of the mind (Attitudes, n.d).

**Culture** – “The beliefs, values, customs, practices and ways of living in a society. Often used interchangeably with the term ‘society’, the most useful definitions of culture emphasize that it is about ‘lived experience’, and that people are both shaped by and in turn shape culture” (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998, p. 245).

**Femininity** - A gendered phenomenon that refers to how a woman (biologically referring to femaleness) comes to be defined. Femininity, like masculinity, is the product of socialization (Breines, Gierycz & Reardon, 1999).

**Feminism** – “A movement and set of ideas that date from the late eighteenth century, based on the assumption that women as a group are structurally subordinate to men: that is, that they are disadvantaged through gender, and that such an unequal situation must be altered” (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998, p. 245).

**Gender** – A social and cultural construct differentiating women and men and defining the ways in which women and men interact with each other. Gender is determined
by the composite of shared expectations and norms within a society concerning appropriate female and male behaviours, characteristics, and roles (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2001).

**Gender Discrimination** – Gender discrimination is any distinction, exclusion or restriction (including violence) performed on the basis of sex, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by girls, boys, women or men on a basis of equality for all, of human rights or fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2001).

**Gender Equality** – Equality here must mean at a minimum some form of equality of opportunity for the sexes, if simply in the procedural sense. That is, there should be, for example selection procedures that do not contain pro-male bias (Evans, 1995).

**Gender Roles** – The pattern of masculine or feminine behaviour of an individual that is defined by a particular culture and that is largely determined by a child's upbringing (Gender Roles, n.d.).

**Gender Violence** - Gender violence is any interpersonal, organizational, or politically oriented violation perpetrated against people due to their gender identity, sexual orientation, or location in the hierarchy of male-dominated social systems such as family, military organizations, or the labour force (OToole, & Schiffman, 1997).
Human Immunodeficiency Virus – Any of several retroviruses and especially HIV-1 that infect and destroy helper T cells of the immune system causing the marked reduction in their numbers (HIV, n.d).

Humiliate – To cause (a person) a painful loss of pride, self-respect, or dignity (Humiliate, n.d.)

Independent women – a woman, who does not strictly conform to traditional gender norms, is independent, and who possesses not only feminine traits but also “masculine traits” such as assertiveness, forcefulness and aggressiveness (Toller, Suter and Trautman, 2004).

Lobola – A bride price, typically of cattle, paid to a bride’s father among Bantu-speaking tribes of southern Africa (Lobola, n.d).

Masculinity – A gendered phenomenon that refers to how a man comes to be defined. Having qualities traditionally ascribed to men, as strength and boldness makes a man masculine (Masculinity, n.d).

Patriarchy – A system of social organization that valorizes the masculine gender over the feminine. Central to patriarchy is the question of men's power over women. Many institutions in our life may be considered patriarchal, such as the family, the state, religious institutions etc. The patriarchal ideology and its value system consider man as superior to woman and give him authority and control over the woman's life. According to this world-view, man is the natural head and leader at all
times. He is stronger than the woman, is rational and courageous and has the responsibility of protecting the woman and the children. A woman, on the other hand, is man’s helper. Although biologically weak, she has the responsibility of bringing up children. She is the home manager and is patient, kind, loving and totally committed to the well-being of the family (Breines et al, 1999).

**Perceptions** – The act or faculty of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind; cognition; understanding (Perceptions, n.d.)

**Power** - Power is a fundamental component of gender. Any major shift in power is likely to include corresponding changes in gender relations. Despite cultural variations, there is a consistent difference between women's and men's gender roles based in power, e.g., access to productive resources and ability to exercise decision making authority. The power imbalance that defines gender relations influences women's access to and control over resources, their visibility and participation in social and political affairs, and their ability to realize their fundamental human rights (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998).

**Rape** - The unlawful compelling of a woman through physical force or duress to have sexual intercourse (Rape, n.d.).

**Socialization** – “The process of becoming social or learning social roles and becoming a social actor. The term is sometimes used in a deterministic way to imply that the social actor in such a way that s/he has no choice” (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998, p. 258).
Stereotypes – A simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group (Stereotypes, n.d.).
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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION, MOTIVATION FOR
AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 comprises of a general introduction and research problem to the present study; thereafter the motivation for and significance for the study are discussed. The aims of the present study are noted briefly, and the chapter concludes with an outline of the organization of the dissertation chapters.

1.1 Introduction and Research Problem

In the past, many laws were implemented in South Africa to prevent women from obtaining true emancipation and equality. Women were prohibited from “standing surety” because of their assumed weakness of sex and, because they were more easily influenced by other people than men were. Previously, men were also seen as the more suitable sex to occupy the public sector and the private domain of the family, was regarded as the proper place for a woman. Over the past 28 years however, women have made great progress in their search for emancipation and equal rights. In South Africa, this quest has led to full gender equity being included in the constitution of 1996, resulting in all South African women gaining equal rights and equality to men (Linnegar & McGillivray, 1998). Does this however, mean that full gender equity has been practiced since 1996?

Research done shows that most South African men have not accepted the independence of South African women, and they still hold negative attitudes about
their autonomy. These negative attitudes have led to independent South African women being discriminated, ostracized, and humiliated in public, private, and political sectors, making true gender equity difficult to achieve.

Therefore the motivation for the present study stems from the need to assess and address the issue of gender equity as a social construct in the South African context.

1.2 Motivation and Significance for the Study

Now that a vast number of South African females are becoming more independent and career orientated, they do not strictly conform to traditional gender roles, resulting in some of them being looked down upon by the opposite sex. Females are no longer just part of the private domain of the family; they are now also part of the political and public sectors as well (Lessing, 1994).

The fact that there is a scarcity of studies of this nature, which have been done in the South African context, warranted further research in the field. It was decided by the researcher to focus on university male students because an increasing number of South African women are enrolling into tertiary institutions, which was previously regarded as a male domain. By 1996, women outnumbered men in South African universities. The female to male ratio was 92:100 in 1996 and by 2001; the female to male ratio for higher education increased to 115:100 (Republic of South Africa, 2005).

Their tertiary education exposes these male university students to information and situations, which encourages and “normalizes” gender equity, therefore they were
chosen for the research study. The youth are the future of this country, and
therefore the researcher believes that it is imperative that research be done with this
age group so that health professionals can find out if a change in thinking about
gender equity has occurred, thus getting the psychologists, sociologists, and gender
study researchers one step closer to obtaining true social gender equity.

According to Gilligan (1997) expressions of female autonomy can be experienced as
threatening to some men. Some men tend to feel “threatened” by women who do
not conform to traditional gender roles (Laing, 1986). Because women are now
portraying traditional masculine traits such as aggression and dominance men tend
to feel a sense of powerlessness and therefore they try to take back their power,
resulting in women being raped, abused and oppressed (Mckendrick and Hoffman,
1990). Twohy (1995) found that there are significant, positive, bilateral relationships
between violence against women, male gender role stereotypes, and hierarchical
power.

Hierarchical power and male gender role stereotypes were found to be strong
predictors of violence against women (Twohy, 1995). In South Africa controlling and
domineering behaviour is learned from family relations, the media, sexist sexual
institutions and activities, and society’s glorification of “strong armed” masculinity and
docile feminity. “What is certain is that South African women, living in one of the
most violent countries in the world, are disproportionately more likely to be victims of
South Africa has the fastest growing rate of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) transmission of anywhere in the world, and most of the people infected are women (Pendry, 1998). According to Pendry, (1998) women who are victims of gender violence have a high risk of being infected with HIV. Women’s positions as potential victims of rape and abuse becomes increasingly precarious as sexism continues to pervade our society (Mckendrick and Hoffman, 1990). The South African “culture is suffused with beliefs in male supremacy, dominance and aggression” (Wilson, 1983:67, in Mckendrick and Hoffman, 1990) and therefore most men have not accepted the independence of females in society.

Research conducted by Douki, Zinebs, Nacef, and Halbreichb (2007) found that in the Arab communities, culture-related factors such as education, work, sexuality, marriage and infertility, significantly contribute to triggering mental disorders in females. The subordinate position of women, has been shown to affect the prevalence of the course and management of psychopathology in women. Women are therefore at a greater risk of developing mental disorders such as depressive, somatoform, anxious or eating disorders, as well as suicidal behaviours and therefore the issue of social gender equity needs to be addressed (Douki, Zinebs, Nacef, and Halbreichb, 2007).

Recently Democratic Alliance member, Johan Visser, of the Western Cape Parliament made headlines in South African newspapers after stating, “God had created women from men in order to be a help for men and that women are meant to stay at home and look after children and not do the work men did” (Makinana, 2009, p. 1). Females make up the majority gender group of South Africa’s population and
therefore it is important that social gender discrimination be addressed (Statistics South Africa, 2009).

The findings of the proposed research study can help the relevant parties (Example: psychologists, sociologists, and gender study researchers) gain greater insight into how male students perceive independent South African females and to what extent has social gender equity been accepted by the “new generation”. It will contribute towards the design of a study using a different and bigger sample to establish if the results of this study can be replicated. Hopefully an article that will come from this study will contribute to the existing information regarding social issues that are related to gender inequity in South Africa. It is hoped that the research study will also change the mindsets of the male participants of the study.

1.3 Aims of the Research Study

The primary aims of the present study were to explore the perceptions of University male students in KwaZulu-Natal about independent South African females.

The secondary aims of this study were:

- To determine whether the “new South African male generation” of University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Zululand are receptive to the independence of South African females.

- To investigate whether the “new male South African generation” hold negative attitudes and perceptions about gender equity.
1.4 Organization of the Dissertation

In chapter 1 an introduction and the research problem to the study is provided. The motivation and significance of the research regarding the South African context is outlined, and the research aims of the present study are discussed briefly.

Chapter 2 provides a general review of the relevant literature. A brief overview of literature concerning gender inequity within the South African context, followed by research concerning variables such as: culture, age, socio-economic status, gender roles, stereotypes, violence against women and HIV, in relation to gender inequity is discussed.

In chapter 3 an overview of the methods used to obtain and analyse the data rendered by the present study are discussed.

The results rendered by the present study are reported in chapter 4.

Chapter 5 discusses the general findings and concludes the study. A critical review and recommendations for future research studies are also provided.

1.5 Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 started with a general introduction and statement of the research problem regarding gender inequity in South Africa, followed by an explanation of the motivation and significance of the present study. The research aims were then outlined and the chapter concluded with a chapter outline of the dissertation.
In chapter 2 literatures relevant to the present study is discussed.
In this chapter a general review of the relevant literature is provided. The chapter starts with a brief overview of literature concerning gender inequity within the South African context, followed by research concerning variables such as: culture, age, socio-economic status, gender roles, stereotypes, violence against women and HIV, in relation to gender inequality. As very little research has been conducted on male perceptions of independent females within South Africa and around the world, the review of literature below may not be directly applicable to the South African context, but is related to the research in general or the aims that are being explored.

2.1 Gender Equity in South Africa

South Africa’s Constitution provides a strong basis for gender equity in the country. Many, if not most, departments of government have to some extent considered gender issues in drawing up their policies in the post-apartheid era, resulting in a number of legislative Acts intended to promote equity for women, being included in South Africa’s constitution (Commission on Gender Equality, 1999). These Acts are namely the: Employment Equity Act, Labour Relations Act, Prevention of Family Violence Act, Pregnancy Act, Maintenance Act, Films and Publications Act, Customary Marriages Act, Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996; Jagwanth & Murray, 2002).
The Employment Equity Act requires employers to implement affirmative action programs to redress disadvantages suffered by people who are members of designated groups.

