Social Work students' attitudes towards gender equality in Namibia: Results from an exploratory study

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Abstract

This manuscript explores the attitudes towards gender equality of students studying social work in Namibia. While previous published research has explored social work students' attitudes toward sexism and gender equality, no published research presents the perspectives of students in a Southern African context. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) was used as the main data collection tool. This 22-item instrument measures levels of benevolent and hostile sexism and is supported with firm psychometric evidence, including established validity in international settings and in multiple languages. Results presented are based on a sample of 154 undergraduate social work students in an accredited social work degree programme at a Namibian public university. Overall, the results indicate above average levels of sexism, with higher scores for benevolent sexism than hostile sexism. Using bivariate analyses, the findings indicate that older students, married students, and those in the advanced stages of the degree programme (years 3-4) hold more positive attitudes related to gender equality, and thus hold less sexist views. Suggestions for addressing negative beliefs about gender equality in terms of curricular integration and increasing opportunities for student exposure to positive imagery are discussed.

Introduction

Between 2007-2011, over 55000 cases of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) were reported in Namibia. The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC), as reported in the Namib Sun, indicated that about one third of women have experienced physical or sexual abuse at the hands of an intimate partner (Ikela, 2013). "Passion killings" which are described by the Namibian police as "murder cases between intimate partners such as husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, ex-husband/ex-wife or ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend" (Nunuhe, 2014, p. 1) is being reported more regularly

over the past years in Namibia, painting a gloomy picture of the gains made in other spheres to address gender inequalities.

Numerous newspaper reports show that in the year 2012, 32 passion killing cases were reported to the Namibian police, whilst 25 murder cases in 2013 and 12 murder cases were reported between January to mid February 2014. Furthermore, domestic violence related cases have also been on the increase as the Windhoek Magistrate Court in Katutura recorded 94 domestic violence cases from January to mid February 2014, compared to 724 cases reported in only the Khomas region under which the Katutura magistrate court operates (Kangootui, 2014; Nunuhe, 2014). If this trend continues, it can be expected that more cases will be reported in 2014 than in previous years.

Similarly, sources indicate that where cases are reported, lack of proper investigative work, withdrawal of cases, length of time to conclude cases, family pressures, shame and bribery result in lack of action (Coomer, 2010). The experienced trend of case withdrawals was further confirmed by a court official indicating that in 80% of withdrawn cases by women they cite reasons such as the offender being the source of economic support or other similar reasons (Kangootui, 2014).

The increase in reported incidents of GBV, also referred to as Intimate Partner Violence [IPV] or "passion killings", has seen more and more Namibians calling for the return of the death penalty and mechanisms to prevent case withdrawals by women. It should be noted, however, that the Namibian Constitution, Chapter 3, Article 6, states: "The right to life shall be respected and protected. No law may prescribe death as a competent sentence. No court or tribunal shall have the power to impose a sentence of death upon any person. No executions shall take place in Namibia" (Republic of Namibia, 1990, p. 9). Namibia as a country, therefore, is engaged in a process of reflection to examine gender inequalities from various perspectives and consider discourses that shape the young people of today.

Literature review

This review of existing literature focuses on contemporary theories of gender equality, the social issues that stem from such inequalities, and the contributions that the social work profession is expected to make in addressing these social problems.

Global context for gender equality and feminist theories

Much is written about the construction of gender and the contributions made by Feminist theories to shape the emancipation of women in developed as well as developing countries. In general, feminist theories are perceived to be action oriented, demanding social transformation, and challenging nations if not women themselves to contest existing power relations whether they are from an economic, political or social perspective (Dietz, 2003).

This overview ad assessment of the wide, diverse and changing field of feminist theory gives particular attention to contestations surrounding the political theorizing of gender, identity and subjectivity. Three divergent and oppositional perspectives-difference feminism, diversity feminism, and deconstruction feminism frame current discussions regarding the "construction" of the female subject; the nature of sexual difference; the relation between sex and gender; the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, etc. and the significance of women as a political category in feminism. The problem of epistemic identification locating or dislocating the female subject, analysing gender difference, politicizing identity have transformed feminist theories from the image of being radical to that of embracing diversity known as "social difference feminism" (Dietz, 2003, p. 408). Social difference feminism acknowledges that diversity exist among women and that prescribed gender roles need to be eliminated, hence the need to embrace gender responsive theories such as the Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) (Dietz, 2003; Jordan & Hartling, 2002).

Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) is based on the premise that people develop through and toward relationships with others as a result of mutual empathy and understanding of each other's limitations and the ability to achieve something which increases a person's sense of value and sense of belonging. However, when an individual does not experience this connection or growth in a relationship, they may use various strategies just to maintain the relationship or keep it afloat. These strategies employed by individuals may lead to the failure of being authentic in a relationship and therefore there is a need to depart from strategies that focus on the individual and instead look at the person as a holistic being and the influ-

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ence that socio-cultural practices have on categorising, stereotyping and grouping people (i.e. sexism, racism, classism, etc.). It can thus be concluded that relations and sense of worth are central to any human beings personal, social, or economic development. Hence, it is recommended that the value and influence relationships exert onto human behaviour be investigated in relation to gender inequality (Jordan & Hartling, 2002).

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Gender issues expose the environmental, structural, and unequal relations that exist between men and women (Ackerson & Subramanian, 2008; Anand, 2009; Dietz, 2003; Jordan & Hartling, 2002). GBV is defined as physical or sexual violence inflicted by an intimate partner meaning that the person had been slapped, or had something thrown at them; pushed or shoved; hit with a fist or something else that could hurt; kicked, dragged or beaten up; choked or burnt; threatened with or had a weapon used against them, whilst sexual violence refers to incidences where a partner has been physically forced to have sexual intercourse; had sexual intercourse because of fear of what the partner might do; had been forced to do something sexual that is found to be degrading or humiliating (World Health Organization, 2005, p.1). These violent behaviours according to various authors stem from skewed gender relations (Ackerson & Subramanian, 2008; Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006; Watts & Zimmerman 2002). Citing a recent study conducted by the World Health Organisation [WHO], Ackerson and Subramanian (2008); indicate that approximately 15% of women in Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand and Tanzania experience physical or sexual IPV. In Namibia alone WHO (2005) reported that 20% of women aged 15 to 49 years interviewed experienced physical or sexual violence during the past 12 months, whilst 19% of the respondents under the age of 15 were physically or sexually violated. Of these under aged girls, 55% indicated that the primary perpetrator was the victim's romantic partner.

In India where gender equality is relative to caste, culture, education and socio-economic status, Ackerson and Subramanian (2008) found that women lacking skills on how to deal with conflict, family power dynamics such as women's higher educational level which are positively associated with social and monetary independence, were most likely to report IPV and that women from geographical areas with higher levels of gender equality are less likely to report IPV. This study

however cautions that further research is required to understand variations in geographical reporting of IPV as this might be influenced by culture and social norms regarding violence against women (2008, pp. 81-103).

Young people's perceptions of GBV

In a recent study conducted in two public secondary schools in Australia that focused on young people's expectations and experiences of dating relations, it was found that young people felt gender equality exist and that it was perceived as "the ability of each person to make independent decisions and choices" (Chung, 2005, p. 449). Further, young women in the study refused to be viewed as "doormats" (Chung, 2005, p. 450) and employed two strategies to facilitate equality in their relationships, namely understanding the behaviour of men and emotional maturity from the female side. The young women perceive young men as emotionally immature, and as a result, behave in unbecoming ways which make men less competent communicators. Conversely, young women appeared to be more in touch with their emotions, and as a result were more effective communicators. This emotional maturity provides them with advantages in their relations, which enables them to manage intimate relationships better. As a consequence, the onus rests on the women to make the relationship a success.

With regard to students' perceptions about gender equality at tertiary institutions, a study conducted amongst Year 1 pre-medical students who had enrolled in 2000 and 2001, at the University of Chicago found that women and minority group students were more responsive to gender and cultural issues(Lee & Coulehan, 2006). Mean scores were analysed at baseline by gender, ethnic group and political affiliation using analysis of variance. The paired scores of the first and follow-up surveys of the 2000 entering class were compared using pared t-tests. Upon entry into medical school, women, minority group students and Democrats scored significantly higher on the cultural sensitivity scale tan their comparison groups. No significant changes were seen overall in the matched data. However, minority groups showed a significant increase in scores, while Republicans and white men experienced a non-significant decline. In addition, incoming students judged cultural competency education to be important. The perceived need to increase the numbers of minority group doctors, varied by gender, ethnic group and political lines. Additionally, preclinical education was associated with

increased cultural sensitivity by minority group students, but not by others. These findings demonstrate the continuing need for diversity in medical school and for medical students to recognize and address their personal and group biases (Lee & Coulehan, 2006, p.7).

