CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the research was to explore and describe the criminal behavioural structure of serial rape within the South African context. Six research objectives were identified in order to facilitate the exploration and description of the phenomenon. The aim of this chapter is to ascertain to what extent the research objectives were achieved. This chapter will also include some investigative considerations which could assist investigators in any future serial rape investigations. Recommendations for future research will also be made.

7.1   CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research was the first of its kind to examine the phenomenon of serial rape within the South African context. Due to the dearth of research on this topic in South Africa, the research objectives were designed in order to construct a comprehensive 'picture' of the phenomenon in the South Africa.

The first research objective was to determine whether the South African serial rapist exhibits a certain amount of general and/or specific behavioural consistency, relating to determining the modus operandi, sexual behaviour, signature, and fantasy elements. The second objective was to determine whether such consistencies are observed, to determine whether the behavioural patterns are similar, and to determine the distinct groupings of behaviour.

Behavioural consistency requires that the offender's behaviour remain similar and consistent across the rape series. Due to the unique nature of the study, and in order to ensure that all of the relevant data were collected, a behavioural framework was constructed. The framework incorporated several psychological and criminological theoretical frameworks and typologies to ensure a comprehensive examination. This allowed the research to be more inclusive, as well as thorough, which allowed for a more explicit description of the phenomenon. The behavioural framework was structured in such a manner as to determine whether the serial rapist did indeed exhibit some measure of consistency across the rape series.

Utilising the behavioural profiling framework, general as well as specific behavioural consistency was observed in the data set in the choice of victims, in terms of the population groups and victim ages. A degree of consistency was also observed in the methods of approaching the victims and the locations where the offenders acquired the victims and where they attacked the victims. The offenders also demonstrated consistency in the levels of violence utilised, methods of control, preferential sexual behaviour, and pattern of sexual appetite.

The research has shown that all of the offenders in the data set exhibited consistent behavioural patterns throughout their individual rape series. As a group, the data set exhibited similar behavioural patterns, which occurred throughout each individual case, as well as the entire data set. The behavioural patterns were identified and observed as distinct behavioural aspects within the modus operandi as well as in the elements of the sexual behaviour.

When compared to international findings of similar types of research, several comparisons and differences were observed. These relate directly to the third and fourth research objectives. The third objective was to determine whether the South African serial rapist exhibit behavioural patterns which are comparable with international serial rapist typologies and characteristics. The fourth objective entailed constructing a victim profile of the South African serial rapist. The South African serial rapist appears to share some characteristics with international offenders. An initial general victim profile was constructed which incorporated the entire victim data set. It consisted of aspects such as the population groupings and the average victim age of each population group. The general victim profile indicated that the age ranges of the victims in the data set are similar, and the offenders were also unknown to the victims.

A significant difference between the current findings and international findings was the presence of considerable number of victims younger than fifteen years in the data set. In comparison to international findings the current research also indicated that the South African serial rapists appear to be more inclined to target victims from different population groups, but the majority of offences still occurred within the same population group. Further research is recommended. The offender population group dispersal of the data set also differed from the international findings. Differences were also observed in the education levels of the offenders. However, this could be attributed the sample size difference, social environment, as well as the general population group composition.

One of the most significant differences identified between the international and current research findings was the lack of forensic awareness. The South African serial rapists in the data set made no attempt to hide their identities from their victims. In many cases, the offenders returned to the exact same location repeatedly. One offender was apprehended with a victim as they made their way to the same rape location he utilised on previous occasions.

Constructing individual behavioural profiles of each offender was the fifth research objective. Once individual profiles of the offenders represented in the data set were constructed, the similarities and differences compared to international serial rape typologies could be determined. The research showed that existing typologies and theoretical frameworks can be applied within the South African context, but these are also inadequate in some respects. For example, the three internationally recognised methods of approaching the victims were observed in all of the cases in the data set, namely the con, surprise , and blitz methods of approach. However, a new method of approach was identified in the data set, which was classified as a delayed-con method of approach. As with the con method, this method of approach utilised a 'con' story, but also includes a time variable. The characteristic of this method is that there is a time delay of between two and five days between the initial contact and the second contact where the rape occurs. In some cases, the offender can also have intermittent contact with the victim to confirm their second meeting. For example, offender D phoned one of his victims during the five-day period to remind her of their appointment.

Another behavioural aspect observed in the data set which differs from the international typologies is the assault location. In over fifty percent of the international statistics, the attacks occurred inside the victim's own residence. In the current research, over fifty percent of the victims were approached and attacked at two different locations. In the majority of these incidents the actual attack occurred outside in isolated locations. Only 26% of the victims in the current study were attacked in their own homes. A significant difference which also became evident was the methods of transportation used by the offenders in the data set. In the South African research, the offenders only utilised their own vehicles during 17% of the incidents. In comparison, 62% of the offenders in the international findings used their own vehicle. Another behavioural difference observed was the occurrence of physical violence. The majority of the physical violence incidents occurred during the incidents where the offender approached the victims by using a con story. The use of injurious force is mostly associated with the blitz

method of approach. The con method is usually characterised by the offender using a trick or ruse, and no form of physical violence.