Women, black persons, and persons with disabilities are members of the designated groups for the purposes of the act. This act has encouraged the employment and promotion of many women in the workplace, thus encouraging egalitarian gender attitudes in the workplace (Republic of South Africa, 1998). The Labour Relations Act also contains specific anti-discrimination provisions to govern the labour sector and to ensure that gender equity is established in the workplace (Republic of South Africa, 1995). The Prevention of Family Violence Act provides for preventative interdicts for victims of family violence and criminalizes the rape of a woman by her husband (Republic of South Africa, 1993).

The Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act highlights the values of human dignity, equity, security of the person, non-racialism and non-sexism as well as the constitutional right of persons to make decisions concerning reproduction and to have security in and control over, their bodies. It also recognizes the right to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of fertility regulation and appropriate health care services. The Pregnancy Act highlights the constitutional responsibility of the state to provide reproductive health to all and provide counselling before and after the termination of a pregnancy. In most cases, no consent other than that of the pregnant female is required for the termination of a pregnancy (Republic of South Africa, 1996).
In South Africa 1 out of every 2 marriages end in a divorce. Divorce affects not only the adults who make this choice but the children as well (Families South Africa, n.d.). The total number of officially recorded divorces in 2008 was 28 924. It is observed that 42,9% of all the divorce cases were from marriages that were solemnised by civil rights and 49,7 by religious rites (Statistics South Africa, 2009). When a divorce occurs children tend to live with one of their parents (in most cases the mother) and therefore it is required that the other parent pay maintenance for each child (Families South Africa, n.d.). In the past, however many parents failed to do so, thus putting more pressure on the other to provide for their children. To prevent this scenario from occurring the Maintenance Act was developed in South Africa.

The Maintenance Act attempts to provide simpler and more effective procedures for dependents to claim maintenance from their ex-partners. Under this act a person cannot refuse to pay maintenance due to a lack of means, if it is proven that the failure was due to his or her unwillingness to work or due to misconduct (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Pornography has become an issue of importance not only around the world but also in South Africa. The pornography industry’s revenue is larger than the combined revenues of the top technology companies which are namely: Microsoft, Google, Amazon, eBay, Yahoo!, Apple, Netflix and EarthLink (Family Safe Media, 2006). The Films and Publications Act deals quite severely with pornography and, in particular, child pornography. The preamble to this act again conceptualizes the act as a means of securing gender equity as it is guaranteed in the constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996).
The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act gives official recognition to customary marriages, including polygamous unions. It also places a duty on the spouses of a customary marriage to ensure that it is registered, although failure to do so does not affect the validity of the marriage. A wife of a customary marriage is given equal status and capacity to that of a wife in a civil marriage, including previously denied capacity to acquire property and to contract. The Customary Marriages Act also abolishes the customary law practice of treating women as minors and gives women full majority status (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

Prompted by international human rights law, lawmakers have paid attention to gender in other pieces of legislation too. The Prevention of Illegal Eviction from and Unlawful Occupation of Land Act is a good example. This act requires courts to consider the needs of the elderly, children, disabled persons and households headed by women when deciding whether or not to permit an eviction. As women bear a disproportionate responsibility for caring for the elderly, children and disabled people, this provision will be significant to them (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

Finally, race, gender, and disability discrimination are especially highlighted in the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act. Gender discrimination includes violence against women, practices that prevent women from inheriting property or that unfairly limit women’s access to land rights, finances, or other resources. Limitations to access social benefits and the denial of access to services and opportunities to a woman are also regarded as discriminatory. The act also specifically prohibits traditional, customary, or religious practices that undermine the dignity of women and gender equity (Republic of South Africa, 2000).
Even though the South African Constitution gives effect to both the right to equity and culture it is not conscientiously practiced at a general societal level. As demonstrated by Bennett, (1995) African customary law is indisputably based on patriarchal values and is discriminatory against women. The system of African customary law includes the relegation of wives of customary marriages to the status of minors under the legal guardianship of their husbands. Women may not own property or hold office in public forums; they may not negotiate or terminate their own marriages or claim custody of their children; and customary marriages require husbands to pay bridewealth (lobola) and allow them to enter polygamous unions. Considering Bennett’s (1995) findings, it is clear that there is a discrepancy between South Africa’s constitution and the African customary laws that many South Africans adhere to. Even though the South African constitution promotes gender equity through its legislation, women are still being discriminated against due to other belief systems.

As indicated by the Commission on Gender Equality (1998: 10):

“It is a sad fact that one of the new proudly non-racial institutions in South Africa is patriarchy... indeed, it is so firmly rooted that it is given a cultural halo and identified with customs and personalities of different communities. Thus to challenge patriarchy, to dispute the idea that it is men who should be dominant figures in the family and society, is to be seen not as fighting against the male privilege, but as attempting to destroy African tradition, or to subvert Afrikaner ideals or undermine civilised and deemed British values...Patriarchy brutalises men and neutralises women across the colour line.”
Mckendrick and Hoffman (1990) believe that transformation of prevailing social relations between the sexes can only come about through a change of social structures and ideologies. In a transformed society the possibility of egalitarian relationships are higher and in such a society no longer would women be thought of as sexual objects or as human beings in the service of men. For full equity to occur, law reform on its own is not enough; social attitudes will have to change too (Linnegar and McGillivary, 1998). The rhetoric of rights and of gender equity is at its most effective if all sectors of state and civil society share an equal commitment to it (Jagwanth & Murray, 2002).

2.2 Gender Equity and Age

When looking at the body of literature on gender inequity, both young and older males tend to show higher levels of negativity towards the independence of females. This finding is attributed to the effects of many other factors such as culture, socio-economic status, ideology and family structure (Toller et al, 2004; Anderson & Johnson, 2003; Calvert et al, 2001; Tu & Chang, 2000; Kalichman et al, 2007). A quantitative study conducted in urban and rural Japan with a sample of human service professionals found that age does not influence egalitarian sex role attitudes (Uji et al, 2006).

2.3 Gender Equity and Socio-economic Status

Previously it was found by many studies that more poor people living in rural areas hold less egalitarian attitudes than middle or upper class people living in urban areas (Uji et al, 2006; Thomas, 2007; Kalichman et al, 2007). This finding indicates that the poorer a person is the more likely they are to hold less egalitarian gender
attitudes. However, in contrast, studies conducted by Tu & Chang, (2000); Pratt, (1985) in Calvert et al, (2001); Anderson & Johnson, (2003) indicate that some middle and upper class people who live in urban areas also tend to hold less egalitarian attitudes. These findings indicate that the socio-economic status of a person does not solely influence the way an individual perceives gender equity; other factors such as cultural and social norms also have to be considered.

2.4 Gender Equity and Culture, Tradition and Religion

Obtaining gender equity has been a huge challenge for South Africa because it is a country of many cultures, and each is steeped in traditions that often run contrary to male/female equity. Culture plays a big role in shaping the way an individual perceives the world around them. Each culture comprises of its own unique patterns of belief, values, attitudes, expectations, and ways of thinking, feeling, moving, and using objects. Individuals from different cultures will therefore perceive similar situations differently (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998).

In South Africa culture plays an important role in the way people perceive gender equity between males and females. The subordination of women has long been supported by the church and other patriarchal religions through a moral order which actively propagandises the authority of husbands over wives (Nathoo, 1997; Makoro, 2007). Women in the African culture, for instance, are viewed as citizens with no rights. Before marriage, black women are subjected to the authority of their fathers or male guardians and later on of their husbands. After marriage most African women relinquish their freedom of movement and are confined to a local area. They
are socialised to succumbing to sexual, physical and mental abuse without complaining (Nathoo, 1997).

A study conducted by the Commission on Gender Equality (1999) in South Africa found that both males and females believed that men were more superior to women due to their interpretations of religious scriptures and ideologies. Similarly, both male and female individuals also interpreted “lobola” (bridewealth) as conferring power and “ownership” rights on the man, instead of seeing it as reflecting respect for the women (Commission on Gender, 1999). A study done in the rural areas of the Caprivi Region in Namibia also supports the findings of the Commission of Gender Equality. The increasing costs demanded for “lobola” (bridewealth) as women receive an education and increase their employment potential has strengthened the belief amongst many young men that they are entitled to even greater power over women within marriage (Thomas, 2007).

While it may be the case that women who achieve a high level of education and actually fulfil their employment potential are able to assert equal rights within a relationship, this is not the case amongst Caprivi women living in the rural areas of the region who rely primarily on subsistence livelihood activities that continue to be mediated through men. Adherence to customary norms can undermine women’s civil rights, but such compliance was found to be necessary for the women of Caprivi to access and make productive use of the more immediate social and economic entitlements or ‘rights’ that they required for day-to-day subsistence (Thomas, 2007). Baxter and Kane (1995) found that factors associated with dependence through interpersonal ties have a negative effect on egalitarian attitudes, especially in
countries in which women are most dependent at a societal level. Such independence draws women toward men’s attitudes, discouraging them from developing interpretations of gender inequity that diverge from men’s, thus promoting and legitimising gender inequity further.

2.5 Gender Equity and Gender Roles

Sex as a human characteristic refers to biological fact: the difference between male and female. Societies tend to attribute all kinds of meanings to the two sexes. Over time, these cultural meanings develop into gender roles or identities we call masculine and feminine, or male and female. Gender roles are socially defined, not physically determined. They are learnt and can, as a social construct, change over time. Gender roles determine what is expected of men, women, boys and girls in each society. They may vary considerably from country to country, rural to urban groups, within other sub-groups of the same society and over time (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2001).

Many of the studies conducted previously, indicate that females are more egalitarian towards gender roles than men are (Tu & Change, 2000; Pratt, 1985 in Calvert et al, 2001; Anderson & Johnson, 2003; Uji et al, 2006). A study conducted by Pratt (1985 in Calvert et al, 2001) found that women who do not conform to traditional gender roles end up being regarded as outcasts. It was also found, that even after women have gained their independence and have moved away from traditional gender roles, men still tend to depend on them to perform roles that require expressive traits such as warmth and gentleness, not roles that encourage assertiveness, aggressiveness, and forcefulness (Glick & Fiske, 2001 in Anderson and Johnson, 2003; Rubin,
Bukowski & Parker, 1998). Calvert et al (2001) found that women hero depictions were unappealing to men because these women displayed ruthless masculine characteristics instead of traditional feminine characteristics such as submissiveness and sensitivity.

In contrast to the above mentioned studies, however, other studies conducted in the past, indicate that male support for gender role egalitarianism is starting to increase. A quantitative study which explored the sex differences in gender role attitudes was conducted with high school seniors in America. The sample consisted of 745 male and 829 females of Caucasian and African American orientation. Overall results indicated that men were not determined to hold highly traditional gender beliefs. Their responses disclosed a neutral view point, which indicated that they are neither traditional nor egalitarian (Lewis, 2005).

