



## Research Article

# The internalisation and normalisation process of rape myth acceptance: a qualitative study

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the general perception of the female rape victims and identify aspects constructing victim-blaming attitude in college students. This study generated qualitative design method with an in-depth interview in data collection. The number of participants in this study is fourteen consisted of seven males and seven female college students in Indonesia. This study examined the perspective toward female rape victim by evaluating aspects appeared within rape scope and rape myth acceptance topic. The result showed that there are an internalisation and normalisation process behind the act of victim blaming in Indonesia.

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## Introduction

Victim blaming is a social psychological phenomenon that includes criminology, social and psychological factors. Gravelin, Biernat and Bucher (2019) define that the sexual violence involved genital, oral, or anal penetration by parts of body or object perpetrator which is accompanied with force or without the consent of the victim. Furthermore, according to the writer, the definition of victim-blaming contains a belief that the victim is the main factor causing a rape incident.

There are some difficulties to draw a comprehensive picture of victim-blaming. Firstly, one of the elements of rape incident involves interpersonal violence that develops judgemental perspective toward perpetrators and victims (Droogendyk & Wright, 2014); therefore, this situation may trigger a biased view by norms and beliefs. Secondly, the rape definition sometimes is defined in a limited way in terms of less consideration about psychological elements such as coercion elements, consent, type of penetration and the statutory age (Koss, 1993). Based on this reason, the lack of conceptualisation to define rape becomes an obstacle to determine appropriate methods and approaches in the studies focused on rape and sexual assault.

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Research on the victim-blaming or rape myth acceptance topic has considerably developed in the past decade. Suarez (2010) conducted a meta-analysis that explaining the association between rape myth acceptance and the demographic elements and behavioural aspects. On the other hand, the newest literature review conducted by Gravelin, Biernat, & Bucher (2019) showed that rape myth acceptance is covered in three levels such as individual, situational and cultural level. They emphasised that ideology at the cultural level has a more significant potential for victim-blaming practice. This study may limit to review topic with acquaintance rape scenario; however, its finding has expanded the area that should be concerned when researching victim-blaming. According to the writer, the aspects in the individual, situational and institutional factor has influenced each other affecting overlapping factors behind rape myth acceptance studies.

Some studies have portrayed that rape myth acceptance persistently occurs in Indonesia. Blackburn (1999) revealed that the media has a significant role in enriching victim-blaming practice in society. The result of this study indicates that media tend to report women's clothes in 'provocative' and 'sensual' description when reporting rape cases. This finding seems to be made a justification for uncontrolled male sexuality. The victim-blaming practice does not only develop in the stigmatisation process but also transforms into the practice of decision making in the criminal justice process. The Thomas Reuters foundation (2019) published news that an Indonesian woman was sentenced to prison caused by reporting sexual harassment. Instead of establishing a verdict on a sexual harassment case, the court convicted her for distributing pornographic content covered by the electronic information and technology law. This report may represent the existence of rape myth acceptance in public institution services.

Furthermore, patriarchal value is also identified as a predictor of rape myth endorsement. The conversation (2018) describes that rape culture tolerates rape and sexual violence by sexism practice, gender role division and the existence of objectification toward the female body. The latest study by Poerwandari, Utami, & Primasari (2019) showed that ambivalent sexism and sexual objectification of women significantly predict rape myth acceptance. Furthermore, this study also emphasises that sexual objectification toward women have greater contribution to the victim blaming attitude.

On the other hand, there is an increasing number in the sexual harassment and rape case in Indonesia (Tempo News, 2016). Moreover, Indonesia was reported as one of the countries with the lowest rank (prevalence incidents of sexual violence 2.7%) in the reporting of sexual violence in Asia (World Health Organization, 2005). According to Komnas Perempuan publication in 2018, the sexual assaults dominated 31% of the destruction in the family and peer relationship. These reports indicate that there is an existence of rape myth acceptance and rape culture in society.

### **Rape Scope**

Three limitations have been identified in the rape studies consisted of rape terminology, methodology & prevalence. The term of sexual intercourse involves the activities related to penetration between the penis and vagina. Traditionally, there is an attempt to stop the incident before penetration occurred (Koss, 1993). According to Koss (1993), criminal regulation also identifies other sexual offences such as having sexual relations with underage, being raped by the legal partner, sexual exploitation to the people who unable give a consent (people with mental illness, mental retardation or drugs). This terminology will be potentially tricky in the examination process because there is no explicit definition. Koss (1993) stated that some previous studies only used case rape based on a police officer, meaning that there is a limited method to measure the scope of rape incident. Methodological limitation to assess rape in the true nature has significant implication to the prevalence of these studies. It will be challenging to complete health agenda without understanding the true nature of rape incident (Koss, 1993); furthermore, rape incident has traumatic consequences for the victim. A study by Droogendyk & Wright (2014) examined how the way of defining rape can affect the practice and implications of the juridical process. Intergroup violence perspective used in to determine rape has an impact on reducing the blame for the victim compared with interpersonal group perspective (Droogendyk & Wright, 2014). This study indicated that rape victim would be responsible for the victimisation.

## Rape Myth Acceptance

Initially, rape theory was developed based on the socialisation of sex roles that male is assumed to be aggressive and female are always placed as the cause of rape incidents (Brownmiller, 1975). Later, Burt (1980) proposes rape definition as a set of beliefs that contain prejudice, stereotypes or false assumptions about rape. Based on the sociological perspective, Burt (1980) explained that acceptable behaviour and gender preferences become the basis of sexual interactions that are internalised along with individual life span development.

Lonsway & Fitzgerald (1994) defined that rape myth as attitudes and beliefs that are widely and continuously used to justify male sexual aggression against women. Rape myth is prevalent and has the potential impact to have negative consequences for rape victims. Therefore, it is essential to understand why society holds personal views. Sanchez-Hucles dan Dutton (1999) described that rape in the cultural framework tends to focus on the local norms that contribute to sexual violence and victim-blaming practice.

