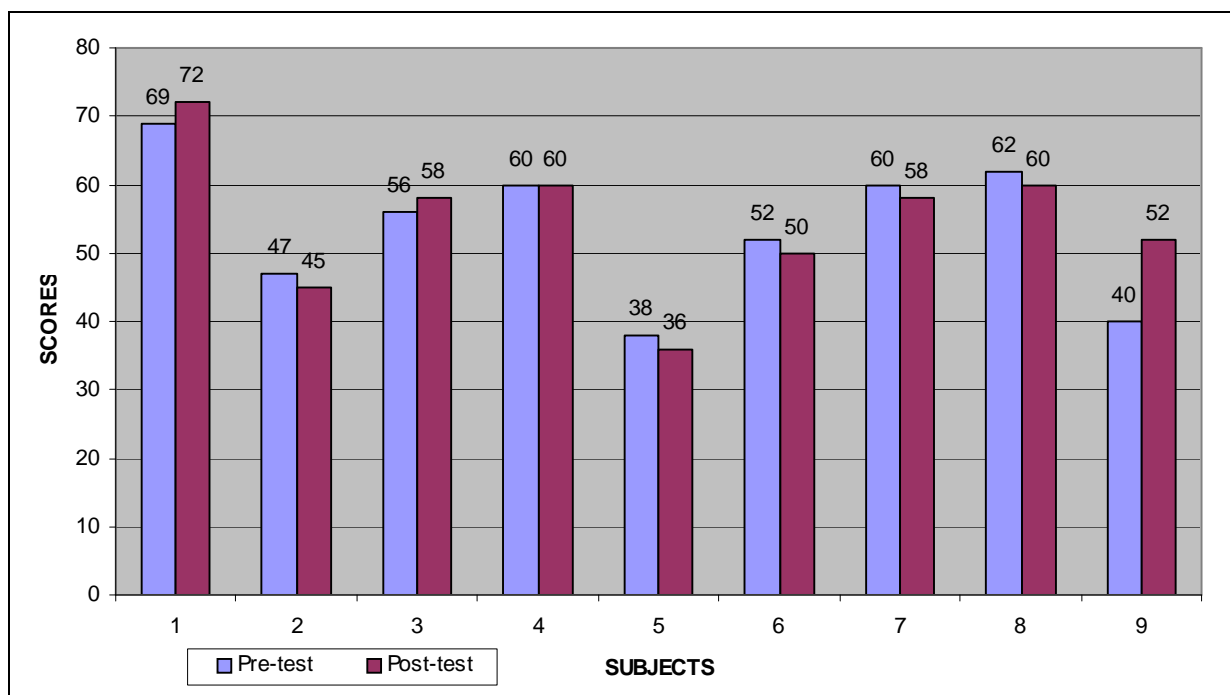


looked at the research subjects' perception of themselves and their perception of how other people view them. A score between 81-125 indicates that the subject has a quite a number of problem areas which contributes to a negative self-concept. A score between 51-80 indicates that the subject has a fair self-concept and attention should be given to the problem areas. A score between 31-50 indicates that the subject has a good self-concept with few problem areas. A score between 20-30 indicates that the subject has a very positive self-concept.

The scores presented showed high levels of improvement in self-concepts of the experimental group as compared to the control group.

It should be noted that, given the period of the programme and the fact that the group was post-tested straight after the treatment, sustainability of these scores or further improvements cannot be assumed.