A cross-cultural quantitative study done at a University in California in the United States of America compared gender role egalitarianism in two domains; employment and social roles. The average age of the group was approximately 21 years old. The sample group comprised of Asian, European American, African American, Native American and Latino participants. The results of the study indicated that the current generation of college students hold relatively more egalitarian gender role attitudes. Both males and females held more egalitarian attitudes when it came to the employment domain; however they were not so egalitarian when it came to the social domain. The results also indicated that women are more egalitarian than men particularly in the employment domain (Anderson & Johnson, 2003).
This finding is consistent with Social Role Theory. Social Role Theory postulates that gender typed norms are a product of the division of labour. When the division of labour in the workplace is no longer gender-based and behaviour is constrained by relatively “gender blind” employment roles, relatively egalitarian attitudes prevail. These employment role constraints do not exist in the social domain where the ideology of benevolent sexism may be a potent force (Eagly 1987).

A study conducted by the Commission of Gender Equality (1999) in South Africa also showed support for Johnson & Anderson’s (2003) findings. It was found that African South African men are more likely to support the notion of a woman working outside the home, than the other racial groups (Coloured and Indians). However, the findings also indicated that this support for women’s working outside the home is largely a result of economic necessity rather than choice. For example, the African population in South Africa is more likely to be poorer than other racial groups in the country, and therefore it is important for both the male and female in the household to work, so that more money is earned overall. In contrast, results of the study also indicated that some men were still against women working outside the home, because they felt that it caused conflict, as they are uncomfortable with the idea of being economically dependent on a woman. Kane (1998) also supports these findings.

For men in particular, there is pride in doing a hard, dirty job and mastering the skills required, even if the work is classified officially 'unskilled' or 'semi-skilled'. Pride in doing the job, learning the skills, and gaining the acknowledgement of others, is in part what creates a gendered self (Billington et al, 1998). For working class men, it
'provides the materials for an elemental self-esteem... The wage packet is the provider of freedom and independence: the particular prize of masculinity in work' (Willis, 1979, p. 196). So masculinity, seemingly such a personal quality, is in part created by work itself, or to put this in more theoretical language, it is created through what Karl Marx called the relations of production (Billington et al, 1998).

Being unemployed in a society where masculinity is embedded in work in this way has repercussions for men's self-esteem and for their personal identity as men (Connell, 1991). Studies of families where men are unemployed and women employed, indicate that there is no necessary or logical 'role reversal' of household tasks, and many unemployed men feel that their identity as men is threatened even further by taking over private roles identified as a women's. Similarly, employed men's resistance to their wives' paid employment reflects the meaning that many men attach to their role as family provider through paid work. This identification of masculinity with paid work clearly points to issues concerning power and dominance in gender roles (Billington et al, 1998).

According to Evolutionary theories of gender development, the resistance that most males have about their wives or female partner's participating in paid employment outside the home is grounded in genetic makeup. Shields (1975), a functionalist, proposed that men and women have evolved differently to fulfil their different and complementary functions, which are necessary for survival; men go to work, while women stay at home, run the household and rear the offspring (Barrett, Dunbar & Lycett, 2002). Similarly, Buss (1995), a socio-biologist suggested that behavioural differences between men and women stem from different sexual and reproductive
strategies that have evolved to ensure that men and women are able to efficiently reproduce and effectively pass on their genes. Traditionally anthropologists have supposed that the division of labour reflects a cooperative arrangement between the sexes to share the costs of rearing offspring, with males taking on the ‘riskier’ tasks, such as going to work, in order to spare the females on whom successful reproduction depends on, from harm (Barrett, Dunbar & Lycett, 2002).

Anderson and Johnson (2003) found that men tend to gravitate more towards occupational roles that emphasize status and hierarchy. Independent of gender, it was found that participants that value male status are less egalitarian than other participants (Anderson & Johnson, 2003). The findings of a study done by Toller et al (2004) also support this finding by Anderson & Johnson (2003). Males that portray higher levels of femininity hold more positive attitudes towards support for feminism, non-traditional gender roles and they are more willing to consider themselves a feminist. In contrast however, males that portray higher levels of masculinity were found to hold more negative attitudes towards support for feminism, non-traditional gender roles and they are less willing to consider themselves a feminist (Toller et al, 2004).

This finding can be attributed to the fact that highly masculine men are hesitant to consider them self a feminist. Masculine men may perceive the label of “feminist” as contradictory to their performance of masculine gender role identity (Burn, Aboud & Moyles, 2000). Another possible reason why men may reject the feminist label is that the connotation of the “feminist” label remains coded as female (Williams & Wittig, 1997).
In South Africa most males are not socialized to share power with women especially if they are raised within a patriarchal culture. The male sense of identity is constructed in opposition to women (Augustine, 2002). A study conducted by Kane (2006) indicated that parents welcome what they perceive as gender nonconformity among their young daughters, while their responses in relation to sons are more complex. Many parents across racial and class backgrounds accept or encourage some tendencies they consider atypical for boys. But this acceptance is balanced by efforts to influence predominant ideals of masculinity, thus reinforcing gender inequity between men and women. This finding is in line with Gender schema theory (Bem, 1981).

Gender schema theory (Bem, 1981) focuses on the role of cognitive organization in addition to socialization. This theory postulates that children learn how their cultures and/or societies define the roles of men and women and then internalize this knowledge as a gender schema, or unchallenged core belief. The gender schema is then used to organize subsequent experiences (Bem, 1993). Children's perceptions of men and women are thus an interaction between their gender schemas and their experiences. If children learn from their culture, parents, and society that women are subordinates to men, they internalize this knowledge as an unchallenged core belief which they will use to organise their experiences of the world. Hence gender inequity between males and females is further encouraged (Bem, 1993).

2.6 Gender Equity and Stereotypes

Stereotypes are "over generalized beliefs about people based on their membership in one of many social categories" (Anselmi and Law 1998: 195). Gender stereotypes
vary according to racial orientation and social class (Landrine, 1999). Just as gender role scripts have an influence on the way people perceive gender equity, so too does stereotypes.

A study done at University of York, England, revealed that male psychology undergraduates were found to still reproduce gender difference and inequalities about women, despite having received lectures and seminars in critical social psychology and feminist perspectives (Gough, 1998 in Peace, 2003). This indicates that gender stereotypes play a role in shaping the way males perceive gender equity.

A study conducted by Heilman and Stopeck, (1985) cited in Calvert et al, (2001) found that men tend to perceive women who succeed in managerial positions as being less physically attractive; this is due to the stereotypical assumption that women are less competent than men are, to handle managerial positions. In another related study, it was also found that men still have less positive attitudes about female managers than women do in the workplace (Laing, 1986). According to Ngatia (2002) men are sexist because they believe that males have always been ‘better’ leaders than women whom they consider to be emotional, insecure, irrational, and focused on family rather than work.

According to Object-relations theorists the way individuals are socialized will affect the way they perceive gender equity between males and females. Nancy Chodorow (1989) emphasizes the role of women as primary caregivers in the development of sex differences. Chodorow (1989) asserts that the early bond between mother and child affects boys and girls differently. Whereas boys must separate from their
mothers to form their identities as males, girls do not have to endure this separation to define their identities as females. Chodorow (1989) explains that the devalued role of women is a product of the painful process men undergoes to separate themselves from the female role.

2.7 Gender Equity and HIV and Violence against Women

Gender violence is closely associated with power and patriarchy, and especially the unequal distribution of power between the sexes. O’Toole and Schiffman (1997: 12) define gender violence as “any interpersonal, organizational or politically orientated violation perpetrated against people due to their gender identity, sexual orientation or location in the hierarchy of male dominated social systems such as the family, military organisations, or the labour force”. Gender inequity, sexual assault against women and HIV infection are all related and prevalent social problems in South Africa. A study done with a community sample of South African men in a Cape Town township found that negative and hostile attitudes towards a woman’s independence and accepting the legitimacy of violence against women were very prevalent. Responses from participants indicated that they hold strong negative perceptions and attitudes about gender equity within their relationships.

If the female in the relationship portrayed behaviour that indicated equality in the relationship, for example, voicing her opinions to her partner, she was physically or sexually assaulted so as to be reminded of her “place” in the relationship (Kalichman et al, 2007). The Commission for Gender Equality (1999) found that physical assault is an accepted practise by both African males and females compared to other race groups in South Africa. Males from rural areas were also found to be less opposed to
wife beating than their counterparts from urban areas (Commission for Gender Equality, 1999).

Culturally constructed gender roles foster power imbalances that can facilitate women's risks of contracting HIV infection and sexual assault (Ajuwon et al., 2002). Women who lack power in both their sexual relationships and relationships with their partner are at a greater risk of contracting HIV, due to them not being able to negotiate condom use. They may even be at a greater risk for violence when they initiate HIV reduction efforts (Kalichman & Simbayi, 2004; Pendry, 1998).

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed literature concerned with gender equity within the South African context. Variables such as: culture, age, socio-economic status, gender roles, stereotypes, violence against women and HIV, were also discussed in relation to gender equity.

In the following chapter (chapter 3) an overview of the methods used to obtain and analyse the data rendered by the present study are discussed.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter an overview of the methods used to obtain and analyze the data rendered by the present study is given.

3.1 Introduction

This study was exploratory in nature, based on the fact that there is still a relative amount of knowledge lacking regarding the perceptions of males about independent women. A few studies addressing topics similar to this study have been conducted (Tu & Chang, 2000; Pratt, 1985 in Calvert et al, 2001; Anderson & Johnson, 2003; Uji et al, 2006). However, none of these studies focused specifically on the way independent women are viewed within the South African context.

To reiterate and for the purposes of clarity, the primary aim of the present study was to explore the perceptions of male university students, in KwaZulu-Natal, about independent South African females.

The secondary aims of the present study was to determine whether the “new South African male generation” of KwaZulu-Natal University and the University of Zululand is receptive to the independence of South African females and to investigate whether the “new male South African generation” hold negative attitudes and perceptions about gender equity.
3.2 Research Design

This study was qualitative and interpretive in nature. Interpretive designs enable the researcher to obtain in-depth, detailed information because participants have more freedom to express themselves. This research design enables more complex aspects of experience to be studied because they are more flexible in nature and impose fewer restrictions on the data (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 1994). Therefore this design was chosen by the researcher.

3.3 Exclusion Criteria

Males that took part in the present study had to be enrolled as a student at either the University of KwaZulu-Natal or the University of Zululand. Furthermore, participants had to be between the age of 18 and 25, as the study was focused more at young adult males. Participants also had to understand and speak English adequately, as the interviews were conducted in English.

3.4 Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select the sample for this study. Convenience sampling takes cases based on their availability (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). The researcher chose to use convenience sampling because it is economical; it does not require large amounts of money or time to use. Prospective participants were approached by the researcher for the study, according to their availability. The final sample consisted of 6 university male students who are between the ages of 18 to 25 years of age. Three of the candidates were chosen from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Westville Campus and 3 were chosen from the University of Zululand Kwadlangezwa Campus. Due to time and financial
constraints, a sample of six was chosen. Participants in the age group 18 to 25 years of age were chosen because males in this age group have grown up in the period were the independence of women has become a priority. The rationale for choosing the participants from the University of Zululand Kwadlangezwa Campus and the University of KwaZulu-Natal Westville campus was because these two universities are in the same province and can be easily reached by the researcher.

3.5 Measuring Instruments

3.5.1 Biographical questionnaire

Participants were asked to complete a short biographical questionnaire. It contained close-ended questions which pertained to the participant’s age, marital status; home language, racial group, nationality, level of study, course being studied and university name (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was language appropriate for all the participants and was easily administered, and the researcher was present at all times to provide clarity if needed.