Gravelin, Biernat, & Bucher (2019) argued that cultural differences influence the level of stigmatisation and victim-blaming practice. There is no national database that can be used as a reference for victim-blaming practice; however, the tendency of responding to sexual assault may represent the degree of victim-blaming training in the society. In terms of understanding the perception of victims and perpetrators in the rape incident, the concept of victim blaming is generated as an umbrella term to identify various attribution in the rape incident.

## About this Study

Previous studies have shown that behavioural and ideological variables are consistently found in the rape myth acceptance studies. Gravelin, Biernat, & Bucher (2019) have identified three levels of factors (individual, situational and institutional) contributing to the victim-blaming for acquaintance rape scenario. Some research has confirmed that there was the involvement of behavioural variables contributing to the acceptance of rape myth at the individual level. These studies consisted of perception toward gender (Sprankle, Bloomquist, Butcher, Gleason, & Schaefer, 2018; O'Connor, Cusano, McMahon, & Draper, 2018; Nafuka & Shino, 2014; Qureshi, Kulig, Cullen, & Fisher, 2020; G., Choudhari, Mutalik, & Bhogale, 2016; Sleath & Bull, 2015; Barn & Powers, 2018), aggressive behaviour (Bhogal & Corbett, 2016); pornography (Foubert, Brosi, & Bannon, 2011); body image perceptiveness (Hayes, Abbott, & Cook, 2016); blaming attribution (Rubinsky, Hosek, & Hudak, 2019) and alcohol consumption behaviour (Angelone, Mitchell, & Smith, 2018). On the other hand, some studies have identified the existence of ideological variables contributed to the rape myth acceptance in the institutional or cultural level. It consists of sexism (Canto, Perles, & Martín, 2014; LeMaire, Oswald, & Russell, 2016; Stoll, Lilley, & Pinter, 2017; (Davies, Gilston, & Rogers, 2012); gender role and sexual double standard (Lee, Kim, & Lim, 2010), sexual dysfunctional belief (Barnett, Hale, & Sligar, 2017), gender norms (Deming, Covan, Swan, & Billings, 2013); masculinity and femininity (Lutz-Zois, Moler, & Brown, 2015), and religious affiliation (Rebeiz & Harb, 2010; Barnett, Sligar, & Wang, 2018).

Gaps have been identified in those studies such as limited demographical preferences that are dominated by American sample, limited to the quantitative methodological approach, and the absence of socio-cultural context in the framework studies. Moreover, Gravelin, Biernat, & Bucher (2019) emphasised that there are inconsistent results between victim blaming aspects and the rape incident scenario, and it is because of the absence of socio-cultural context involved in the rape myth acceptance studies. Talking all of the above into consideration, in this study, we aimed to explore the general perception of the female rape victims and identify aspects constructing victim-blaming attitude in the college students.

## Method

This study generated qualitative design method with an in-depth interview in data collection. The interview schedule will be attached in the appendices. Participants in this study are male and female college students in Indonesia. Eight males and eight females have involved in this study. However, due to the technical issue during the interview, two participants excluded, and this study only analysed data from seven males and eight females. Participant criteria were

male and female college Indonesian students, studying in an Indonesian university and aged above 20 years old. A summary of demographic information in this study shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Participant Basic Information

Participant	College Students	Gender	Ethnicity
M1	V	Male	Padang - Bali
M2	V	Male	Jawa
M4	V	Male	Madura
M5	V	Male	Minang
M6	V	Male	Jawa
M7	V	Male	Jawa
M8	V	Male	Banjar
F10	V	Female	Minang
F11	V	Female	Betawi
F12	V	Female	Tionghoa
F13	V	Female	Manado - Jawa
F14	V	Female	Lampung
F15	V	Female	Jawa
F16	V	Female	Madura - Jawa

The participants were recruited by open recruitment process involving a poster publication advertised in the social media. The potential participants were asked to fill an online form which records their contact detail. Participants registering in the online form have been chosen randomly, and the researcher contacted them to confirm availability and to sign informed consent. The online platform (*Skype* and *Zoom*) were generated to accommodate the interview process. Besides, the duration of the interview process were around 40 minutes per participant.

Data analysed with thematic analysis approach to identify themes and pattern in the transcript of the interview process. In this study, the researcher used qualitative data software called MAXQDA Analytics Pro to organised the codes and label categories. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained that thematic analysis could be an approach to examine the phenomenon, meanings and the personal view about a specific topic. The process of data analysis will be described below:

- Evaluating data transcription by reading and writing notes about initial ideas
- Generating labels/ codes for meaningful sentences
- Categorising labels/ codes based on the similarity group topic
- Reviewing each category and establishing links between groups.

In terms of establishing a rigorous research and analysis process, the researcher applied the principle of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The credibility of the finding has been confirmed by conducting an in-depth interview with specific guidelines (see interview schedule) fulfilling the purpose of research. In the interview process, participants were allowed to define, label, and answer the question from their perspective. Moreover, the transferability issue in this study has been reflected in the research with similar socio-demographic characteristic. However, these findings have limitation to the generalisable to the large population of youth representation. In the confirmability points, the researcher asked confirmatory questions by allowing the participants to correct or clarify their answers throughout the interview process. And finally, the findings of this study would have emerged in similar themes in other group studies. It means that this study completes the dependability principle presented by the extent to which findings could be replicated.

## Results

The result of this review is not only defining the component of victim-blaming, but it is also performing rape scope coverage contributing to the operation of rape myth acceptance practice in Indonesia. The first category, called rape definition coverage that reviews participants' projection about the themes constructing rape definition on the personal level. There are three sub-categories consisted of the element of rape and the type of rape victim gender, identifying the aspect of the rape victim, and identifying the component of rape perpetrator. On the other hand, the second category is victim-blaming scope defining the conceptual variable reflecting the endorsement of victim-blaming process. There are six sub-categories in this theme such as gender dynamic, religious affiliation, knowledge about rape, scepticism about rape incidents, the role of media portrayal about rape, and women objectification toward pornography, and the summary of the theme is presented in Table 2. It should be mentioned that the victim blaming aspects in the individual coverage are consistently found in the conceptual component of victim-blaming.