In South Africa, perceptions of gender-based violence amongst youth are linked to social problems such as unemployment, financial difficulties, ever present risk of sexual assault and rape within homes or social spaces, transactional sex and lack of community cohesion (Mosavel, Ahmed, & Simon 2012). An exploratory formative research to examine the barriers that affect the health and well-being of youth was conducted with fourteen focus groups (nine with girls and five with boys). The findings suggest that young women were still expected to play a submissive role in terms of love and sex, and that the role women are expected to portray has negative consequences for health education programmes and women's emancipation. Similarly, the study concluded that boys and girls need to question patriarchal norms that enhance GBV by doing self-introspection about their own relations, whilst symbols and images portraying inequality need to be addressed to foster community cohesion.

Gender and culture

Though Namibia has sufficient polices to address gender inequalities, the implementation of these instruments are yet to make significant impacts on the lives of women especially due to economic, institutional and cultural pressures (Thomas, 2007). The influence of culture in the advancement of negative gender roles over the years is debated in many societies. "I'm an African woman, a victim of culture. I have no rights, I do whatever he says" (Ruppel, 2008, p. 1) is one example of testimonies showing of the link between gender and culture. Gender is defined as "…the social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and the relationships between women and men, and girls and boys, as well as between women and between men" (Ruppel, 2008, p. 43). Gender can thus be interpreted as a learnt process of socialization through the culture of a particular society. For example, in many cultures, boys and girls are associated differently on how to behave in order to be perceived as masculine or feminine, at the same time girls are encouraged to play with dolls and boys with guns. As a consequence, what people deem as truth and beliefs, develops through social interaction and social consensus (Worden, 2003).

Culture is believed to be the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society. These ideas or customs that communities adopt have an influence on the progression of women especially with regards to the uptake of leadership positions. During a Regional Women Parliamentary Caucus hearing held in Windhoek during 2012, the Secretary General of National Unity Democratic Organization (NUDO) cited an example where women do not only deal with various facets in intimate relationships but are further expected to deal with cultural factors where men have dominant and defensive attitudes while paying lip service to the proposed 50/50 representation in parliament (Regional Women Parliamentary Caucus, 2012). Though employment and education opportunities are increasing for women, many women in Namibia continue to rely on men to access resources. Customary practices in the Zambezi Regions (former Caprivi Region) and control over women's power exacerbate gender based violence and dependency by women on men (Thomas, 2007). This paper examines the ways in which discourses of gender equality and ensuing sexual rights can have complex, contradictory and even adverse implications when they are mobilised, resisted and reinterpreted at local level. Drawing upon research undertaken in the Caprivi Region (now called Zambezi Region) of Namibia, this paper investigates the ways in which men and women respond to ideas about gender equality, and seeks to place these responses within the wider context of socioeconomic change and understandings of morality prevalent within the region. The tendency of many young women to seek out relationships with older men and the increasing costs of bride-wealth payments play a key role in reinforcing patriarchal attitudes and fuelling disrespect for women's rights both before and within marriage. In addition, a failure to adhere to customary norms, which uphold men's dominant role continues to threaten the support networks and assets available women. The consequences of this situation are examined with particular focus on implications for the future transmission of HIV.

Gender equality and legal instruments in Namibia

In Namibia, The Married Persons Equality Act No 1 of 1996 became the first statue to abolish men's automatic marital power, followed by the launch of the National gender policy in 1997, complemented by a Plan of Action in 1998. The debates leading to the enactment of the Married Persons Equality Act according to

Becker (2000) brought to the front how gender is constructed. Becker argues that male and female gender identities were mainly informed by social attributes such as age, class, ethnicity, individual aspirations and desires, especially the crafting of female political and economic dependence and male control over access to women (Becker, 2000).

Gender, education and training

Remarkable gains have been made in the enrolment of women and girls at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. During the past ten years, efforts to facilitate the enrolment of women and girls and keep them in education institutions were made. Most recently, the policy on allowing girls who become pregnant to come back to school and write exams was enacted in 2009 (Kapenda, 2012). Other programmes implemented include the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWENA) programme which supports girls through bursaries and implements Girl Guide programmes in school, and Education Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP). The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (2010) reported that gender inequality in education has decreased in Namibia. Even though girls drop out more from school than boys due to teenage pregnancies, the enrolment level for girls in primary, secondary as well as in tertiary institutions has improved. There were 102 girls for every 100 boys in primary school whilst for every 100 boys in secondary school, there were 113 girls in 2006 (MGECW, 2010). In respect to Vocational Training Centres (VTC), indications are that more male students enrol across the five institutions in Namibia. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) Namibia progress report indicates that 67% of male students compared to 33% of female students were enrolled at VTC's during the period 2005-2006 (Republic of Namibia, 2008).