3.5.2 Interviews

The qualitative data was collected using semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The semi-structured interviews asked the participants about how they perceive the independent South African female. Open-ended questions pertaining to opinions about childcare, breadwinners in a household, gender roles and stereotypes, women and sport, feminism and career choice were asked in the interviews (see Appendix C). Interviews are a more natural form of interacting with people and it gives the researcher an opportunity to get to know people better and to get more detailed, in-
depth information, therefore the researcher chose to do one-on-one interviews (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

3.6 Research Procedure

3.6.1 Stage 1 - permission
The email addresses and contact numbers for each participant was obtained once the research sample was chosen. All the participants were sent an email that fully explained the research study. Guidelines were also given to participants on what to expect for the one-on-one interview sessions in the email (see Appendix D). All participants were phoned and interview appointments were made according to the availability of the participant and the researcher. Ethical clearance to conduct the study on campus was not necessary to obtain, as the research interviews were not conducted on the campus premise. A consent form was given to each participant to fill out, before data collection began. The researcher was present at all times to provide clarity were necessary (see Appendix A).

3.6.2 Stage 2 – data collection
In the second stage of the study, data was collected from participants. The data was mainly of a qualitative nature. Before data collection commenced, the researcher introduced herself and participants were asked general questions about themselves, so as to build rapport. Once clients appeared to be more relaxed and comfortable with the researcher data collection commenced. Each participant was asked to complete a biographical questionnaire (see Appendix B) and thereafter to participate in a one-on-one interview.
Interviews took place from April to May 2010 and were administered in an environment that was quiet and comfortable. The University of Zululand, Kwadlangezwa male students were interviewed at the Empangeni library in Empangeni and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville male students were interviewed at the Stanmore library in Phoenix, Durban. A digital voice recorder was used, with the permission of each participant, to record all the interviews. The duration of each interview was approximately 1 hour.

3.6.3 Stage 3 - data analysis

Data in the present study was collected qualitatively by means of one-on-one semi-structured interviews. A thematic analysis of the data collected was conducted to identify themes. Themes were identified by means of a coding scheme, in the qualitative data. The researcher chose to use the thematic analysis technique to analyse the data because it is flexible and allows for changes throughout the research process. It also provided more in-depth information about the topic being researched (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999; Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

3.7 Ethics

The present study was non-therapeutic in nature; participants were only required to complete two assessment instruments (namely one-on-one interviews and a biographical questionnaire). Due to the fact that both these instruments were administered at the convenience of each participant at a neutral venue, participants were not inconvenienced or disorientated. Furthermore, all participants were briefed on the nature and objectives of the study before its commencement, and only consenting participants took part.
Consent forms were given to all the participants to obtain informed consent. The consent form assured participants of confidentiality, however the boundaries and limits of confidentiality was also explained to each participant. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw their participation at any time and about the possibility of their answers being used when writing up a research dissertation; however, no actual names would be used to ensure confidentiality.

The American Psychiatric Association (1992) stresses that one of the first principles of research involving participants, is that the research should not involve any harmful procedures, either of a physical or psychological nature. The participants in the present study were not placed under any physical or psychological danger. However, the researcher, a clinical psychology master's student, made herself available after each interview in case debriefing was required by the participant.

3.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter the methodology regarding data collection and analysis was outlined and discussed. The chapter started with a brief introduction, which reiterated and clarified the primary aims and purpose of the present study. Thereafter the research design was defined. The participants' demographic characteristics were also provided. This was followed by short description of the measuring instruments in the order of their application, starting with the biographical questionnaire and then a one-on-one interview. The three stages of the research were then discussed (stage 1: permission, stage 2: data collection, and stage 3: data analysis). The chapter concluded with the discussion of ethical considerations relevant to the present study.
Chapter 4 presents and discusses the qualitative results rendered by the administration of the one-on-one semi-structured interviews.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

In Chapter 4, an analysis of the qualitative research study, which attempts to answer the three original research questions: (1) What are the perceptions of male university students, in KwaZulu-Natal, about independent South African females? (2) Is the “new South African male generation” of University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Zululand receptive to the independence of South African females?; and (3) Does the “new male South African generation” hold negative attitudes and perceptions about gender equity?, is presented.

As the research progressed, three themes emerged from the data: (1) Socialization, Gender Roles and, Stereotypes, (2) Cultural Background, and (3) Masculinity.

The discussion begins with a table which contains relevant biographical information about each participant in the present study. Thereafter, explanations for each of the three above mentioned themes are provided, so that readers have a better understanding of what they entail. Finally, an analysis of the data is presented. The presented data may have some minor editing when necessary, and all the interviewees are presented as pseudonyms in the data analysis in order to protect their identity.
4.1 Biographical Information for each Participant

The data on the biographical information for each participant is as follows (Table 1):

Six male university students between the ages of 19 and 25 participated in the research study. Of the six male students, two were in a relationship and four were single. The home language of four of the participants was English, one was IsiZulu and one was Sepedi. Three of the participants were Indian, two were Black and one was White. Three of the participants attended University of KwaZulu-Natal and three attended University of Zululand. Three of the participants were in their second year of study, 2 were doing fourth year and one was doing Honours.

Table 1: Biographical Information for each Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Home Language</th>
<th>Population Group</th>
<th>Level of Study</th>
<th>Course being Studied</th>
<th>University Attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Honours</td>
<td>BSc Honours Biokinetics</td>
<td>University of Zululand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>BCom Accounting</td>
<td>University of KwaZulu-Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>BA Social Work</td>
<td>University of Zululand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>BSc Engineering</td>
<td>University of KwaZulu-Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Second Year</td>
<td>BCom Accounting</td>
<td>University of KwaZulu-Natal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Sepedi</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Fourth Year</td>
<td>BSc Animal Science</td>
<td>University of Zululand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 About the Three Themes

The three themes that emerged from the data analysis were: (1) Socialization, Gender Roles and, Stereotypes; (2) Cultural Background; and (3) Masculinity.
Each theme is further divided into sub-headings to give the reader more clarity on the current study’s findings. In this section each theme is explained, followed by results, that are appropriate to that theme

4.2.1 Theme 1: Socialization, Gender Roles and Stereotypes

This theme highlights the impact that the process of socialization has on each participant’s perception of independent South African females. The gender roles and stereotypes that each of the participants used to make sense of their world, was mainly dependent upon how they have been socialized through their family systems. Gender roles refer to the pattern of masculine or feminine behaviour of an individual that is defined by a particular culture and that is largely determined by a child's upbringing (Gender Roles, n.d.).

And stereotypes are a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group (Stereotypes, n.d.). The gender roles and stereotypes that an individual acquires to make sense of the world around him/her would largely depend on the way they have been socialized. Socialization is the process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998).

4.2.1.1 Traditional Gender Labels

Even though it has been fourteen years since South African females have gained constitutional gender equity rights to men, it was found that most of the participants’ still use traditional gender labels to describe females. Words such as “sensitive”, “passive”, “timid”, “cautious”, “soft”, “kind”, “compassionate”, “weak”, “fragile”,...
“caring”, and “tender” were used by the participants, when conveying their perceptions of independent South African females. It was also found that the participants believed that women should be “excluded” from certain activities due to portraying the above mentioned traits. They felt that these traits make women more suitable for more traditional gender roles than the masculine roles that independent women are now adopting.

Interviewer: “Do you think women should be allowed to drive? Give a reason/s for your answers.”
Participant A: “Ya, because they are just as capable as the other person to drive… I think I’m one of those okes who say women are worse drivers and I do believe it as sad as that sounds. The reason why I do say that women are maybe worse drivers, I think when you drive, you have to, you need to be aggressive, you can’t be too timid on the road, you can’t be too cautious. I think that causes crashes and I think men are a bit hot headed and are a bit more aggressive than women that’s why they more alert on the road.”

Interviewer: “In your opinion should all girl schools offer subjects such as Woodwork, Metalwork, Motor Mechanics, and Technical drawing? Give a reason/s for your answer.”
Participant C: “I wouldn’t allow my wife to do such work...Working as my...as a mechanic and stuff...every time when she comes home, her hands is very dirty, you know, that, you know...You know...umm...we guys, we were made in a way that we are hard, we are like strong, we are like...in a way...even in our appearance you can see, we not like soft as women. That why now, we enjoy...like...going out with someone different...you know...not of your kind, so to say, you know. Ya because they have this softness, kindness, you know in a women where...now only when...you only find that now she’s carrying all those heavy stuff and she’s starting to change, you know, ya, it won’t even be fun.”

Interviewer: “Would you be intimidated by a female boss? Give a reason/s for your answer.”
Participant D: “I wouldn’t feel as intimidated by a female boss. Well then a female is obviously generally speaking, they a lot more compassionate and kinder than men...in general...Personally it’s like females should act lady...being courteous and kind”

Interviewer: “Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer.”
Participant E: “…females are like, you know, err, weak and they like, you do get some strong ones, I’m saying we know that women are like, you know, weak and like fragile and stuff and now you like, you seeing them playing rugby now”

Interviewer: “Tasks such as cooking, cleaning and care giving should be the job of males, females or both? Give a reason/s for your answer”

Participant F: “I think it should be for women because women are the people who care and tender and love kids and wouldn’t want to see anything harmful to happen to kids you know.”

4.2.1.2 Physical Strength

Most of the participants also believed that females are generally physically weaker than males and that this trait justifies why females, even now after gaining constitutional gender equity, should be excluded from doing certain activities. Participants still held the belief that females should not attempt any careers or sports that require physical strength. These careers and sports are namely: Mining, Road Works, Construction, Mechanics, Engineering, Rugby and Cricket.

Interviewer: “What type/s of careers/jobs in your opinion is appropriate for women to occupy? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant A: “I don’t see women in jobs that require strength… Physically I don’t think women will cope there. Just what I’ve seen, it is very tough work that and I think that line of work men need to do just because physically and physiologically they able to do that. I just can’t picture women as engineers hey. The way I picture engineers are as someone on the ground with a hard work getting dirty, that’s just sort of the misconception I guess I got but I guess women can be a chemical engineer, I can see them as a chemical engineer working in that type of environment. I don’t really see them as electrical engineer…I just see that as a masculine sort of job with your pants half down showing crack”

Participant D: “I suppose it doesn’t make a difference because everyone is doing anything, everywhere so suppose all of them are open but like labor intensive careers… I don’t…I haven’t seen…Mining, road work…I haven’t seen females working on the road.”
Interviewer: “Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant E: “…females are like, you know, err, weak and they like, you do get some strong ones, I’m saying we know that women are like, you know, weak and like fragile and stuff and now you like, you seeing them playing rugby now …with regards to physical activities, it should not be for them. Err; firstly, males are generally stronger than a female. They err, are generally more aggressive.”

Participant F: “Ah, I would say, generally speaking… no, because those sports are very physical. They require a certain body mass and certain, certain, strength; that women, most of them, do not have. And generally we know that women are softer than men. Women are very soft. Can you imagine a person who is smiling and who’s soft, actually playing rugby?”