**Table 2.** Findings Categorized by Category and Theme

Rape Scope		Rape Myth Acceptance Scope	
Category	Theme	Category	Theme
Rape element	Sexual behaviour	Gender role	Gender norms
	Coercion		Sexism
	Disagreement		
	Gender Type		
Identifying the aspect of rape victim	Female clothes	Religiosity	Religious affiliation
	Verbal expression		
	Women's behaviour		
	Social environment		
	Situational factor		
Identifying the aspect of rape perpetrator	Women's physical and physiological characteristic		
	Male's self control	Knowledge	The level of education
	Male's sex drive		Residence
	Personal attitude		Skepticism
Traumatic events			
Participants attribution toward Female Rape Victim	Empathy	Women's objectification	Media portrayals
	Sympathy		Object poronography
	Feeling sorry		
	Blaming the victim		

### Rape Definition Coverage

#### *The element & gender type in the rape*

The rape elements appeared in this study are the sexual intercourse involving coercion, threat and disagreement between two or more people. This view was developed both in the male and female participants. Some participants clearly explain the rape definition, but some participants describe rape by reflecting the personal attribution of rape such as negative behaviour, associating 'rape' with something 'taboo', 'despicable', and 'inappropriate'. Some male participants also define rape by emphasising any sexual intercourse practice without legal marriage (adultery) that construct the baseline definition of rape. This concept comes from scepticism about a disagreement between victim and perpetrator. Other than that, a female participant showed that sexual harassment as a part of sexual harassment. There are various ways influencing participants' perspective about rape, such as their personal experience, close friend's experience, social media,

and news in both online and conventional media. All participants agreed that female tend to be a victim in the rape case, except three participants said that each gender has a similar potency to be a victim in the rape case (F14.015; F10.014).

*A rape.. mmm...what's that? Rape, in one word is forcing... mmm it's kind of forcing in a sexual activity and it works for both men and women. Well, the main thing is a sexual activity acted under coercion. (F10.009)*

*Ee... I think, it's a sexual activity with no consent from both sides. So, the desire comes from one person only, either it is the man or the woman. It can happen to both strangers and acquaintances. (M7.008)*

*...in a college society where the college students are far from their parents, the rape case becomes the thing that terrifies them and the parents as well. Personally, the rape case is really disgusting. (M4.016)*

*I think it has been there for a long time. Still, it is considered as a taboo. Even the victim feels embarrassed to speak up about the case. I think, this case has been there for a long time but kept undetected. (F13.020)*

*Well, that's common. However, we cannot name it a rape ee... We cannot categorize it as a rape because, in an educational environment, they do it willingly. (M6.008)*

*I think, they are alienated. It's because they are considered as not virgin anymore in which it belongs to adultery. Despite the fact that the rape is out of their desire, they are still being... alienated. People should have helped them do a recovery since the victim must have had a mental problem. (F16.033)*

*Ee... the people's reaction is divided into two groups based on the type of rape itself. Victims from a pure rape in which there is no love and consent at all will get a positive reaction from the people. They will get support and help to recover their mental. On the other hand, when the rape case happens to lovers, the victim will be expelled harshly from the residential area despite the fact that she was raped. (M6.025)*

*I more often find the case outside campus or university like in a family or friendship. Something which happens inside campus or university I think belongs to sexual harassment not a rape. Well, that's based on my knowledge though. (F10.016)*

### **Identifying the aspect of the rape victim**

This part has identified what aspects make female is risky to be a victim. Based on the data analysis conducted in this study, there are four aspects considered as the cause of rape experience to the women consisted of female's clothes, verbal expression, women's behaviour and social environment, women's physical & physiological characteristic

#### **Female clothes**

The way of the female dress become a greater reason for rape in the male participants. All participants define that women with 'open' and sexy clothes tend to stimulate male's desire contributing the male intention to do a sexual offence toward the female. Some male participants explain female dress standard and restriction according to the eastern culture, such as wearing clothes covering the body and do not show the shape of the body (M4.038). Furthermore, sexy clothes also can be defined as a specific fashion item such as short pants, mini skirt, legging and other items showing off neck, elbow and knee (M8.014; M8.015). Some male participant belief that women should protect their bodies from the view of the opposite sex (M6.014; M6.015; M7.034). This belief reflects that female's appearance relates to the emergence of the male's lust. However, one participant explained that clothes are not a single factor causing rape to the female; there was a rape incident involving a hijab female wearing modest dresses (M2.016).

Sexy clothes tend to stimulate male's desire M2.015; M2.021; M2.033; M6.015; M8.021

On the other hand, most of the female participants reject the concept that female's clothes become the leading cause of rape incident. They did not deny that female's clothes are used to excuse a sexual offence, but the fact that rape can happen to the women with any types of clothes appearance (F15.032; F10.045; F11.028; F13.036). One participant said

that the way female dressed up would be determined with the norm and cultural standard such as avoiding dress which is too short and showing body curves (F15.040). Only one female describes her personal belief that women's appearance contributes to the male's sexual desire leading to the rape incident. This belief comes from the religious belief that what a woman wears will raise a consequence to the male's action.