At the Polytechnic of Namibia, the overall female enrolment rate has increased from 5,238 in 2008 to 6,024 in 2009. These increments have been consistent over the years and are notable in the fields of science and technology (Ikela, 2012). According to the Annual 2011 Polytechnic report, enrolments in the qualifications of Masters, Honours, Degree, Diploma, Certificate, Introductory and Higher Certificate courses were also dominated by women (Polytechnic of Namibia, 2012). However, a closer look at school enrolments reveals important distinctions in enrolment of male and female students.

Table 1: Polytechnic of Namibia Student Enrolment (2011)

School	Female	Male	Total
Centres of Excellence	26	29	55
School of Business and Management	5,372	3,174	8,546
School of Communication, Criminal Justice, and Legal Studies	275	270	545
School of Engineering	220	724	944
School of Health and Applied Sciences	249	190	439
School of Information Technology	321	567	**888**
School of Natural Resources and Tourism	476	484	960
Total	**6,939**	**5,438**	**12,377**

Table 1 shows that females were mostly in the business and management, communication and health, and applied sciences fields.

The same trend can be observed at the University of Namibia (UNAM) which consists of eight faculties after the launching of the schools of medicine and pharmacy in 2010 and 2013 respectively, and two complementary Programmes namely the Centre for external studies and the UNAM foundation programme. According to the UNAM statistics office (Ihemba, R., personal communication, 28 February 2014) a consistent increase in female student enrolments across schools was experienced over the past 5 years.

Table 2: Total Number of Students Enrolled at UNAM (2009-13)

Faculty or School	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Agriculture & Natural Resources	194	220	228	246	282	262	358	288	357	285
Economics & Management Science	1330	1147	1678	1331	1922	1490	1964	1543	2044	1560
Education	591	365	697	357	1911	1191	2026	1093	2479	1339

Engineering & Information & Technology	42	118	45	174	80	258	83	267	79	267
Humanities and Social Sciences	934	424	1121	515	1255	585	1302	562	1355	587
Law	340	318	368	367	417	380	427	369	473	409
Science	473	524	687	642	788	680	876	742	877	753
School of Nursing & Public Health	695	207	745	193	818	218	883	202	857	187
School of Medicine			32	23	92	46	169	77	191	91
School of Pharmacy									51	25
External Studies – UNAM	1427	655	1946	980	2213	1298	2217	1259	2038	1056
Foundation programme	66	34	71	50	87	59	84	28	96	80
Total	**6092**	**4012**	**7618**	**4878**	**9865**	**6467**	**10389**	**6430**	**10897**	**6639**

Table 2 shows that the enrolment at UNAM has been dominated by female students and increasing over the years. If results are compared based on the fields of study, male students dominate enrolments in the technical skills programmes of the Engineering and IT faculty, whereas women are more represented in the science and health related fields such as the School of Medicine, School of Nursing & Public Health as well as in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science.

The Social Work profession in Namibia

The School of Social Work was established in 1983 and is housed in the Department of Human Sciences within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Namibia (UNAM), and is currently the only Institution to offer Social Work training programmes in Namibia. Excluding the academic requirements as guided by Senate, the school conforms to the policies and guidelines of the Health Professional Council of Namibia (HPCNA) and Social Work and Psychology Act no. 6 of 2004 (HPCNA, 2010; UNAM, 2014).

The social work profession as defined by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) "promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationship,

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and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. There are two basic principles that are fundamental to social work practice namely human rights and social justice (Nicholas, Rautenbach & Maistry, 2010, p.5).

Therefore, social work students are expected to acquire essential skills, values and standards of professional conduct for social workers.

The common values of practicing social work could be summarised as follow:
- Respect for the inherent worth and dignity of all people, and the rights that follow from this.
- Social workers should embrace human diversity.
- The capacity and the right of individuals to make decisions on issues that affect their lives.
- Being unbiased and non-judgmental when serving clients. (Fairley, Smith & Boyle, 2006, p.68).