Interviewer: “Would you take your car to a female mechanic to get fixed? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant F: “No ways, I just don’t trust them. I just don’t trust her. She would probably not even fix, the bolt well fit in my engine. I would probably have an engine knockout. It depends on physical fitness; you can understand the theory but do not perform the practical. Do you know how tight a screw should be in an engine? Where is the woman going to get that strength? When she can’t even open a bolt.”

4.2.1.3 Traditional Gender Roles

Most of the participants were found to be generally more open minded, than “the older South African male generation” about sharing household chores between the male and female in the household. However, findings also suggested that they all also still expected the female in the household to be responsible for chores that have previously been considered as a traditional female task. The participants all believed that the cooking and care giving for the family should be done by the female and not the male in the household. They also expected the female to do the household chores more frequently than the male in the household.
Interviewer: “Tasks such as cooking, cleaning and care giving should be the job of males, females or both? Give a reason/s for your answer”

Participant A: “Nowadays if I had a family, I would say both. For cleaning the house, I think that should be even, for cooking, most probably the wife will do more of the cooking, I don’t think, I won’t…Because, like I said, where the man is seen as the driver of the car or the breadwinner, I also sort of see it as, the lady sort of does the cooking”

Participant D: “Both. Old traditions made it just the female, but nowadays with stay at home dads and women in high positions, they working late so now somebody has to be cooking, cleaning and…then if the man has to do it…then he has to…but not every day…I’d get irritated.”

Participant E: “…they both now days speaking all right, they both working, they both breadwinners, they both err, got err, a working life; now you work, like I’m working, my partner’s working, now I feel that I come home she should, she should, she shouldn’t do everything herself because she also has her private, I mean she also has her working life, so I feel that I should also be able to err, help her in certain things like cooking and stuff, okay, that there I feel that a female should do right”

Participant F: “It’s what you know from being brought up. It’s what you believe is right from wrong…cooking and washing dishes, men don’t want to do that but women don’t have a problem doing that.”

Interviewer: “After marriage who should take on whose surname? Give a reason/s for your answer”

Participant C: “…For a woman, ya it is. (Laughter) Umm…for a woman, I mean, the reason for her, I mean, to join my family, so to say…umm…is for her to help me, I mean, keep…umm…the rock hold on my family because I can’t do it, I mean, alone as a man. Remember I cannot…uhh…I mean bare children, you know, in a way, I cannot get pregnant. So for her…for me to have, I mean, a family I need a woman, ya.”

4.2.1.4 Suitable professions for females

It was also found that most of the participants felt that females are more suitable to occupy “caring, nurturing professions” because they possess traits such as patience, sensitivity, emotion, persuasion, care and love. The professions that the participants
thought were suitable for a woman to occupy are namely: Teacher, Nurse, Psychologist, Social Worker, Doctor, and Librarian.

*Interviewer: “What type/s of careers/jobs in your opinion are appropriate for women to occupy? Give a reason/s for your answer.”*

*Participant A: “I think woman have more patience therefore I think teaching is good for women… Nurses…I think women have more of a caring nature than men so they should make better nurses than men. You need to have a caring nature as a nurse and I definitely think women are better…:*

*Participant C: “Psychology, social work……nurses...”*

*Participant D: “Women are more sensitivity and emotional. They, ya, they would be more suited for things like being doctors…because, they can connect more with the client or the patient or whatever in an emotional way than a man...”*

*Participant E: “I’ll say err, like a Nurse… Err, because err, because maybe we know that females are err, are more like you know err, loving or like we know that females are more loving towards err, towards like people and towards children...*

*Participant F: “Psychology. Women are very persuasive. Social work. Women are very caring, loving and want to see their people’s life improving. Librarians, you know, women are people that who to read novels when they growing up. Women, they into finding and seeking information. What’s new? What’s not? You would have guiding people into a better life. In general I would say, jobs that are good for women….is a women that…its (repeated) positions that doesn’t require any hard decision making or a decision that would really impact or hinder other people from progressing or jeopardizing other peoples life. Chemical engineering, she qualifies. Just mixing of chemicals. Bit can you imagine mechanical engineering? Where she has to climb on a bridge and use a hammer? She not physically built for that. She would probably get sicker earlier than men would, you know.”*

4.2.1.5 Socialization within the family context

Findings suggest that the way participants perceive gender equity is largely due to the way they have been socialized within the family context. They seemed to have developed their perceptions from watching the gender roles between their parents
and other family members. The degree to which they were liberal in their thinking about gender equity, was largely dependent on how open minded their families were.

Interviewer: “Okay let’s put this more in context. You can drive, your wife can drive and she has her own car, you have your own car and during the week she drives to work or, takes the kids to school and you obviously go with your car to work. Now it's Saturday and you all decide to go out as a family. She can drive, you can drive. Who drives?”

Participant A: “I’ll drive…because I think it’s more of a culture thing. Maybe not a culture thing it’s just the way I’ve been brought up it’s the way that everyone in my family does it, that’s the way it’s done and its always thought of as the male drives the family around, sort of, that’s what the dad does you know. Father does that... it’s just accepted that the wife is going to cook the supper so I feel that it’s also accepted that the husband is going to drive the car.”

Participant F: “Since all charity begins at home and education is very good at a young age or rather what you see from practical means and, uh, your surroundings or rather something that is very casual to you; I grew up knowing that dad drives and moms on the left seat. It’s like paying lobola.”

Interviewer: “Tasks such as cooking, cleaning and care giving should be the job of males, females or both? Give a reason/s for your answer”

Participant C: “Both…Umm...uhh...maybe it’s what I (repeated), it’s what I believe on. That...umm...if you are a man, gone are those days where by a man was going to read the newspaper, you know, shower and go to sleep, or enjoy supper and go to sleep. Now it’s high time since now she’s working also and I’m working that now we share duties. I normally used to see when my dad did...uhh...for my mother. It’s more fun. Even worse my dad, you know, grew up in the olden days but, you know, adopting the environment that we now living in. Ya its good”.

Interviewer: “Is it ok for a woman to earn as much or more money than her husband/boyfriend does? Explain your answer”

Participant D: “You can’t help the situation can you.”

Interviewer:” If you could?”

Participant D: “How would you? What’s the situation? Tell her no don’t take the promotion? That would make…no sense…I see this with my mother and my father, as long as the money is coming in.”
4.2.2 Theme 2: Cultural background

This theme highlights how each participant’s cultural background has influenced their perceptions about independent South African women. Culture plays a big role in shaping the way an individual perceives the world around them. Each culture comprises of its own unique patterns of beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, and ways of thinking, feeling, moving, and using objects. Individuals from different cultures will therefore perceive similar situations differently (Billington, Hockey & Strawbridge, 1998). The results indicate that all of the participants were greatly influenced by their cultural backgrounds. The degree to which they embraced gender equity between males and females was determined upon how strongly they held their traditional cultural teachings. From a cultural perspective, it was found that most of the participants held less egalitarian attitudes about: (i) The female being the breadwinner in the household and (ii) The female expressing her opinions in the relationship.

*Interviewer: “Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer.”*

*Participant A: “The husband…I feel that also just culturally, the way I am brought up with family and everything, I just believe the husband should be the main breadwinner though I’m not saying that the wife, I still believe that the wife has just as much right and is just as important that she goes and pursues her career as a high level even if its higher than me, even if she earns more money than me, then she does but I think as a father figure and as someone to lead a family. It’s a culture thing,”*

*Participant F: “The male should be. Traditional or African cultures would say the man is the head of the house, a woman is the body so the man doesn’t need the woman saying anything you know.”*

*Interviewer: “Who should propose to whom in the relationship? Give a reason/s for your answer”*
Participant A: “I think the male should propose. Because of again my culture and the way I have been brought up but I don’t see anything wrong with a lady proposing if she decides she wants to propose, she can propose. However, if my wife to be proposed to me I’ll be caught in a web.”

Participant D: “I want to do it. Why must you take over from me? I just think that marriages are…It’s a male thing. There are…there are things that change but there are things that shouldn’t change”.

Participant E: “I’ll say things should go back to the old traditional way, as in the male… I feel that err, like you know if I say that there’s some things that a guy will do and there’s some things that a female must do, like err, like I said, like take for example now, the lady must like cook the food, because like you know, they know like to cook and stuff and, but then now, to propose now I’ll say, it’s a guy’s thing because err, it’s, it was always that way for all I know, for as long as I know; it was always that way”

Interviewer: “After marriage who should take on whose surname? Give a reason/s for your answer”

Participant C: “…taking your surname...oooh...absolutely no. you know, we may...we believe that whenever I get married to a woman, I’m like... ummm... uhh...keeping...umm...the history of my family, you know, alive. Even when I’m gone and even my children would do the same thing; it’s not right in a way for a man”

Participant D: “That’s a cultural perspective now. In our culture it’s the female that takes the males surname. I’d follow my culture. I just think it’s culturally...it’s what happens culturally and that’s important. It’s not the fact that she’s taking the surname; it’s the cultural thing behind it. Like I said before, something’s should change and some shouldn’t.”

Participant E:”She should take mine. It’s like in my family, it’s a tradition where the females must take the males’ surname and as I said that it’s, in the family, the male is the head and she should respect that and to like you know be under him err, but err, take his name; because I think that she, the name of the males should be carried down to generation and generation as it’s always been.”

Participant F: “No way. She has to have my surname, I’m the man. Besides being a sexist, no I’m not that. I’m just speaking of what I was taught and what I believe is right and I wouldn’t change that because of what the world is now...see that problem arises there, women doing it for themselves. What happened to loyalty? What happened to morals? What happened to respect of your ancestors? What happened to what you were taught? What you have learnt? Your history? Your culture?”
4.2.3 Masculinity

This theme focuses on the effects of masculinity on the way the participants perceived independent South African women. Masculinity is a gendered phenomenon that refers to how a man comes to be defined. Having qualities traditionally ascribed to men, as strength and boldness makes a man masculine (Masculinity, n.d).

4.2.3.1 Egalitarian attitudes in relation to the employment domain

It was found that majority of the participants were more open to their female partners working outside the home. However, they still believed that she must still “know her place” as the woman in the social domain.

Interviewer: “Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant A: “I just believe the husband should be the main breadwinner though I’m not saying that the wife, I still believe that the wife has just as much right and is just as important that she goes and pursues her career as a high level even if its higher than me, even if she earns more money than me, then she does but I think as a father figure and as someone to lead a family. It is a culture thing,”

Interviewer: “Is it ok for a woman to earn as much or more money than her husband/boyfriend does? Explain your answer”

Participant C: “Yes it is okay but, there’s a big “but” there. You see the problem that....umm...you find that maybe like....umm...sixty to fifty...sixty to seventy percent of women or ,should I say, in South Africa are single or divorced. It is because of, I mean, those questions and terms of status where you find that a woman is earning, I mean, more than a husband now she’s like more superior than men, you know, now she starting to order him around, telling him stuff. As long as if she won't change her attitudes towards her husband, you know, it is fine”

Participant F: “Ya I would say it’s not okay but it depends on the person’s character and personality. There are people who earn high money but still know their position and they still know who they respect and how they
should respect and how they should treat that particular person because they understand the purpose and the need of being a woman.”

Participant E: “If she is more qualified than me, if she has err, better skills than me, then it will be okay; ‘though there will be like little bit err, like things in my mind where I’ll feel like it’s not right because I supposed to be like you know, like I said that I believe that the males are like head

4.2.3.2 Support for females working in outside the home due to economic necessity

Findings show that at least half of the participants in the study supported the idea of a female working outside the home. However, this support was largely due to economic necessity rather than choice.