*Women are kind of demon nets. The factors probably are the way they dress and behave which are considered as something seductive. (F16.022)*

*Well, the point is that when a man sees something that can rise his sexual desire, he will think about doing something bad such as raping. F16.023*

*Well, they should wear usual clothes like hijab, and then ee... the clothes should cover their aurat (a part of the body that needs to be covered in Islam) and it shouldn't show the curve of the body. Nowadays, many women like to wear mini dresses which show their aurat. It makes men interested in them. (M4.038)*

*The clothes which are considered inappropriate for the east culture. For example, not wearing hijab, ee... short pants or skirt, ee... tight clothes which show the curve of the body. (M8.014)*

*...Leggings can be one of the examples of inappropriate clothes. Although they are long pants, they still show the curve of the body. (M8.015)*

*Ee... based on moslem religion, the first factor is showing everyone the aurat (parts of the body that need to be covered) ee... then, there is a chance for a man to do a rape and ee... the perpetrator and the victim are in a 'right' time and place. (M6.014)*

*The clothes that do not show the curve and the thigh. Yeah, something like that and it can change all the time. (F15.040)*

### **Verbal Expression, Women's Behaviour, Social Environment and Situational Factor**

Male and female participants also identify attitudinal aspects related to rape, such as verbal communication styles, women's attitude and their social environment. Female's communication styles sometimes also attract a male to do sexual intercourse. Women perhaps do not intentions to ask for sex. However, men receive different perception toward feminine communication styles (M4.037; M8.025; M8.027). Female's communication style verbally and behaviourally, which make men feel emerged on their sexual desires. Some female's participants also identify that the content of communication moderate male's sexual attraction (F16.024; F11.031)

Female's behaviour is also considered as the cause of rape. Some male participants develop a scenario that women can seduce the opposite sex that potentially generates a sexual attraction respond to women. Another form of seductive activity is women deliberately showing her body in front of the male (M2.033). This statement can be reflected in specific jobs such as club and café waiters or ladies escort (M2.030). Women's activities that are identic with nights life will be identified as the rape predictor because this behaviour is not following ethics (M4.039). On the other hand, some female participants also identified that women today tend to show personal existence by uploading sexy photos to impress society on the social media, and this behaviour triggers the opposite sex to think negatively about women (F11.016). (M2.033; M2.030; M4.039; M5.049)

Furthermore, some male participants also identified the social environment and situational factor contributing to rape incidents. Female in the negative social environment tend to reflect a negative behaviour, and it will add a higher potential to the rape incident (M5.059; M7.057; M2.032). On the other hand, some situations characterised by time and places may also be possible as a predictor of the rape incident, for female, should avoid deserted street because this type of places is prone to criminality (M5.055). Some male participants described the opportunity to do sexual offences usually happened in the silence and closed place (M2.025; M6.014). Other than that, rape incidents can also occur

suddenly, both people who are already known or not (M7.030). Furthermore, A female participant recognised that women objectification in pornography creates a stigma that women deserve to be raped. This action is justified by how media objectifies and exploit the existence of women (F10.040).

*It's because when there is a woman dresses modestly, a man will not be interested in her and becoming sympathetic instead. However, if a woman dresses and talks inappropriately, it will trigger a man to do such a thing. (M4.037)*

*Ee... it's kind of seductive attitude including the gesture. Women may not aware that it makes men think that they want to have sexual activity with them. Besides the gesture, women's utterance about sex also can stimulate men's lust. (M8.025)*

*Usually, it is the way the women dress, talk, walk, and behave. Besides, it can also come from the women's scent. (F16.024)*

*Emm.. it is like, based on my experience, based on my environment. The woman propose a vulgar topic and sex topic. Take a look at the appearance, nowadays, especially in the center and district of Jakarta, it is common for women wearing mini and sexy clothes. So, the thing that provokes the man are the way the women talk about sex and other things. That's in my opinion (F11.031).*

*Ee... usually, some women become seductive. They seduce the man first ee... they intend to show the curve of their body which can stimulate the men's lust (M2.033).*

*The special factor... maybe those who work in the night hour ee... in a café or in a karaoke bar (M2.030).*

*The behavior or the attitude of the women can also be another factor. There are women who are stolid. Some of them like to hang out with men... mmm... some women behave against the ethic and the women nature (M4.039).*

*Nowadays, especially a woman like me, I have been living in Jakarta since I was a kid, so women want to look pretty. They want to look pretty in front of not only men but also women. They want to have a kind of body goals, perfect. Those things trigger men to hve a negative thinking. We do not know, we do not know in what phase people are, having high lust or low, we do not know. Well, if we meet a person having high lust and we want to show off what we want to show off, it will trigger the rape case (F11.016).*

*So, it is like, some of my friends like to hangout at night. Some of them go with their lover (M5.059).*

*So, this is why those kind of places need to be avoided. Not passing by at night can be the best choice (M5.055).*

*For example, in a quiet place like ee... in... in campus... in a class where there is no one but a woman who is wearing sexy clothes, or there is someone with whom he has one-sided love, a sexual harassment can happen (M2.025)*

*Ee... based on moslem religion, the first factor is showing everyone the aurat (parts of the body that need to be covered) ee... then, there is a chance for a man to do a rape and ee... the perpetrator and the victim are in a 'right' time and place (M6.014)*

*Emm.. Maybe, it is because, back to the idea that some men do the rape since they think that women can be.. mmm.. what to say.. it feels like I (the man) can do anything to women. It is a kind of underestimating attitude. And women, mmm maybe, the perpetrator considers women as object, sexual object. So, they can do anything then (F10.040).*

### **Women's Physical & Physiological Characteristic**

Female physical appearance becomes an attraction for men, especially in the certain women's body part that is considered as male's fetishes (M8.024; M1.028). Moreover, some female characters, such as the level of desire and inattentive personality, allow the potential of rape (M2.022; M5.042). On the other hand, a male participant also recognised that rape could occur when the female cannot fight back or protect herself because female generally have a weaker body than men (M7.025; M7.027)

Female group participants identify that there are three women characters that are vulnerable to rape. Women's physical and emotional is susceptible to assault condition. They may react the assault with various respond such as women cannot rationally thinking, shock effect, and lack of resistance (F10.020; F10.039; F13.029; F15.031). Moreover, a participant mentioned that women are part of the underprivileged group, and this condition located women as a targeted rape (F12.032).