Specific training approaches

The social work curriculum is designed to engage in the process of critical self-reflection as a basis of professional social work practice. As from the very first semester, students are asked to question how their own characteristics (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability, etc.) impact their experiences as a person in society, as well as to begin to question how this position influences their worldview. In addition to this critical self-reflection, students are repeatedly exposed to the oft-repeated mantra that "social work is not a value neutral position" (Clark, 2006). Rather students learn that the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living (Lancaster, n.d.). As part of professional social work practice, students

are taught that social workers must be sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

Once students have engaged in basic self-reflection and have developed an understanding of the profession and its core values, they begin to explore specific topics relevant to social work practice. Specific courses and content areas which may potentially contribute to the decrease in sexist attitudes include courses in human behaviour, gender and culture, social work with vulnerable groups and developmental psychology. As such, social work education presents opportunities for instructional activities that can target attitudes and beliefs related to gender equality as well as create a platform for including gender equality as a cross-cutting theme given the overarching professional focus on reducing oppression, appreciating diversity, and promoting equality.

Method
Research Questions

The research questions guiding this inquiry included:
1. What are the general attitudes and beliefs about gender equality among social work students in Namibia?
2. Are there significant differences between benevolent and hostile sexism among social work students?
3. Are there significant differences in levels of sexism based on students' age, sex, year of study, religiosity, country of origin, or self-identification?

Procedures

Questionnaires were administered in a classroom setting at the end of a regular course meeting. Given the lack of exposure to participating in research projects, the administering investigator explained the informed consent document, the study procedures, and reviewed the concepts of anonymity and voluntary participation. Participants were then provided with copies of the instrument, as well as copies of the informed consent document. Consistent with the general ethical guidelines related to social science research, no inducements or incentives were offered to participants.

Measures

Demographics: The demographic questionnaire contained nine questions designed to yield data related to participants' gender, age, year of study, primary language, country of origin, religious affiliation, frequency of religious participation, and self-identification as a feminist.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: The primary data collection instrument utilised in the current study was the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory [ASI] (Glick & Fiske, 1996) which contains two sub-scales of different concepts associated with attitudes towards gender equality: namely hostile and benevolent sexism. While each of these types of sexism reflects prejudicial attitudes and beliefs about women, it is the delivery and phrasing of these statements that differentiates the two concepts. The first 11-question subscale measure hostile sexism, which is typically expressed in terms of negative attitudes or beliefs about women and their role in society. An example of a statement measuring hostile sexism in this study is "Women exaggerate problems they have at work". The second sub-scale of the ASI measures benevolent sexism, which at its core makes fundamental assumptions about the innateness of human characteristics. The opposite of hostile sexism, these statements focus on the 'naturalness' of certain characteristics, such as women are naturally more kind, empathetic, or compassionate than men (Forbes, 2014, Par. 1). An example of a statement representing benevolent sexism in the current study includes "Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess".

This instrument was first published in 1996 (Glick & Fiske, 1996) with subsequent research validating the psychometric properties of the instrument. The 22 statements on the ASI were responded to using a likert-type scale, with responses ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The total score was calculated by first reverse scoring all negatively worded statements, and then calculating a total score for the participant. Using a 5-point likert scale in the current study, the lowest possible score was 0 and the highest possible score was 110. The ASI and its subscales have consistently shown high levels of internal consistency. As would be expected, reported *alpha* levels range from .82 to .91 for the full scale (Smith & Craig-Henderson, 2010).

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Cultural Appropriateness of the Instrument: With respect to the international application of this instrument, the ASI has a long history of successful use in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts, including a multi-country (N=19) study to establish construct validity in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts (Glick, et al., 2000). No changes to the original phrasing or language (English) of the ASI were made in the current study.

Sample

The sample for the current study was comprised of 154 individuals, of which 126 females represent81,86% of the sample, and 22 males who represented 14,9% of the sample (five missing cases) enrolled in a social work degree program in Namibia. The ages of respondents ranged from 18-52. As is discussed in the results section (participants sub-section), participants represented all four years of the baccalaureate social work degree program, come from eight countries, and speak 19 different languages as their mother tongue.

Data Management and Analysis

Completed questionnaires were assigned a unique identification number and entered into Microsoft Excel. Upon entering the data, the researchers reviewed the spread sheet and made the decision to exclude any participants who failed to answer 10% or more of the survey questions, or who did not complete the demographic questionnaire. Given these exclusionary criteria, no participants were excluded from the total analysis. However, all missing data are excluded from analysis of relevant questions, and the results indicate the sample utilized in each statistical procedure as well as indicate the number of missing cases in the analysis from the overall sample of 154 students.