GRAPH 2
CONTROL GROUP SCORES: SELF-CONCEPT



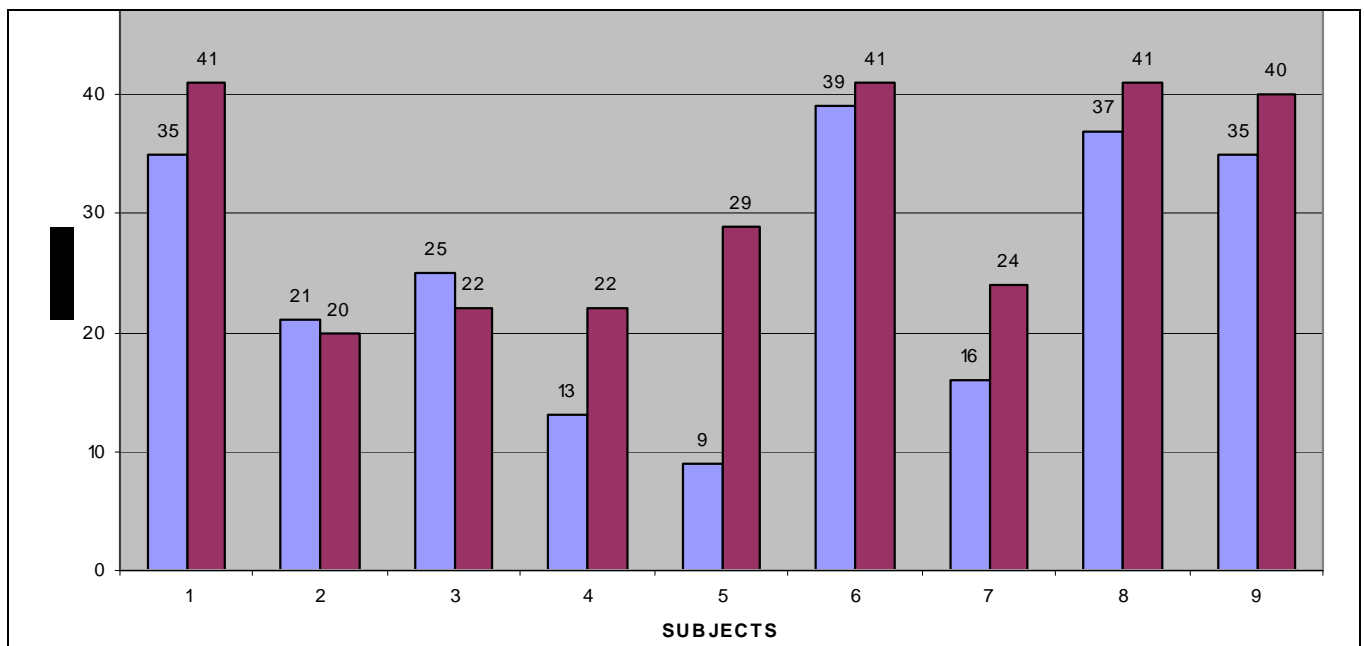
The effectiveness of the sexual offender programme in helping the offenders to develop a positive attitude towards women and to develop victim empathy

Sessions on gender issues, sexuality, values, beliefs, norms, family influences, socialization and relationships provided a platform where group members' attitudes towards women were addressed. Their responses during these sessions identified a need to take into account and address the social context within which their responses are rooted. According to Hoghghi *et al.* (1997), in general, we cannot understand individual behaviour in isolation from its context and the major influences on it. The group members commented on the usefulness of the role exchange exercise in developing victim empathy. Humanizing the victims prepared the way for the offenders to take responsibility for the abuse and it was only upon understanding the harmfulness of their activities, that some genuine remorse developed. The aim was to help the perpetrator to overcome the tendency to see the victim as an object for their self-expression and to see instead the victim as hurt, frightened, betrayed, and defiled by their behaviours. This module dealt, powerfully and effectively, with the implications of their behaviour for the victims. The long and short-term consequences were discussed and the focus shifted away from them to their victims,

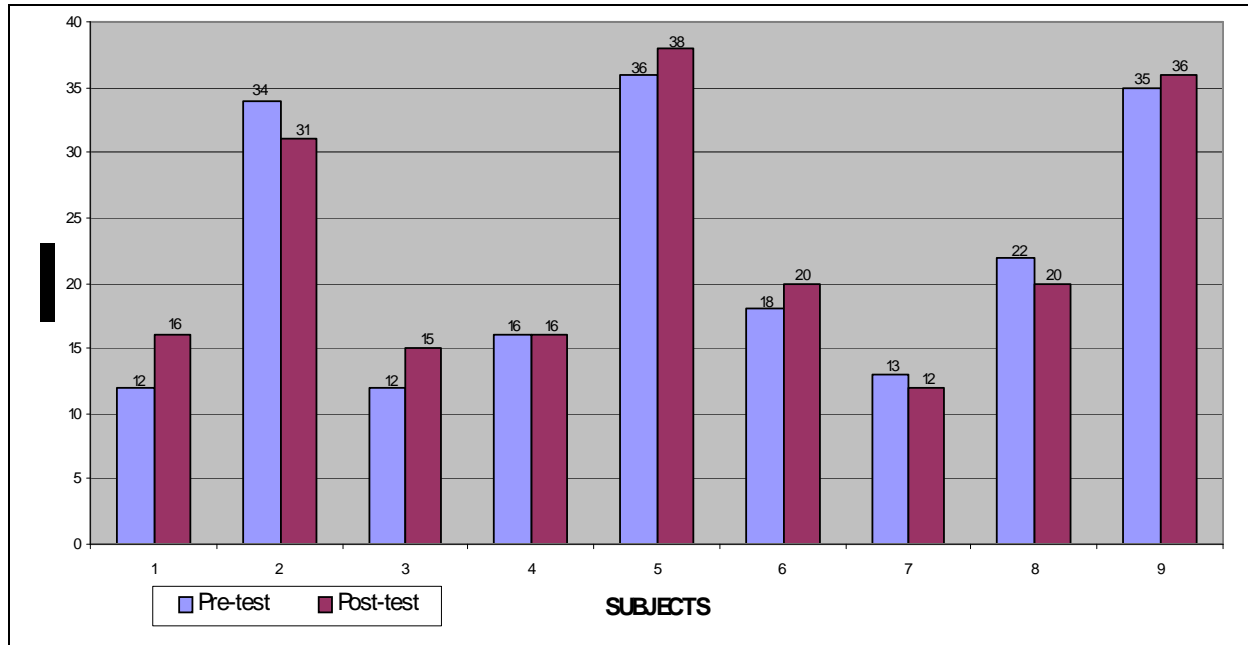
the victims' families and the community. This was a very powerful process and was a turning point in the treatment process. An awareness of the need to understand others' feelings and points of view before reacting to a situation was developed. The results of the pre-test and post-test of the Attitude Towards Women scale by Spencer & Helmreich, 1978, are summarised in graphs three and four. The scale is a 15-item scale that measures attitudes towards a number of aspects of women's roles including vocational, educational and interpersonal relationships. The interpersonal realm covers dating, sexual behaviour, and marital obligations. This scale also provides information regarding offenders' degree of sex role stereotyping. Although scores range from 0-45, it is not necessary solely to score the ATW quantitatively. The researcher also derives to information regarding the degree of subject's sex role stereotype by analysing how the subject has engaged/ answered to the scale's individual item. However a high score indicates a more egalitarian attitude toward women.