Interviewer: “Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer”
Participant C: “Both…Umm...well looking at the economy of the country, I mean, since we are talking about the nowadays neh, well looking at the economy of the country and things are hard now…umm…males and females, I believe that...umm...we all should be breadwinners.”

Participant D: “It should be both spouses. It just…it makes a lot more sense to have more money in the family and both spouses working in this day and age”

Participant E: “I’ll say both…I wouldn’t want my wife or girlfriend to be at home or be a housewife. I feel, no, they need to be independent err, and stand up on their own two feet, especially in this day and age where things are so expensive”

4.2.3.3 Negative attitudes towards being economically dependent on a female

Majority of the participants were found to hold negative attitudes about being financially dependent on a female. The idea of the women working outside the house caused “conflict” within the men, because they were not comfortable with being economically dependent on a woman. They also felt that their identity’s as men
would be threatened if they chose to take over private roles identified as a female’s responsibility.

Interviewer: “What is your opinion on "stay at home dads" and working mums?”

Participant A: “No, I, I won’t, I don’t see myself staying at home, I don’t think I’d function. I need to be, I like to be assertive and the one that takes charge. I definitely want to be the, to use the old term, those pretty rough morals, I want to be like the “man” of the house.”

Participant C: “Uhhhhh. I disagree, I totally disagree…I think it’s boring …umm... and for a man...no...We were made in a way that...umm...we should go out there and work, it’s how we were made. But just imagine the old man sitting at home? No. No, no, no. I mean, it’s like, it’s like in a way you are losing a value of being a man”.

Participant F: “Again what started from before the 21st century, men are known to work “piece jobs”, cold, physical, hard labour jobs. Working in the mines, doing welding, picking up bricks for other people, building, digging up holes like for pipes, collecting bottles in heavy loads and sell them you know. So I never saw a man sit at home while the woman is working, and do nothing. It comes with being a man saying that I have to stand up and do something. I have to contribute to my children, I have to earn some money to buy something for them, and it only hits you as a dad. That’s why they say dad is the head of the house, you get my point”.

Interviewer: “Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant A: “I think it goes also to that father figurehead that if you have children, they can see “ my dad worked for the family and brought it in for the family, I think it creates a structured family where as if your dad just sits back and does cooking, and doesn’t drive the car and doesn’t bring in the bread or the money and the mother just does it, you going to get a weak society of men.”

Participant F: “The male should be. Women being bread-winners, they tend to underestimate their partners or their spouse because they think that they are not contributing enough…A woman that has more money than the man wouldn’t actually listen to what the man says wouldn’t actually have to ask anything of what the man has; and if she’s not asking for anything, at the end of the day she doesn’t, she doesn’t see the importance to be at this part, with this particular person.”
Interviewer: “Is it ok for a woman to earn as much or more money than her husband/boyfriend does? Explain your answer”

Participant E: “If she is more qualified than me, if she has err, better skills than me, then it will be okay; ‘though there will be like little bit err, like things in my mind where I’ll feel like it’s not right because I supposed to be like you know, like I said that I believe that the males are like head. Now, if, I would feel like err, if for example now she is earning more than me, I will feel in my mind that err, it’s like bad, it’s like wrong. Although it is the right thing because she is more high skilled than me, like she deserves getting more because of her skills, but I’ll say that “Hey I’m the man, I’m supposed to be like you know, the head. I’m supposed to like lead the family by, in like every aspect you know, with regards to providing for them, with regards to my income and everything”

4.2.3.4 South African independent females are “trying to hard”

Findings suggested that majority of the participants had a negative attitude towards independent South African women. One of the reasons that were given by the participants for this negative attitude was that independent women try too hard to “beat men” and be better than men. They also felt that independent women tend to “overdo” it when it comes to gender equity. Women that portray traditional masculine traits such as assertiveness, forcefulness and aggressiveness were also seen in a negative light by the participants. They felt that these women were not very appealing.

Interviewer: “Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer”

Participant A: “Yes...women have become more independent, they’ll almost want to be able to show that they can’t be beaten and I think more women would want to do rugby, cricket and stuff because they can show that “look we can also do that and we don’t have to rely on you.”

Interviewer: “What is your opinion about women who are assertive, career driven and independent?”

Participant A: “Yes it is good. I think the world needs them but it seems like they are, note that when I say “they” I’m generalizing, there are definitely women that may be too reckless or aggressive too driven and not really caring or taking into consideration others aspects so those assertive, career
driven women are the modern world are almost wanting to prove a point too much I think”...

Participant C: “I will normally say to my sisters whenever they said they want to do medicine and all this stuff, “You go girl”, but one thing I discovered is that...umm...you can have everything, EVERYTHING, but without a husband or without a wife, there will always be an aspect that is missing in your life so for me to them. I will be worried for them because it is hard to find a husband if the woman is independent”.

Participant D: “I like the way those women are all for umm women empowerment and what not...but I also think that they over perform...overdoing the role. Putting men down... it’s not attractive or appealing… To me personally it’s not because then that’s coming across as too dominant or too… forceful in her ways and not being…and not...giving way or letting others have their input, or letting others have their say.”

Participant E: “they tend to have like an air about themselves. Err... there are a few, okay maybe even less than a few that, that are independent and successful, but down-to-earth as you can never get"

Interviewer:”Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant E: “Err, yeah, because uhm, err, they should take part in sport… they shouldn’t take part at like, at like they shouldn’t like pursue it or anything. Don’t go on to like, you know, err, on to try and join a squad or anything...to me that’s, err, I’ll say, that’s a guy’s faculty or activity. Maybe they can play it but I mean, it won’t like, that gender won’t suit that field, or that activity of sport. okay fair enough, you wanna be err, different and you wanna be err, like uhm modern and stuff, you wanna be like men, but I mean don’t try and be everything like a male. There’s certain things that you gotta know err, like, you know, where to stop and stuff.”

4.2.3.5 Independent females threaten the “manhood” of males

It was found that most of the participants were generally threatened by the independence of South African females because it challenged the patriarchal ideology that males are more superior to females. They all felt that it was totally unacceptable for a male to take instructions from a female or be controlled by a woman.
Interviewer: “Would you be intimidated by a female boss? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant C: “Uhh...Ya...Umm... you know sometimes...Uh. If you are a man sometimes it’s very hard to be shouted at, especially by a female or to be ordered around by a female. You find that she is now pushing it too far, you know, and worst part is...it’s a female, you know.”

Participant E: “Err... Maybe first I might like have, err, like a bad mind in me like, as in err, she’s err, a female... I wouldn’t like that because I feel like err, you know like I always want to be like on top, so... I would be intimidated by her because I know that there are uhm, a lot of highly-skilled females who are more competent than males, so I would be intimidated by them because err, they may, they may have err, better uhm, traits or better err, skills than me, which will intimidate me to be like you know, afraid of them.”

Participant F: “I would be. Again I would say this that a man is the head of the house, women is the body. I cannot control my wife and rule her and yet be controlled by another lady from work telling me what to do, what I shouldn’t do, when I should stand up, when should I sit, when I should breathe while I’m telling my women that. I be very much intimidate that who does she think she is to control a man like me which I think every man has that, I cannot be controlled by a lady.”

Interviewer: “What is your opinion about women who are assertive, career driven and independent?”

Participant A: “Stepping on people’s toes and not worrying about it. I’ve noticed that with a few of them, they too aggressive sort of thing, it gets a bit, ya, it’s annoying. They want to over show their point and then what I find annoying is they don’t want, they don’t really want help of men. And I want to help”

Interviewer: “In your opinion, do women have the ability to run a country (be President) or a multi-million rand company (be CEO)? Give a reason/s for your answer.”

Participant D: “…they may not have as much support because a lot of men would not like bow down to a female leader. It’s being masculine I suppose and dominant”

4.3 Outlier Responses

An outlier is a response that one or few of the respondents in a research study state (Sproull, 2004). The results of the study indicated that most of the responses
given by Participant B can be considered as outliers. The responses of Participant B indicated that he supports the independence that South African females have gained over the last decade. He held more egalitarian perceptions than the other participants about the abilities of females and their social roles in society.

Participant B believed that females are extremely capable of making their own decisions and being successful without the help of a male. He also did not agree with ascribing tasks such as cooking and care giving only to the female of the household, rather it should be an equally shared effort between the male and female.

*Interviewer:* Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer.

*Participant B:* if there is a big-enough need for it and if more of the females are generally encouraged to do it or are, they actually willing to be able to be part of a rugby team, for example, then they should be given that privilege because I mean uhm, why settle for so-called uhm, denominating sports into male and female categories…

*Interviewer:* Do you think women should be allowed to drive? Give a reason/s for your answers.

*Participant B:* Well, generally, yes, because uhm, especially in today’s times of uhm, generally high crime rates, health uncertainty, that sort of thing: women should definitely drive. In the sense that if the male is not around, at the time, at least there would be somebody uhm, in the position to take care of those situations, should like a family member or close relative, have an incident…

*Interviewer:* Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer

*Participant B:* Well, considering the blow to the male ego, I would say, it would be a ‘little bit of a blow, but at the same time, uhm, I would definitely encourage her to pursue the position as well, because if you had to get married to somebody, you’ll have to have that understanding, it’s somebody’s life that hangs in the balance as well, it’s not just your choices that influence her, that she also has a life of her own and if she’s in a position
that earns more and generally uhm, prospers more over a period of time, then I'll be supporting of it.

Interviewer: Tasks such as cooking, cleaning and care giving should be the job of males, females or both? Give a reason/s for your answer

Participant B: I am domesticated, so I wouldn't mind doing it, or I don't mind doing it at all, and at the same time, if it's in a relationship, well, my personal belief is that uhm, a relationship should be based on a 50/50 perspective, I mean uhm, there will be times when obviously, one party can only come 20% and the other will have to fort up the 80%, but at the same time, uhm, it wouldn't be uhm, an ascribed point that like you know uhm, when I get married or in a relationship of that nature, I would, tell my wife, you know what, you're gonna do the cooking, I'll lean on the table, and that sort of thing, that's just uhm, apart from considering her feelings, that would just be, I would just consider it wrong because if I can cook and I can help out around the house, I would definitely do so.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on "stay at home dads" and working mums?

Participant B: it all depends on uhm, my wife's position, uhm, the nature of how many kids we have, because that would be another contributing factor. If I was a stay-at-home dad, I would graciously accept it, provided that uhm, the wife fulfils her role as well… Uhm, there's obviously a lot to consider in staying at home, as a stay-at-home dad, to take care of kids, to take care of uhm, uhm, household duties, but uhm, if it had to come down to a choice where if, for example, I was retrenched, and uhm, my wife actually offered me like, the chance to just stay at home and take care of the children at that time, if there are any, I'll definitely consider it because in today's time, especially with dual-career families, where both parties are working, there's very little time for families to actually establish a bond..

Interviewer: Is it ok for a woman to earn as much or more money than her husband/boyfriend does? Explain your answer

Participant B: Well, definitely, because uhm, for example, if the boyfriend is not motivated to go through university or acquire a degree where he would actually earn a very good salary, and she is, then by all means, she should be entitled to a higher salary, but at the same time, uhm, if the roles were reversed, then she should be entitled to a lower one. It all boils down to personal characteristics of both parties involved… because I know, currently, females that are earning more than I am at the moment, so that is not a problem.