Once the data were entered and cleaned using excel, they were exported to SPSS version 21.0 for analysis. Data analysis procedures included univariate (descriptive), as well as bivariate analyses exploring the participants' level of benevolent and hostile based on the socio-demographic variables included in the demographic questionnaire.

Results
Sample Characteristics:

As previously identified, characteristics of the sample were collected through the use of a demographic questionnaire, which contained questions designed to yield data on concepts that have previously been found to be statistically associated with levels of sexism, including age, marital status, and frequency of religious participation as well as variables of interest, such as the year of study and country of origin. Results from selected characteristics are presented below to provide additional context as to the characteristics of the study population.

Age: In the current study, married students represent the minority given that only 14,3% (n=22), report being married. Conversely, 83,8% (n=129) of the participants reported being single.

Year of Study: Students from the first to final year of study in the BA Social Work (Honours) programme are represented in the total sample (N=154). Thirty-four (34) first year students responded to the survey, which represented 23,4% of the total sample. Among second year students, 22 (or 15,2% of the total sample) responded to the survey. The third year students comprised 34,5% of the study sample given that 39 students completed the survey. Finally, in the fourth year, 50 students (or 34,5%) completed the measurement instrument.

Religious Identification and Frequency of Religious Participation: Participants were asked to identify their religious affiliation, if any, as part of the demographics questionnaire. The responses were recorded and analysed as entered. Thus, the researchers did not attempt to collapse the data, but rather used the respondents' descriptions as attributes for this variable. As can be see in the table below, there were nine different responses to this question. However, Christian was the most common response (n=96, 69,5%), followed by Catholic (n=17, 12,1%), and ELCIN (n=7, 5,0%). The remaining categories were identified by five or less respondents each.

Table 3: Religious Identification

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Christian	98	63,6	69,5	69,5
	ELCIN	7	4,5	5,0	74,5
	Catholic	17	11,0	12,1	86,5
	Muslim	1	,6	,7	87,2
	Anglican	4	2,6	2,8	90,1
	7th Day Adventist	5	3,2	3,5	93,6
	Lutheran	2	1,3	1,4	95,0
	Pentecostal	3	1,9	2,1	97,2
	None	4	2,6	2,8	100,0
	Total	141	91,6	100,0	
Missing	System	13	8,4		
Total		154	100,0		

With respect to frequency of religious participation, it was most common for respondents to engage in religious services weekly (n=64, 44,1%), and least common for participants to report never participating in religious activities (n=8, 5,5%).

Country of Origin. Large numbers of international students (N=4000) are studying in all faculties at the University (A. Sam, personal communication, 4 March 2014). In the current study, social work student respondents reported eight different countries of origin, with Namibia representing approximately 71% of all respondents. The frequency for each country represented in the sample is included below.

Table 4: Country of Origin

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Namibia	107	69,5	70,9	70,9
	Zimbabwe	31	20,1	20,5	91,4
	Zambia	8	5,2	5,3	96,7
	Botswana	1	,6	,7	97,4
	Germany	1	,6	,7	98,0
	Sweden	1	,6	,7	98,7
	Nigeria	1	,6	,7	99,3
	DRC	1	,6	,7	100,0
	Total	151	98,1	100,0	
Missing	System	3	1,9		
	Total	154	100,0		

Descriptives
Levels of Benevolent and Hostile Sexism

As previously indicated, the 22 items on the ASI can be combined and reported for an overall sexism score, or can be calculated using each of the two established sub-scales measuring hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. As is shown in Table 5, the overall sample mean was 58,09, with minimum and maximum scores of 16 and 87 (r=71), receptively. Regarding the hostile sexism subscale, the mean statistic for the sample was 25,59 (r=40) (55 is the highest possible score on this subscale). In the domain of benevolent sexism, the minimum reported score was 7 and the maximum was 48 (r=41) with a mean of 32.33.

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of Sexism Scores

|	N	Range	Mini-mum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Devi-ation
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
Hostile Sexism	136	40.00	7.00	47.00	25.5956	8.79510
Benevolent Sex-ism	136	41.00	7.00	48.00	32.3309	7.80413
ASI Total Score	124	71.00	16.00	87.00	58.0968	14.20261
Valid N (listwise)	124					

Identification as a Feminist

As can be seen in Figure 1 below, the sample was rather equally divided in terms of self-identification as a feminist. Approximately 47% (n=63) of participants self-identified as feminists, whereas 52,3% (n=68) do not identify as such. Interestingly, identification as a feminist is not solely associated with female respondents, as 30% of male respondents (n=6) also self-identified as feminists.