The post-test scores on the Attitude Towards Women scale administered indicated that the sexual offender programme in this study contributed to the development of a more positive attitude towards women and to greater victim empathy by the experimental group. Data obtained during the evaluation process also indicated such improvements. Group members' responses on the pre-test scale, were observed to be influenced by their social backgrounds. Those from the rural areas were more prone to agree with statements that supported gender stereotypes influenced by cultural beliefs and patriarchal systems, compared with those from more urban areas.

GRAPH 3
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP SCORES: ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN



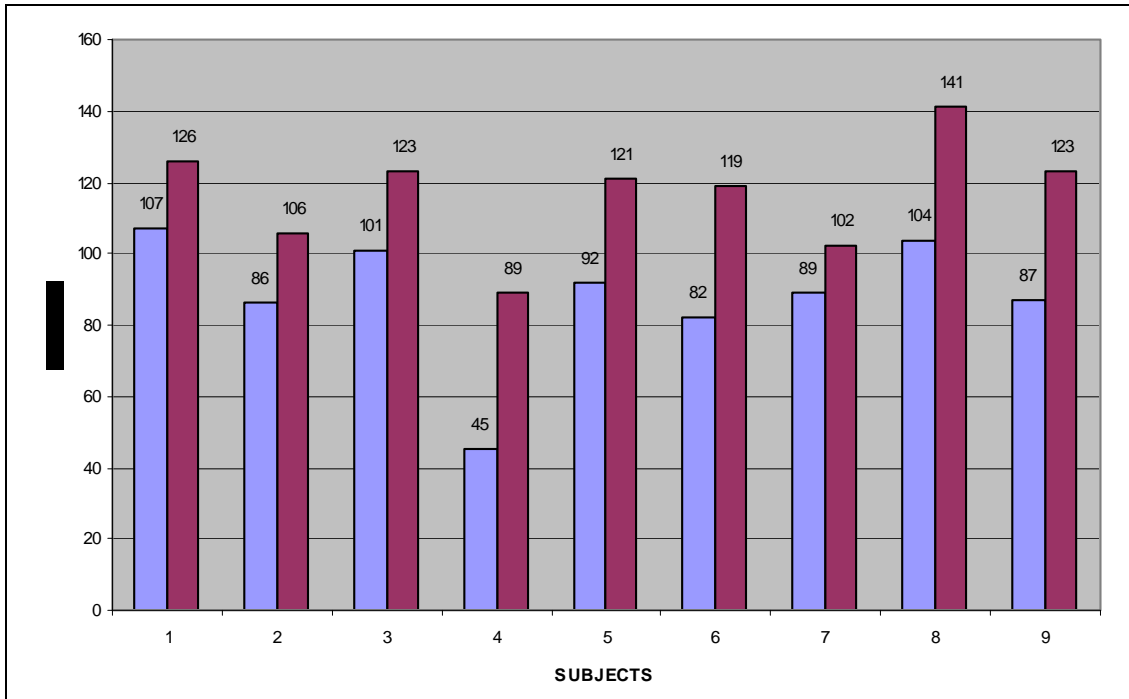
GRAPH 4
CONTROL GROUP SCORES: ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN



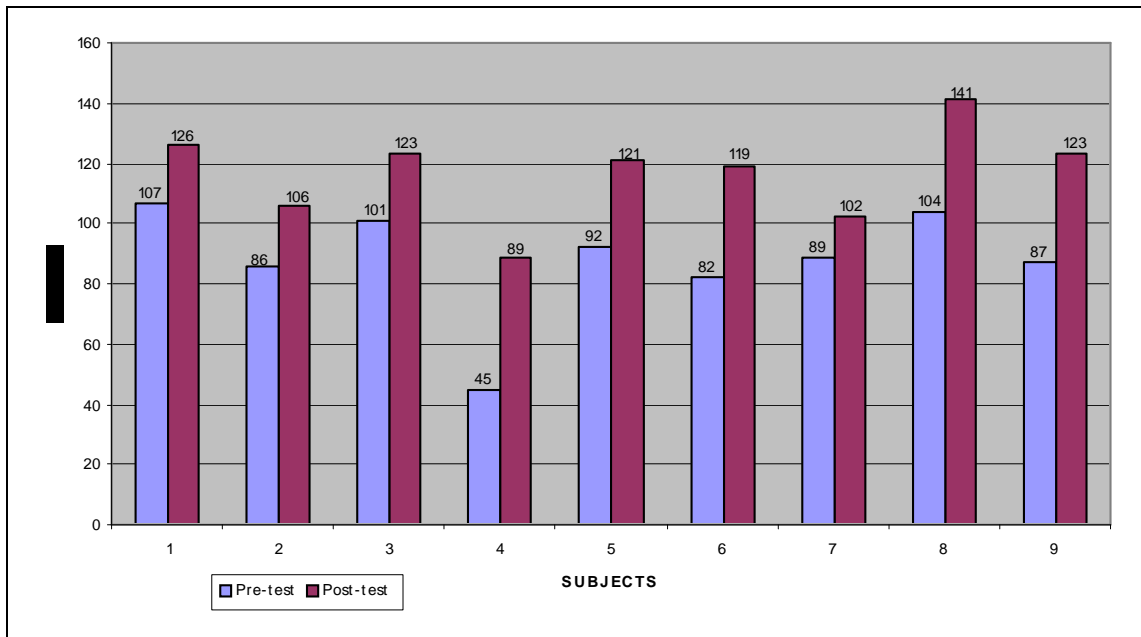
The effectiveness of the sexual offender programme in cognitive restructuring and its influence on behavioural change

Sessions on cognitive restructuring and re-education were spent developing and utilizing covert sensitisation scripts. The purpose of covert sensitisation was for each group member to learn to recognize his own thought processes and behaviours that place him at risk to abuse someone, and to interrupt these thought processes and behaviours. These sessions also provided group members with opportunities to be in touch with themselves, deal with their emotions and review and change their thinking processes. Ward, Hudson, Johnston and Marshall (1990) suggested that an understanding of the cognitive processes underlying the initiation, maintenance and justification of sexual offending is a vital pre-requisite to the successful treatment of sexual offenders. Group members' responses to these sessions indicated their increased ability to avoid taking impulsive actions or decisions. This ability can limit chances of future offending since it is strongly believed that criminal acts frequently involve the satisfaction of immediate needs at the risk of longer-term aversive consequences: criminals are commonly assumed to be deficient in control or delay functions (Hoghughi *et al.*, 1997). The process of engaging group members in dialogue and in thought processes also had a positive impact in their improved cognition. The results of the pre-test and post-test of The Abel and Becker Cognition scale as outlined by Salter (1988) are summarised in graph five and six. This is a 29 item scale that measures cognitive distortions. The items were chosen from statements offenders have actually made in treatment (Salter, 1988). The focus is on what constitutes consent to sex, the perception of passiveness in victims as permission to continue, date rape, social roles, victim as a liar, victim enjoying it, and harmfulness of sexual offences. Subjects mark each item on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree (1-5). The items are noted clinically rather than formally scored (Salter, 1988). Each item represents statements that have been made by sex offenders to justify their behaviour (Salter, 1988). Agreement with any of the items represents an example of distorted cognitions to be addressed in therapy. For the purpose of this graph, items are scored quantitatively as well. The scores range from 29 (strongly agree), 58 (agree), 87 (neutral), 116 (disagree) and 145 (strongly disagree). All subjects from the experimental group showed more rational, positive, and improved cognitions in their post-test scores.