*The external factors are ee... woman's body ee woman's look, and woman's attitude (M8.024).*

*...it will be eee... be easier to access those things. Eee... it also has something to do with a fetish. Everyone has different fetish, there are people who like a smooth way and those who like a rough way such as raping or doing other violent things. You may know it better than me since you study psychology (M1.028).*

*Ee... actually, we can control that. Furthrmore, there is a research which shows that men hass less lust than women. (M2.022).*

*It is like... I mean. Try to put ourselves in the victim's shoes. The thing might happens because we are being careless (M5.042).*

*So, when she is alone, she will easily become the victim. Another factor is the appearance of the woman itself. Besides, the man's intention can also be another factor (M7.025).*

*The things that make the woman easily become the victim is her appearance, ee besides, the woman cannot defense herself (M7.027).*

*Maybe it is because, women are considered as not having power to resist or maybe it is also because they are emotionally vulnereable since they themselves think that they are weak. That's my opinion (F10.020).*

*I am not like her, she sees a man like he is handsome, rich, this, that, so she fills something she doesn't have from her father that at last when she was being flattered just a little, seduced a little, she was like so happy, once trapped in love, but the love was not right. I had told her about that, but she didn't listen, then I just left her that way (F12.032).*

### **Identifying the aspect of rape perpetrator**

#### **Self-control & sex drive**

The relation between sex drive and male's self-control becomes the main reason behind the rape incident. Some participants explained that male would do everything to fulfil their sexual desires (M1.026; M2.016; M2.034). Furthermore, women also mostly agree that male self-control is an essential component behind sexual assault (F14.030). A female participant identifies that the act of rape is derived from the intention of the perpetrator (F13.052), and pornography consumption can be a stimulus of male sexual desire (F10.042).

*Mmm... of course, it's because they become the victim of lust. Eeee... when men's lust is, what's the term, the right term to say. Let's say erection. When a man has an erection eee... he will do anything to satisfy himself where the chance is 75%. There are many ways to satisfy himself such as raping, having sex, masturbating, or else (M1.026).*

*I don't think so. There are some cases where the victim is already wearing syar'i clothes (clothes that cover almost all of the body based on the syari'at/ rule in Islam). Despite the fact that she is wearing syar'i clothes, she gets a sexual harassment. So, probably, all comes from the perpetrator. He cannot control his lust. (M2.016).*

*It's because naturally, men's lust is stimulated by seeing something like that. However, when ee... the men cannot control the lust, the rape happen (M2.034).*

*Ehm it's because of forcing and the rapist. Because the rapist doesn't has a self-control (F14.030).*

*It totally depends on the rapist's intention (F13.052).*

*Maybe the rape is triggered by, what's that, the effect of watching emm pornography. Some of them whatch until emm, so it's like the perpetrator watches pornography and he wonderes what it is like. When there is a chance, he will try to do what he has watched on the video, that's in my opinion (F10.042).*

### **Personal Attitude**

On the other hand, some participants also consider male personal attitude as a factor to commit rape. They identify the perpetrator attitude caused by lack of education and religiosity (M5.119). Furthermore, they believe that education and religiosity becomes a moral foundation that is important to construct someone personality. A specific attitude can be triggered by personal motive like a conflict between individuals; therefore, using the act of rape as a part of revenge (M2.025).

*Usually, the factors that come from men are their personality, the lack of education, and the lack of religion (M5.119).*

*For example, in a quiet place like ee... in... in campus... in a class where there is no one but a woman who is wearing sexy clothes, or there is someone with whom he has one-sided love, a sexual harassment can happen (M2.025).*

### **Traumatic Events**

Some participants also identify that the perpetrator commits a rape because of his traumatic life event in the past. Participants argued that the perpetrator past life containing incidents related to sexual assault. Therefore, rape behaviour becomes a projection of perpetrator's past life (F10.044; M2.022; M2.023).

*What I have seen in news, emmm (???? 25.14) the perpetrator could be a victim in the past, yeah I don't know the specific experience but yeah they might be victim in the past so that there is a trauma. So, the perpetrator has a trauma about sexual harassment (F10.044).*

*So, men should have been able to control it. However, the rape case happens not only because one factor but there are other factors such as ee... the past trauma, the victim of harassment, or other things. So, when there is a chance, the rape case can happen. (M2.022).*

*Well, yeah maybe... in... in the past he had experienced the same thing or seen the same thing that creates trauma in his life (M2.023).*

### **Participant Attribution toward Female Rape Victim**

Almost all participant expresses their concerns to the female rape victim. Some of the participants showed their empathy by imagining how hard living under stigmatisation, and the other participants indicated to compassion by giving direct help in the form of psychological and material support. Male participant group projected their worries to the women's future after getting raped in the family and society (M4.035; M8.012). A male participant showed a tendency that rape is a part of destiny, and it is essential to accept the situation and forgive the feeling of guilty (M6.050; M4.098). On the

other hand, female group participants indicated that the female rape victim is experiencing a traumatic life event and suffering in the future. Some female participants said that rape is not an option that the victim wants (F14.024; F10.037). Therefore, all participants showed expression of regretting the incident and feeling concerned about what had happened to the rape victim.