Interviewer: In your opinion, do women have the ability to run a country (be President) or a multi-million rand company (be CEO)? Give a reason/s for your answer.
Participant B: There shouldn’t be that sort of uhm, division between the two, I mean it’ll all boil down to individual characteristics, individual uhm, factors that, that prescribe to the person themselves. : I...to be honest, I actually would, pending on the type of female that it is, ‘cos obviously if it’s a president, if it’s a presidential position, then it needs to be filled by somebody who’s capable of filling the shoes of a president; and if a woman can definitely do that, then uhm, and she’s a worthy candidate it seems like she’s driven to make a change to the country, then by all means, why couldn’t we give her a fair chance.

However, with that being said, the results also suggest that Participant B’s perceptions are also to some extent influenced by cultural teachings. Participant B’s perceptions were not so liberal when viewing gender equity solely from a cultural perspective. It was also found that he still reproduced some stereotypical ideas such as: “females tend to be a little more passive”; “Netball is generally a female sport”, and “females have highly subjective and emotional natures as opposed to men” when conveying his perceptions about independent South African females.

Interviewer: In your opinion, do women have the ability to run a country (be President) or a multi-million rand company (be CEO)? Give a reason/s for your answer.

Participant B: Women are uhm, even given their highly subjective natures and highly emotional natures should be given a fair chance.

Interviewer: Do you think women should be allowed to drive? Give a reason/s for your answers.

Participant B: …generally males are more aggressive on the roads, females are, tend to be a ‘little more passive

Interviewer: Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer.

Participant B: …well obviously with the exceptions of things like Netball and that, which are generally female sports…if you look at the history of Netball, it, everything sparks towards being, it being a fully-fledged, female sport. I mean, if you look at, in terms of the outfits, the uhm, the style of playing the sport, the uhm, the attributes needed, you could, one could argue it’s fairly similar to basketball, but basketball is more aggressive, more assertive
Interviewer: Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer

Participant B: I wouldn't, judging from religious background, uhm, me being Muslim, we believe that uhm, the males are technically uhm, by definition, the breadwinners in the family, in the sense that he has to provide for the female, but if you look at females and the, the amount of positions that they are taking up today, if they, if they earn more, then by all means, they should be entitled to do so. It would, as I said, be a 'little bit of a blow to my ego, but at the same time, I'd be supportive of it.

4.4 Summary of Main Findings

Participants were found to still reproduce “traditional gender labels” to describe females when conveying their perceptions of independent women. Most of them have adopted stereotypes such as: (i) Females are generally physically weaker than males (ii) Chores such as cooking and care giving in the household should be done more frequently by the female than the male (iii) Females are more suitable than males are, to occupy professions that are considered as “caring, nurturing professions”.

These stereotypical viewpoints were used by most of the participants to justify why they believed that females should be exempt from pursuing certain careers and sports. Nurturing careers and tasks such as cooking and care giving were viewed as being more female “friendly”, because females were regarded by most of the participants as being more warm and gentle than men.

Results also indicated that the manner in which participants were socialized by their family systems and cultural backgrounds, determined how liberal they were in their thinking about gender equity. The more open minded the family was about gender equity, the more egalitarian the perceptions of the participant was. Most of the
participants held less egalitarian perceptions about 21st century independent South African women because they felt that “these women” do not conform to cultural teachings.

The results also indicated that majority of the participants held egalitarian attitudes towards their female partners working outside the home. However, they still believed that she must still “know her place” as the woman in the household and allow the man to still be the “head” in the household. The participants were found to hold negative attitudes about being financially dependent on a female. They also felt that independent South African females “try to hard” to “beat” men and be better than them.

Most of the participants perceived independent women to be generally very unappealing, because they portrayed traditional masculine traits such as, assertiveness, forcefulness and aggressiveness. They also felt that their identity’s as men would be threatened if they chose to take over private roles identified as a female’s responsibility, instead of being the “head” and breadwinner of the household.

Findings also suggested that atleast half of the participants supported the idea of a female working outside the home due to it positively influencing the income being brought into the household.

Despite participants generally holding less egalitarian attitudes about gender equity, it was found that they were more receptive to gender equity than the “older” South
African male generation. Participating in household chores and encouraging their female partners to pursue their career goals, highlighted their receptiveness to gender equity.

The results indicated that most of the responses given by Participant B could be considered as outliers. Even though he generally held more egalitarian perceptions than the other participants about the independence of South African females, he still reproduced a few gender stereotypes when conveying his perceptions about independent South African females. Participant B’s perceptions were also not so liberal when he viewed gender equity solely from a cultural perspective.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This Chapter presented an analysis of the qualitative research study. A table which contained relevant biographical information about each participant was presented and thereafter explanations for each of the three themes: (1) Socialization, Gender Roles and, Stereotypes; (2) Cultural Background, and (3) Masculinity, was provided. Finally, an analysis of the data was presented.

The following chapter (chapter 5) discusses the main findings of the present study. The limitations of the present study are provided and recommendations for future research suggested. The chapter concludes by outlining the contributions made by the present study.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The motivation for the present study stemmed from the need to gain greater insight into the perceptions of male university students about independent South African females. This was done by addressing three aims:

- **Primary aim:** To explore the perceptions of male university students, in KwaZulu-Natal, about independent South African females.

- **Secondary aims:** To determine whether the “new South African male generation” of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Zululand is receptive to the independence of South African females.

- To investigate whether the “new male South African generation” hold negative attitudes and perceptions about gender equity.

On these grounds, this chapter discusses the main findings of the present study. The limitations of the present study are provided and recommendations for future research suggested. The chapter concludes by outlining the contributions made by the present study.

### 5.1 Findings and Interpretations

In this section, the main findings for the present study are discussed. The discussion is dividing into three sections. Each section explains the findings in relation to the
three themes mentioned in Chapter 4: (1) Socialization, Gender Roles and, Stereotypes, (2) Cultural Background, and (3) Masculinity.

5.1.1 Theme 1: Socialization, Gender Roles and, Stereotypes

Even though it has been over a decade since constitutional gender equity was awarded to South African females most of the participants were found to still reproduce “traditional gender labels” to describe females when conveying their perceptions of independent women. Words such as “sensitive”, “passive”, “timid”, “cautious”, “soft”, “kind”, “compassionate”, “weak”, “fragile”, “caring”, and “tender” were used quite frequently throughout the interview process to describe women.

Results of the study also indicated that most of the participants have several gender stereotypes to justify their less egalitarian views on gender equity.

These gender stereotypes are:

(i) Females are generally physically weaker than males.

(ii) Chores such as cooking and care giving in the household should be done more frequently by the female than the male.

(iii) Females are more suitable than males are, to occupy professions that are considered as “caring, nurturing professions”.

This finding is supported by Glick & Fiske (2001) as cited in Anderson & Johnson (2003), and Rubin et al (1998). They found, that even after women have gained their independence and have moved away from traditional gender roles, men still tended to depend on them to perform roles that require expressive traits such as warmth and gentleness, not roles that encourage assertiveness, aggressiveness, and
forcefulness (Glick & Fiske, 2001 in Anderson and Johnson, 2003; Rubin, Bukowski & Parker, 1998).

The participants used the above mentioned stereotypical views to justify why they believed that females should not pursue or pursue certain careers and sports. Careers in fields such as Mining, Road Works, Construction, Mechanics and Engineering were all considered to be unsuitable for a female to pursue due to her being physically weaker than a male. Sports such as Rugby and Cricket were also discouraged for the same reason.

Careers in the fields of Teaching, Nursing, Psychology, Social Work, Medicine, and Librarianship, were all viewed as being more suitable for females to occupy, because they were viewed as being more patient, caring, sensitive, emotional, loving, and persuasive than men are. Household chores such as cooking and care giving were also considered as the female’s responsibility by most of the participants for the same reason.

It was also found that most of the participants developed their perceptions about gender equity from watching the gender roles between their parents and other family members. The degree to which they were liberal in there thinking about gender equity, was largely dependent on how open minded their families were. The more open minded the family was about gender equity, the more egalitarian the perceptions of the participants was. This finding is in line with Gender schema theory (Bem, 1981), which focuses on the role of cognitive organization in addition to socialization. This theory postulates that children learn how their cultures and/or
societies define the roles of men and women and then internalize this knowledge as a gender schema, or unchallenged core belief. The gender schema is then used to organize subsequent experiences that the child encounters in the world around him/her (Bem, 1993).

5.1.2 Theme 2: Cultural Background

The results indicate that all of the participants are greatly influenced by their cultural backgrounds. The degree to which they embrace gender equity between males and females was largely determined upon how strong they hold their traditional cultural teachings. Most of the participants held less egalitarian perceptions about independent South African women because they felt that “these women” do not conform to cultural teachings, which states that the male is “powerful” and “dominant”, while the female is “passive” and “submissive” in the relationship.

They all held less egalitarian attitudes about:
(i) The female being the only breadwinner in the household
(ii) The female expressing her opinions in the relationship

Augustine (2002) supports this finding. In South Africa most males are not socialized to share power with women especially if they are raised within a patriarchal culture. The male sense of identity is constructed in opposition to a female’s identity (Augustine, 2002).

This finding is also in line with studies that have been done by Nathoo (1997) and Makoro (2007). They both found that the subordination of women has long been
supported by the church and other patriarchal religions through a moral order which actively propagandises the authority of husbands over wives (Nathoo, 1997; Makoro, 2007). The results of a study conducted by the Commission on Gender Equality (1999) in South Africa, also supports the above mentioned finding. It was found that both males and females believed that men were more superior to women due to their interpretations of religious scriptures and ideologies (Commission on Gender, 1999).

5.1.3 Theme 3: Masculinity

It was found that majority of the participants in the present study held egalitarian attitudes towards their female partners working outside the home. However, they still believed that she must still “know her place” as the woman in the household and allow the man to still be the “head” in the household.

This finding is in line with the results of a study done by Anderson & Johnson, (2003). They found that the current generation of college students held relatively more egalitarian gender role attitudes. Both males and females held more egalitarian attitudes when it came to the employment domain; however they were not so egalitarian when it came to the social domain (Anderson & Johnson, 2003).

Majority of the participants in the present study were found to hold negative attitudes about being financially dependent on a female. The idea of the female working outside the home, whilst they stayed at home, caused “conflict” within the participants, because they were not comfortable with being economically dependent on a woman. They also felt that their identity’s as men would be
threatened if they choose to take over private roles identified as being a female’s responsibility, instead of being the breadwinner and “head” of the household.

Findings by Kane (1998) and the Commission of Gender Equality (1999) support this finding. They found that some men were still against women working outside the home, because they felt that it caused conflict, as they are uncomfortable with the idea of being economically dependent on a woman. Connell (1991) found that being unemployed in a society where masculinity is embedded in work has repercussions for men's self-esteem and for their personal identity as men. Similarly, employed men's resistance to their wives' paid employment reflects the meaning that many men attach to their role as family provider through paid work (Billington et al, 1998).

In contrast to the above finding, the current study also found that at least half of the participants supported the idea of females working outside the home due to it positively influencing the income being brought into the household. This finding is in line with the results of studies done by the Commission of Gender Equality (1999) and Anderson & Johnson’s (2003). The findings indicated that support for females’ working outside the home is largely a result of economic necessity rather than a choice; both the male and female in the household work, so that more money is earned overall for the family.