**GRAPH 5
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP SCORES: COGNITION**



**GRAPH 6
CONTROL GROUP SCORES: COGNITION**



FURTHER ADAPTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The processes of this study helped the researcher to identify factors inhibiting better programme performance and provided guidelines relating to further development and adaptation of the programme that was being evaluated. Programme adaptation may be necessary to narrow the gap between programme objectives and programme impact (Sathiparsad, 1997:109). Participants with lower educational or intelligence level experienced difficulty in understanding the instructions or answering procedures of the scales. Since the scales are in English and the participants were Zulu speaking, the researcher spent time trying to interpret the statement without losing their

meaning. These experiences are indicative of the need to develop scales that can be easily used by people with low education or intelligence level and that do not need language interpretation.

The need to do some exercises under supervision and during formal group sessions was identified as important in preventing future problems. For example, some participants experienced difficulty in accurately engaging in the “self-collage” exercise. Some of the participants’ collages were not the reflection of the participants’ lives or situations. The sessions on relationship with women and search for closeness lacked more practical components. For most participants intimate relationships were not practical while in prison. The participants were not even encouraged to develop intimate relationships with one another because that could be interpreted as promotion of homosexual relationships in prison. This aspect was identified as a need to be monitored and revisited during provision of after care services.

CONCLUSION

The overall response to the sexual offender programme in this study was positive. Data revealed that the objectives of each session and the programme as a whole were achieved. The assessment elicited information necessary for the formulation of intervention and treatment strategies, and also helped the researcher to develop a detailed profile for each research subject (Mathe, 2004). The approaches used in programme implementation were relevant and provided an environment for participants to grow and change. The topics covered in the programme were relevant and contributed to the group member’s development of insight, acceptance of responsibility and accountability for their actions, motivation not to offend and the skills necessary to avoid re-offending.

The data further revealed that skills learnt during the sessions were being implemented outside of the group setting. The skills learned also inspired the group members to develop interest in improving other aspects of their lives, for example education, spirituality, and sports. However, the fact that subjects were willing participants in the programme cannot guarantee that the responses to the programme could be the same with unwilling participants. Since this was a field experiment, the researcher did not have total control of extraneous variables. Nevertheless, despite there being no proof that the change occurred solely as a result of the researcher’s intervention; the triangulated research method adopted in this study, and the use of a control group supported the positive effects of the programme. This is reflected by the fact that the experimental group volunteered to continue meeting without the researcher’s involvement after formal programme termination, and they became agents of change as they adopted the role of peer educators in a “no violence towards women” programme. On the other hand, given the period of the programme and the artificial environment (prison) in which the group took place; it is difficult to make comments on the sustainability of the change in the group members.

The group participants themselves during the final group evaluation expressed satisfaction about their progress and the group itself. For all of them the group experience taught them how to work in a group context, how to convey respect when interacting with people, to be patient, to confront life challenges and to make use of effective communication skills.

According to Dhabicharan (2002) there is consensus that a long-term, intensive programme has significant record of success in rehabilitating the sexual offender. Because of the unstable prison environment, it is sometimes not possible to keep a prisoner in the same prison for a long time. However, to ensure maximum effectiveness of the prison programme, it is recommended that a long term, intensive programme made up of separate interrelated modules that form the bigger rehabilitation picture be implemented. These modules could be: intensive assessment, intensive

twenty to twenty three sessions programme similar to programme under study, restorative justice programmes including family and community re-integration, Community Corrections' after care services including relapse prevention, and other programmes such as life skills, substance abuse, and pre-release programme. These modules can be implemented separately, by different professionals, and throughout the prisoner's sentence term (from prison to parole term). Ideally, each group should have a tailor-made programme.

Community awareness programmes should also form part of the rehabilitation programmes. In the community, public acceptance of sexual stimuli and messages that foster exploitive attitudes and glorify abusive behaviours must be challenged. Social acceptance of violence, sexual objectification and compensatory sexual behaviours must be questioned. The greater success of rehabilitation programmes necessitates supportive environments by the service providers, the prison officials, prison policies, practices and procedures. These are practices that de-emphasise security over rehabilitation, policies that promote restorative justice over punishment and policies that calls for the implementation of Reconstruction and Development Programme principles. A longitudinal study is recommended to ascertain the long-term effects of the programme. In addition, studies similar to those conducted by Nicolaichuk (cited by Perkins *et al.*, 1998) which reported fifteen year post-release experience of the treated and untreated sex offenders are recommended.

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