Figure 1: Self Identification as a Feminist

Adequacy of programmes addressing Gender Equality in Namibia

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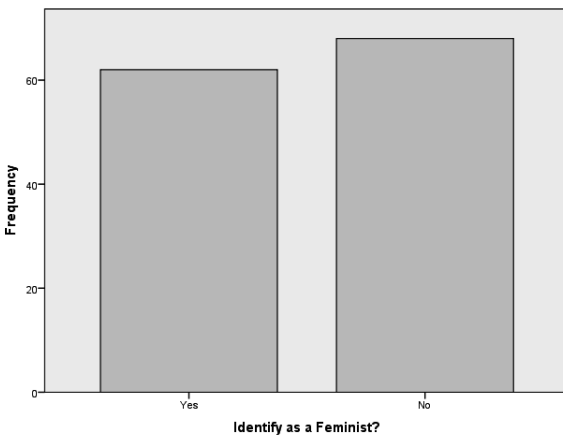
As part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to identify whether they believe there are adequate programmes addressing the issue of gender equality in Namibia. Two thirds (66,7% or n=100) of respondents indicated a belief that there are not sufficient programmes to address gender equality in Namibia. Conversely, 33% of respondents (n=50) felt that adequate programmes exist to address this issue in Namibia.

Figure 2: Adequacy of Gender Equality Programmes in Namibia
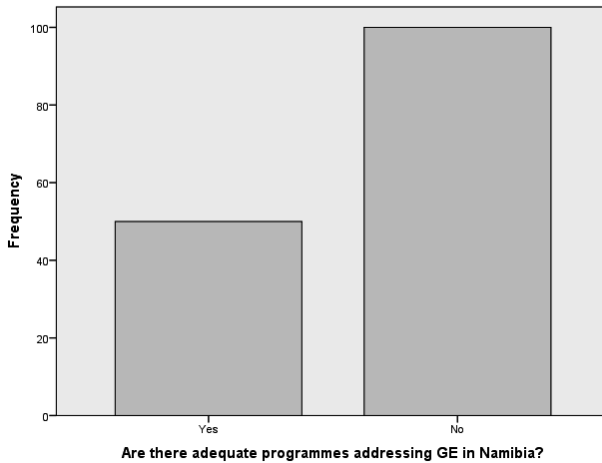
Knowledge of Campus-Based Gender Equality Activities

Given that the sample was comprised on university students, it was deemed salient to inquire about student's beliefs about the visibility of initiatives and programmes aimed at addressing gender equality on campus. Only 37,8% of respondents' (n=56) recall having seen programmes or initiatives addressing gender equality on campus. Conversely, 62,2% (n=92) of those sampled reported no knowledge of visible awareness initiatives or programmes addressing this issue on the university campus.

Figure 3: Knowledge of Initiatives or Programmes on Campus
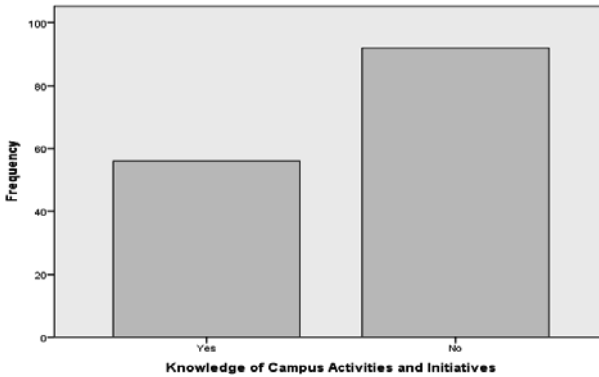
Bivariate Comparisons

While numerous bivariate and multivariate comparisons were possible from the collected data, the researchers limited comparisons to those relevant to the research questions and which were appropriate given the exploratory nature of the inquiry.

Age and Level of Sexism: An analysis of a possible correlation between of the age of respondents and the level of sexism was conducted using Pearson's r. Analysis revealed a moderately weak negative correlation given a calculation of r = -.21, p < .05 (two-tailed hypothesis). Thus, results indicate a statistically significant relationship between age of respondents and their level of sexism as measured using the ASI.