*It also affects their psychology. When they were forced to do such a thing, there was a psychological disturbance ee... they begin to be afraid of seeing someone, or men surround them. (M4.035).*

*The external factors are ee... woman's body ee woman's look, and woman's attitude (M8.012).*

*Ee... my response ee... I ee... feel. I feel bad for them. They are probably the dearest in their family. That unfortunate thing may happen because of her bad luck (M6.050).*

*Since they have done that thing, they of course feel guilty (M4.098).*

*It's so sad. It is out of their control. So, we cannot blame them (F14.024).*

*Emm.. The struggle will be heavier further because it feels like living with a trauma. And yes, trauma cannot be easily. It might be really hard though. It feels like in a stage where we have to live our life and accept that we have experience that bad thing. So, yes, it is hard for those accompanying the victim as well as the girl victim itself (F10.037).*

### **Conceptual Variable of Rape Myth Acceptance**

*A gender role, gender norm, sexism & religious affiliation*

Participants projected that norm becomes the most influential factor about blaming the rape victim. Most Indonesian societies adopted standard based on cultural and religious values. Therefore, society must comply with the norm that sexual activities must be carried out in a legal marriage bond (F16.038). Intentional or accidental sexual activities will be viewed as activities that violate social norm (F16.040; M4.077). This view becomes a basis for expressing public disappointment toward norm breakers, and it is projected in the women to attribute such as female clothing and behaviour (F13.033; F15.043; F15.044; M2.044; M1.041). Moreover, society will blame the victim more when there is a pregnancy (F12.038; F16.035).

Participants also projected that general society sometimes limits women's roles such as women not being flirtatious (F15.038) and women have a lower degree than male (F13.034). The act of sexism in this study will justify the view that women who contravene the affirmed roles will admit rape myth acceptance (F15.044; M4.039).

Furthermore, personal religiosity endorsed rape myth that women are to blame in the rape incident. Some religious institutions have specific regulation about the sexual relationship after going through the marriage process. This regulation becomes the source of the label about a dishonourable person who has sexual relations without legal marriage (M4.045). The religious conservatives accuse that rape as an incident violating ethics; therefore, they may limit the perspective about the intention behind rape incident. (F16.037; M7.034).

*The rule is that people must be married first before doing a sexual intercourse (F16.038). It is just like a moral value in civics lesson. Two people who are not married yet is considered to be immoral for doing sexual intercourse (F16.040).*

*Ehehehe... norm is a thing in a society such as ethics. People are afraid that the rape behavior which is consider as bad will affect people in general. You know that the majority of people here are Moslem, right. People who are lacking of education will think that there will be azab (punishment from God) to the Moslem people around. However, those who are well-educated InsyaAllah have wider perspective already (M4.077).*

*It is like people begin to disrespect the woman or do other similar things. It sounds as if the woman cannot fit in a society. Or, as if they have violated the norm in a society (F13.033).*

*Well, yeah that's usually "that's because the everyday clothes", for example, "that's because the sexy dress" "It is no wonder that she is raped" (F15.043).*

*It is like, no wonder that men feel horny when they see a woman wear such a mini dress. The men won't resist the temptation so that they try to satisfy their desire by force (F15.044).*

*Maybe, it's because they see the case only from one perspective. The comment that I mostly hear is "it's no wonder that she becomes the victim of a rape case. She works in a dim place... ee... and look at the way she dresses". They know it but they let it be (M2.044).*

*...but mostly, they tend to being judgemental. Even in a police office, they also become judgemental "It's because you are drunk!" Well, the point is not on the alcohol but it's just because there is such a man. We talk about the case in Indonesia, right? (M1.041).*

*Mm.. maybe it is because women are stigmatized by the society. Women are required to be passive, to not wearing a sexy dress. If it is not, they will be considered as bad women. There will be a statement in the society "you must be wearing a sexy clothes". The society thinks that men will feel horny when they see women wearing a sexy dress (F15.038).*

*The behavior or the attitude of the women can also be another factor. There are women who are stolid. Some of them like to hang out with men... mmm... some women behave against the ethic and the women nature (M4.039).*

*People consider them bad. The women are considered sinful (M4.045).*

*It's because the culture or religion. That behavior is considered inappropriate behavior. It against the rule. (F16.037).*

*One of the factors can come from the norm in a society, or the spirituality in a society. For example, in a moslem society, people have what so called the aurat. Furthermore, there is a customary law which consider it bad (M7.034).*

### **Knowledge & Skepticism about Rape**

Participants also define that people with certain characteristics tend to blame. The level of education and residence become the factor constructing the prejudice level toward female rape victim. People who live in rural areas tend to blame the rape victim because they are a communal society that has less tolerance to accept value outside their customs, culture and religious norms. Besides, urban society tends to live with individualistic norms that blameless rape victim (M4.054; M6.025). Someone's residence may predict the educational access gained, and the level of education becomes a factor of the acceptance of rape victim. Education is believed as an instrument linked to the cognitive capacity to assess rape incident with an open mind and less judgemental thinking. (F13.047; F14.065).

On the other hand, some participants also identify that community groups that blame the rape victim tend to maintain sceptical thinking about the incident of rape. Sceptical thinking is disbelief that there is an element of coercion in the sexual relationship. They expressed that the incident was caused by the involvement of both male and female, especially if there is a close relationship between victim and perpetrator (M6.025; F11.017).

*Usually, those are people who ee... live in villages They are different to those who live in a city. People in a city tend to be individualistic they don't really care about other people but their own family. Meanwhile, people in villages still care each other so that they tend to gossip about problems like this case. Besides ee... there is a lack of education (M4.054).*

*Ee... the people's reaction is divided into two groups based on the type of rape itself. Victims from a pure rape in which there is no love and consent at all will get a positive reaction from the people. They will get support and help to recover their mental. On the other hand, when the rape case happens to lovers, the victim will be expelled harshly from the residential area despite the fact that she was raped (M6.025).*

*Yes. It is not necessary a (formal) education. The open-minded thought and strong humanity in a family are the characteristics of a well-educated family although (formal) education also affects the mindset of the family (F13.047).*

*Other than education. Well, education really affects the mindset so yeah... (F14.065).*

*Ee... the people's reaction is divided into two groups based on the type of rape itself. Victims from a pure rape in which there is no love and consent at all will get a positive reaction from the people. They will get support and help to recover their mental. On the other hand, when the rape case happens to lovers, the victim will be expelled harshly from the residential area despite the fact that she was raped (M6.025).*

*According to me, they are often underestimated. The rape case is like an iceberg phenomena, for those who are brave enough to show off (speak up), for those who are brave to make a report, they have to be ready for blasphemy, being alienated from society (F11.017).*

### **Media Portrayals & Pornography Consumption**

Participants also identify that the role of media in portraying female rape victim contributes to the rape myth acceptance. Media headlines emphasise a bombastic title about rape case to attract readers (M4.069). Furthermore, the news showed overexpose victims without proportional identity protections, and they tend to develop a reader perspective by depicting women's clothes and behaviour (F10.052; F15.052).