The results of the present study also suggested that majority of the participant’s perceived independent women as being unappealing. They generally had negative attitudes towards these women because they felt threatened by their independence. One of the reasons that were given by the participants for this negative attitude is
that independent women try too hard to “beat men” and be better than men. They also felt that independent women tend to “overdo” it when it comes to gender equity.

Results of a study done by Calvert et al (2001) support this finding. It was found that women hero depictions were unappealing to men because these women displayed ruthless masculine characteristics instead of traditional feminine characteristics such as submissiveness and sensitivity. Laing (1986) found that men still have less positive attitudes about female managers than women do in the workplace. This finding is also supported by the present study.

Despite participants generally holding less egalitarian attitudes about gender equity, it was found that they were more receptive to gender equity than the “older” South African male generation. Participating in household chores and encouraging their female partners to pursue their career goals, highlights their receptiveness to gender equity. Participant B’s outlier responses also demonstrate that the new male generation is more receptive to gender equity than the old generation was.

Studies conducted in the past, support this finding. They indicated that male support for gender role egalitarianism has started to increase. A quantitative study which explored the sex differences in gender role attitudes was conducted with high school seniors in America. Overall results indicated that men were not determined to hold highly traditional gender beliefs. Their responses disclosed a neutral viewpoint, which indicated that they were neither traditional nor egalitarian (Lewis, 2005).
5.1.4 General Discussion of the findings

The present study’s overall findings suggested that the “new” male generation of KwaZulu-Natal still generally hold negative attitudes and perceptions about gender equity and South African independent females. Even though it has been over a decade since constitutional gender equity has been awarded to South African females, the participants still reproduced traditional gender stereotypes in their perceptions about independent South African females. Culture and the way the participants were socialized by their family systems, were found to strongly influence the way the participants thought about gender equity.

Another factor that strongly encouraged participants to adopt less egalitarian attitudes was the patriarchal teachings of masculinity. The increase of woman’s economic and public power has challenged the discourse of male superiority. This has largely led to males feeling emasculated, resulting in them having less egalitarian views about gender equity, thus making it harder for gender equity to be fully established in South Africa. Scholars in masculinity posit that men are taught from a tender age that they must be the head of the household. Society expects them to conform to this socially constructed norm. As such when a man is able to satisfy his role as the “head” of the household, he feels that he is meeting his responsibility as a man and society’s expectation of him (Gilligan, 1997; Laing, 1988).

The present study’s findings also suggest that the “new” South African male generation of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Zululand is more receptive to the independence of South African females than the “older” South
African male generation. This is evident in their willingness to allow their female partners to work outside the household; and to share household chores equally between the male and female. This implicitly challenges the hegemonic ideas of the women’s place.

It is evident in the analysis of this study that there is more to gender equity than the right to work and, membership of the labour force nowhere means membership on equal terms. Employment does not automatically give women the power to renegotiate the domestic division of labour. Most of the men interviewed felt that family responsibilities are more in the domain of a female. These men said that their responsibility is to ultimately earn money and be the “head” of the household whereas their female partners’ responsibility is to ultimately look after the home and family.

This is not only a classic statement of male breadwinner ideology, but captures one of the essentials of a patriarchal sexual division of labour that claims that men are naturally suited to public activity and women to private nurturance. The preconception that men are sole breadwinners should be corrected and the reality accepted. It is no longer feasible to regard women only in the context of raising children and household chores, but as breadwinners and policymakers, a stance taken by all feminists. As long as the fundamental assumption is that the man is the breadwinner, a female professional will not be perceived as being on the same footing as her male counterparts (Gallagher, 1981).
Men need to understand more clearly how they are shaped by cultural practices and societal institutions (family, peer groups, workplace) that are regularly repeated everyday of their lives. They need to find ways of working with and on the psychological forces and emotional investments that often make them willing to be trapped within existing structures. They need to become aware of the huge pressure of ideological and cultural messages that shout at them to keep up with their tough defences and guard their backs as men. If men are to move forward and embrace gender equity at a social level, they need to acknowledge the full power of feminist arguments so that they can challenge some of the shaping forces. They can only do this if they stop being so defensive around feminist perspectives. Some of these perspectives can help them see how not all men are innately fixed as oppressors of women.

If we are to achieve true gender equity in society, male and female stereotypes and biases must be addressed. Changes in the way South African independent females are perceived requires that men move beyond traditional role concepts and stereotyping. Women are still frequently being excluded from the decision-making processes and the halls of power due to biases, prejudices from patriarchal ideologies and out-dated gender role expectations. Human development will never achieve its potential as long as women are denied their right to equal gender rights to men in the social domain.

There are many factors that have come out clearly in this study that constrain gender equity between the sexes, but I feel that three must be overcome if true synergy is to be achieved: (a) obsolete mindsets that restrict the role of women to caregiver, (b)
patriarchal ideologies and (c) the use of cultural teachings to restrict women from reaching their full potentials. Each of these constraints requires massive re-education and attitude change. As long as beliefs, attitudes and traditions prevail in which distinctions are made about people’s intrinsic worth based on sex stereotypes true gender equity will never be reached.

5.2 Limitations of the Present Study and Recommendations for Future Research

No study is without its limitations, and the limitations of the present study are discussed below. Recommendations in line with these limitations for future research are also provided.

- The sample size in the present study was relatively small, with a total sample consisting of 6 participants. Future studies should employ larger sample sizes, as this will aid in the accuracy of the thematic analysis and increase the generalizability of the results.

- Only male university students between the ages of 18 and 25 were included in the present study. Future studies should include a broader age range and extend studies to include younger and older male participants. In this way, a clearer picture of perceptions about independent South African females can be gained.

- The participants in the present study were recruited by means of convenience sampling. This could have led to possible selection bias, as there is a chance
that not all male university students in the KwaZulu-Natal area were represented in the sample for the present study. As a result, the present study’s results should be generalized with caution. Future studies could consider an alternative means of sampling, for example, stratified random sampling, enabling researchers to make broader generalizations with regards to the results of future studies.

- A further limitation of the present study, relates to the fact that the researcher is a female and is of a different racial orientation and ethnic background to some of the participants in the research sample used. It should be taken into consideration that this may compromise the reliability of the research study’s results.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

Although the present study incurred some limitations, aspects that added value most certainly exist.

The present study was the first of its kind. It explored the perceptions of male university students about independent females within the South African context, and therefore added a wealth of knowledge to the under-researched and out-of-date body of knowledge involving gender equity. This information will aid psychologists, sociologists and gender researchers in the development of intervention programmes targeted at increasing gender equity in South Africa.
Results suggested that even though the “new” generation South African males are more receptive to gender equity between males and females, they generally still held negative attitudes about gender equity. For true gender equity to be practiced in South Africa patriarchal and cultural teachings will have to be addressed and parents will need to adopt more liberal ideas surrounding gender equity, when raising their sons and daughters.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the main findings of the present study. The limitations of the present study were provided and recommendations for future research suggested. The chapter concluded by outlining the contributions made by the present study.
REFERENCES


Masculinity. (n.d.). Retrieved September 26, 2010, from:


Rape. (n.d.). Retrieved September 19, 2010, from:


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

By signing this form, I (full name) _________________________________ agree to participate in the research study explained to me by the researcher.

I declare that:

• I have read and fully understand all the information that the researcher has provided to me about the research study.

• I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions where information about the research study was not clear to me, and I have had all these questions answered satisfactorily by the researcher.

• I understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any explanation, and without my medical and legal rights being affected.

• I understand that I will have to answer a biographical questionnaire, however my name, address and phone number will not be required.

• I understand that all the information gathered from me, for the research study will remain confidential and anonymous.

• I fully understand that no potential harm or risks exist for me if I participate in this study.

• I understand that the information gathered in this research study may be published; however none of the presented information will be directly linked to me in any way.

• I understand that I will be required to participate in a one-on-one interview, which will take place off the University campus.

• I understand that the interview will be tape recorded so that data collection will be more efficient.

• I will be as honest and open as possible when answering questions in the interview.

Signed at (place) _______________________________ on (date) ______________

___________________
Signature of participant
APPENDIX B
BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

1. What is your current age? ______________________

2. Marital Status? (Please tick one of the following):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dating</td>
<td>Widower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If other, specify ______________________

3. Home Language? (Please tick one of the following):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Setswana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zulu</td>
<td>Venda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>Tsonga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xhosa</td>
<td>Sotho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swazi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If other, specify ______________________

4. Population Group? (Please tick one of the following):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White</th>
<th>Coloured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If other, specify _________________________________________

5. If you are NOT a South African citizen, indicate your home country (Please tick one of the following):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zimbabwe</th>
<th>Mozambique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If other, specify ____________________________________________

6. Level of Study? (E.g. 1st Year) __________________________________________________________

7. Course being studied? (E.g. BCom Accounting)

8. Registered at which University? (Please tick one of the following)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UKZN Westville Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNIZULU Kwadlangezwa Campus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sport
- Do you think that sports such as Rugby, Soccer, and Cricket should be offered in all girl schools? Give a reason/s for your answer

Roles
- Do you think women should be allowed to drive? Give a reason/s for your answers.
- Who should be the breadwinner in a family? Male or female? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- Tasks such as cooking, cleaning and care giving should be the job of males, females or both? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- What is your opinion on "stay at home dads" and working mums?
- Is it ok for a woman to earn as much or more money than her husband/boyfriend does? Explain your answer.
- Would you be intimidated by a female boss? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- Who should propose to whom in the relationship? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- After marriage who should take on whose surname? Give a reason/s for your answer.

Skills
- In your opinion should all girl schools offer subjects such as Woodwork, Metalwork, Motor Mechanics, and Technical drawing? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- Would you take your car to a female mechanic to get fixed? Give a reason/s for your answer.

Career
- In your opinion, do women have the ability to run a country (be President) or a multi-million rand company (be CEO)? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- What type/s of careers/jobs in your opinion is appropriate for women to occupy? Give a reason/s for your answer.
- What is your opinion about women who are assertive, career driven and independent?
Hello, I am sure you remember me, but if you don’t, my name is Thirusha Mohabir and I am a Clinical Psychology Masters student at the University of Zululand. My dissertation focuses on gender equality. More specifically, I am interested in the perceptions of male university students, in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) about independent South African females. An independent female is a female who does not conform to traditional feminine roles. She is not afraid to be independent, forceful, aggressive and assertive.

I am going to do a one-on-one interview with you. It will be about an hour long and I will digitally record the interview for transcription purposes and accuracy. Open-ended questions pertaining to opinions about childcare, breadwinners in a household, gender roles and stereotypes, women and sport, feminism and career choice will be asked in the interview. However, since the interview is semi-structured, you are free to express your opinions about any other topics which are related to independent females in the interview.

You will have to sign a consent form and fill out a biographical questionnaire. Your real name will not be used when discussing the study’s results, so don’t worry about that. I would like to set up an interview appointment with you as soon as possible so please let me know when it will be convenient for you. The interview will take place at the Stanmore Library in Phoenix if you from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and at the Empangeni Library if you from the University of Zululand. If you have any questions related to the research study, feel free to contact me for further clarification. Once again thank you for agreeing to participate, I really appreciate it.

Hope to hear from you soon
Thirusha Mohabir