Sex of Participants and Level of Sexism: An independent samples T-test was conducted to understand whether participants' levels of sexism varied depending on their sex. Analysis revealed no significant differences in total ASI scores between male (M=60,25, SD=12,79) and female (M=57,72, SD=14,48) participants; t (119)=.854, p = .395.

Marital Status and Level of Sexism: An independent samples T-test was conducted to explore whether marital status impacted participants' levels of benevolent or

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hostile sexism. Analysis revealed significant differences in total ASI scores for married (M=51.72, SD=12,75) and unmarried (M=59,07, SD=14,23) participants; t (121)=2,052, p = .04.

Year of Study and Level of Sexism: In order to understand whether a relationship existed between the year of study and the level of sexism of respondents, a one way ANOVA was conducted, with findings indicating a significant result of F(3,115) = 12,097, p = .000. The analysis revealed significant differences in attitudes among the students enrolled in each of the four years of the programme.

Table 6: Year of Study and Level of Sexism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	28	68.6429	9.79877	64.8433	72.4424	52.00	87.00
2	17	61.7059	10.59932	56.2562	67.1555	37.00	74.00
3	29	55.8966	14.47743	50.3896	61.4035	23.00	78.00
4	45	51.5556	12.48373	47.8050	55.3061	28.00	76.00
Total	119	58.0840	13.81388	55.5764	60.5917	23.00	87.00

Country of Origin and Level of Sexism: A one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore whether there were significant differences in students levels of sexism based on their country of origin. The results indicate significant differences between groups, with F(3,116) = 4,728, p = .000. Based on the unequal distribution of participants among the sample, which range from 1 (DRC, Nigeria, Sweden, and Germany) to 68 (Namibia), the results of this test must be viewed with caution and retested in future studies equivalent sample distribution.

Frequency of Religious Participation and Level of Sexism: In order to test for a relationship between frequency of religious participation and levels of sexism, a one-way ANOVA was conducted. Results of this test indicate no statistically significant

differences based on the frequency of religious participation, given *F(4,115) = ,354, p = .841.*

Table 7: Frequency of Religious Participation and Level of Sexism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Daily	21	57.8571	14.37110	51.3155	64.3988	29.00	87.00
Weekly	52	58.0962	13.25210	54.4067	61.7856	23.00	79.00
Monthly	23	61.2609	12.17754	55.9949	66.5268	34.00	81.00
Holidays Only	16	56.1250	19.35588	45.8110	66.4390	16.00	83.00
Never	8	59.1250	13.15227	48.1294	70.1206	33.00	75.00
Total	120	58.4667	14.04251	55.9284	61.0050	16.00	87.00

Conclusion

The analysis of study data revealed a number of significant relationships between levels of sexism and predictor variables. Of the six bivariate relationships examined, four revealed statistically significant differences. These included age of participants (younger participants expressed higher levels of sexism), marital status (unmarried participants have higher overall sexism scores than married participants), year of study (higher levels of education resulted in lower levels of hostile and benevolent sexism), and country of origin. Conversely, statistically significant differences were not found among the sample with respect to sex of participants or the frequency of religious participation.

In addition to bivariate analyses, participants' responses to the questions about the adequacy of programmes addressing gender equality in Namibia, and the visibility of campus initiatives and programmes were noteworthy. By almost a 2 to 1 ratio, participants do not believe there are enough programmes in the country addressing gender inequality. At the campus level, only 37% of respondents report knowledge of campus initiatives or programmes addressing the issue of gender inequality. Given the recent increases in reported acts of violence throughout Namibia, the university setting serves as ideal setting for initiating macro level changes which also have the possibility of changing the beliefs and behaviours of individuals (micro level). In this respect, highly visible campus messaging, initiatives, and campaigns send a clear message from the university, which serves to shape the campus climate. Further, it may also serve to increase the level of dialogue related to this issue, and serve as a springboard for changing beliefs and values related to the gender inequality.

While limited in scope and by methodical constraints, this study provides important insight to the attitudes and beliefs of social work students related to gender equality in Namibia. Future studies may centre on the beliefs and attitudes of university students in general in order to provide a comparison across traditionally male dominated and traditionally female dominated professions. Further, while very few international students participating in student's exchanges were included in the sample, it was apparent that significant differences existed amongst African and European students. This has potential for a comparative study rigorously examines the beliefs and attitudes and structures amongst these different populations.

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