On the other hand, male's pornography consumption also become the reason that women are perceived as an object to be raped. Some participants identify that consuming pornography affects the level of male's desire which should be fulfilled (F10.042; M1.029; M2.013)

*Well, actually I don't know either it is not published or it's me who don't follow the media. As far as I know, however, media tends to find a way to catch our interest ee... it is like... (M4.069).*

*Emm.. it is like highlighting for example clothes the victim is wearing. It will lead people's opinion to blame the way the victim dresses. So, people will begin to rationalize the rape by commenting about "that's because her dress, that's because she is going home late". All of the comments are irrelevant. (F10.052).*

*In my opinion, the news should protect the victim's identity. The news should mor—many people will not know the identity if there is only an initial published in the news without attaching the address. (F15.052).*

*Emm.. Maybe the rape is triggered by, what's that, the effect of watching emm pornography. Some of them whatch until emm, so it's like the perpetrator watches pornography and he wonderes what it is like. When there is a chance, he will try to do what he has watched on the video, that's in my opinion. (F10.042).*

*The thing between media and fetish, well for fetish... as I have explained before, there are people who like a smooth way and a rough way like raping and other things. The video helps to arouse them (M1.029).*

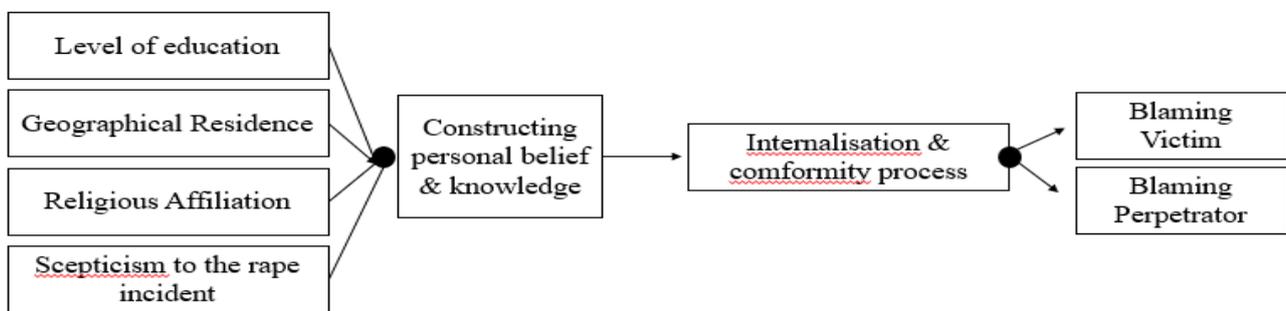
*Eee... maybe it's because there are a sexual factor and other factors as well. Maybe the perpetrator was also a victim in the past or the victim of blue film (M2.013).*

## Discussion and Conclusion

### *Internalisation Process of Rape Myth Acceptance*

Internalisation and conformity process toward victim-blaming attribution were identified in this study. There is a connection between personal belief and knowledge and the process of information about rape incidents. Four aspects were identified as the factor contributing to the individual capacity, such as the level of education, geographical residence, religious affiliation and scepticism toward rape incidents. The internalisation process has been shown in Graphic 1.

Participants in this study expressed that education access becomes the main characteristic that distinguishes blame attribution to the female rape victim. Low-level educated people living in the rural area tend to maintain a mindset that adheres to traditional norms. This mindset intervenes analytic thinking to evaluate rape incidents objectively. Moreover, this group society tends to apply conformity by following other people’s judgements about traditional value arrange the man and women role. This finding is justified by the previous result of the relationship between gender role conformity and rape myth acceptance. According to Grubb & Turner (2012) explained that gender role conformity enhances rape myth acceptance and victim-blaming by emerging cognitive schema supporting the traditional stereotyping idea that rape victims are the cause of incidents. The scepticism of the rape scenario was identified in this study. Some participants showed that society sometimes doubts the element of coercion in the rape scenario. They believe that the rape incident began from a consensual motive to do intimate sexual activities.

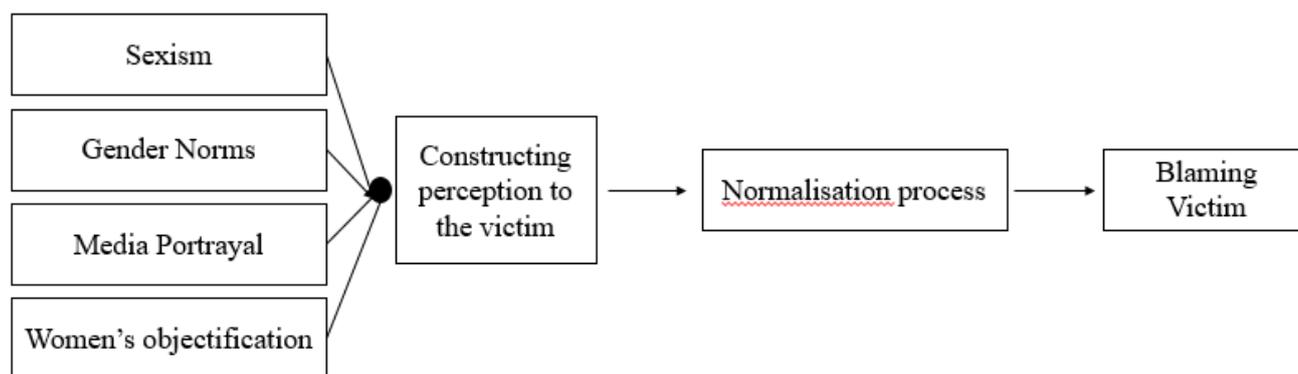


**Figure 1.** Internalisation Process of Rape Mith Acceptance

Furthermore, Spiritual values are known to be the foundation of an individual belief which influence responses to the rape myth. Intimate sexual activities without legal marriage are not allowed, and it violates religion rules. This religious belief will internalise some values that guide personal attribution to endorse rape myth. Barnett, Sligar, & Wan (2018) revealed that Christian and non-believer populations showed a positive association with rape myth acceptance. Furthermore, Rebeiz and Harb (2010) showed that people endorsing the values of conservatism (tradition and conformity) tend to display rape myth acceptance. This concept needs further exploration because the majority of the Indonesian population hold belief such as Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hinduism and Buddhism.

### *Normalisation Process of Rape Myth Acceptance*

Sexism, gender norms, media portray, and women’s objectification were identified as conceptual variables which contribute to the normalisation process toward rape myth acceptance. In this study, sexism and gender norms were expressed frequently as the factors which justify victim-blaming behaviour. The normalisation process based on perception formulation toward victim-blaming has shown in Graphic 2.



**Figure 2.** Normalisation Process of Rape Myth Acceptance

Participants in this study projected that the Indonesian perspective about female rape victim was dominated by prevailing social and cultural norms. The previous survey of Poerwandari, Utami, & Primasari (2019) confirmed that ambivalent sexism becomes a predictor of rape myth acceptance in Indonesia. This finding is identified in this study because society tends to place female in gender normative position such as being pure, protected and cherished. Sexism in this study shows that sexual harassment is tolerable as long as the victim behaves within the gender norm. This finding is supported by previous studies that a traditional gender role is persistent in the structural level of society (quo, Stoll, Lilley and Pinter, 2017; LeMaire, Oswald, & Russell, 2016). Gender norm socialisation plays an important role to construct rape myth acceptance, and it is reflected in the attitudes toward female rape victims (Barnett, Hale, & Sligar, 2017; Lee, Kim and Lim, 2010).

Moreover, this study also identifies the involvement of media and pornography toward the existence of rape myth acceptance. Participant showed that media portrayal of rape tends to decriminalise women. This finding is consistent in the previous study that women's clothes was captured with a provocative and sensual description in the Indonesian news-editorial (Blackburn; 1999). The topic of women's clothes in the rape incident frequently appears in this study. It reflects that women's appearance has become a significant aspect supporting the perceptiveness female rape victim. Similar to the previous pattern, women's objectification in pornography seems to normalise the exploitation toward female that is projected in the acceptance toward rape myth. This finding is supported in the previous studies that there is a trend for male committing sexual assault or rape to also regularly view pornography (Foubert, Brosi, & Bannon, 2011).

In conclusion, internalisation and normalisation process toward female rape victims have appeared. Participants expressed their belief about rape and the perception of the female rape victim. Education, geographical residence, religiosity and scepticism have been identified as aspects that endorse the internalisation process of rape myth acceptance. Moreover, sexism, gender norms, media portrayal and women's objectification are known as factors which support the normalisation process in the victim-blaming attitude. This study is limited in the exploration and identification of rape myth acceptance components, and it cannot show the proportion or the level of contribution toward female rape victim perceptions. Secondly, this study cannot show the different response between male and female participants. The theoretical implication of this study is to provide a scheme which is examined by the explorative approach, and it involves the socio-cultural aspect framing the finding of rape myth acceptance. Furthermore, this study is relevant in the female rape victim stigmatisation in the Indonesian criminal justice system.

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**Appendix 1.** Interview Form**Interview Schedule****I. Opening**

- A. **(Establish Rapport)** My name is Mutia Husna Avezahra and I am a researcher in the Forensic Psychology field.
- B. **(Purpose)** I would like to ask you some questions about your personal identity, your knowledge about rape cases in Indonesia and how do you perceive towards female rape victims.
- C. **(Motivation)** I hope to use this information to understand how do Indonesian students view female rape victims and to probe the concept behind these perceptions.
- D. **(Time Line)** this interview will be take about 45 minutes. Are you available to respond to some questions this time?

**II. Body**

- A. **(Topic)** Personal Identity
  - 1. Could you introduce yourself please?

*(Question 1. Did not have to be asked because this information is on the online form)*

- a. What is your name?
- b. How old are you?
- c. What is your level education?
- d. What major do you take in the university?
- e. What is your ethnic group?
- B. **(Topic)** Knowledge about rape cases
  - a. Based on your understanding, how would you define rape? What do you think has influenced how you define rape? Who do you think becomes a victim of rape?
  - b. Based on your understanding, how would you define rape? What do you think has influenced how you define rape? Who do you think becomes a victim of rape?
  - c. Do you think rape occurs in a university or educational setting? How do you think this occurs? Why do you think that?
- C. **(Topic)** View toward female rape victims
  - a. What do you think about female as a victim of rape? Are there particular factors that make a woman more at risk of becoming a victim of rape?
  - b. What is your view toward female victims of rape?
  - c. In your opinion, how does Indonesian society view female victims of rape? Do you think rape frequently occurs in Indonesia? Why do you think that? What underpins these beliefs?
  - d. What is your attitudes or response to the female experiencing rape?
  - e. How do you think female victims of rape should be treated? Would you recommend that all female victims report to the police?

**III. Closing**

- A. **(Maintain Rapport)** I appreciate the time you took for this interview. I should have all the information I need. Would it be alright to contact you again if I have any more questions? Thanks again.