The individual profiles of the offenders allowed the researcher to determine the behavioural pattern of each of the offenders. By applying the behavioural profiling framework during the construction of the profiles, several distinctive behavioural aspects, which relate directly to the motivational indicators, were identified, which could not be adequately explained by the existing behavioural theories or typologies. The first unique aspect observed throughout the data set was the variations in the types of aggression exhibited by the offenders. During several of the incidents, some of the offenders initially employed instrumental types of aggression in the beginning of the incident. However, as the incident progressed, their behaviour changed and escalated to expressive types of aggression, which was more than necessary to ensure victim compliance. For example, offender A initially threatened one of his victims and slapped her a few times during the rape. However, the levels of violence and aggression increased and continued after the rape, to such an extent that he was charged with attempted murder.

The other significant difference observed in the data set was the multiple types of behaviour relating directly to the typological categorisation of each individual offender. Five of the offenders utilised in the data set exhibited behavioural patterns which could not be explained by any single typology. In all of these cases, the offenders exhibited behavioural patterns that were characteristic of multiple typologies in various facets of their behavioural structure. For example, offender G exhibited verbal behaviour during the sexual contact which was indicative of the power-assertive type rapist. However, during one incident, he attempted to deflect the blame for his actions and to garner sympathy from the victim. This is completely contradictory to the power-assertive type of behaviour exhibited during his other incidents. Offender I is another example of multiple behavioural types observed throughout the rape series. The levels of violence and methods of control utilised during his incidents were indicative of a power-reassurance type rapist. The offender will only employ the necessary amount of force needed to ensure victim compliance. By contrast, his sexual behaviour and interaction was indicative of a power-assertive type rapist. He was aggressive, degrading, and used profane language. He gave the victims explicit instructions as to what he expected from them and what type of sexual activities he wanted them to perform. Only three offenders in the data set exhibited behaviours which could 'fit' into a single typology. The research thus illustrated that although the existing

typologies can be applied to serial rapists in the South African context, in many respects they are not mutually exclusive.

The final research objective was to determine whether a general behavioural profile of the offender can be constructed by applying the specific behavioural frameworks and typologies that will be applicable within the South African context.

Due to the lack of any empirical research within the South African context, a behavioural profiling framework was constructed which integrated several existing psychological and criminological typologies and theories. The aim was to ensure that no behavioural evidence would be lost, and that any behavioural profile constructed would be as comprehensive as possible. The framework was comprehensive enough to differentiate between the multiple behavioural variations exhibited in the data set.

A general behavioural profile is intended to serve as a general guide for future serial rape investigations. Due to the nature of the phenomenon, the profile attempts to give the investigator a general idea of what to expect, as each individual case is different and unique. The profile focuses on general victim demographics as well as on a general offender description (e.g. age, population group, level of education, and criminal record). The profile also focuses on the modus operandi of the offender. This includes the methods of approach most commonly used, the locations where the victims were approached, and the locations where the actual rapes occurred. The general levels of violence as well as the methods of control most frequently utilised by the offender are also incorporated. The final aspect incorporated in the modus operandi is the general sexual behaviour exhibited throughout the data set.

In the current research there were marked differences amongst the offenders from the different population groups represented in the study. Therefore, a general profile for each individual population group represented in the study was more appropriate.

The biographical profiles of the various population groups represented in the study differed in several key sectors. For example, the black offenders were four years older than the white offenders in the data set, and eight years older than the coloured offender. The white offenders were employed in a professional capacity, and possessed high levels of education. In comparison, the black offenders were employed as labourers, and had low levels of education.

The coloured offender was unemployed at the time of his series, and possessed a medium education level. Although the biographical profiles of the various population groups differed, the groups did illustrate several commonalities in terms of their modus operandi.

Several behavioural differences were also observed in the data set between the black, coloured, and white offenders. For example, black offenders illustrated a tendency to commit their crimes outside, in open areas such as fields and plantations. They also made use of public transportation systems or walked to the intended locations with their victims. In comparison, white and coloured offenders tended to prefer to commit their crimes in more secure places, for example inside the victim's own home or inside a car. White offenders also exclusively made use of their own vehicles during their series.

In the following section, several investigative considerations will be given to assist the investigating officer in any future investigations. The aim is to make the investigator aware of certain aspects which could be overlooked during an investigation.

7.2   INVESTIGATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

One of the most common problems with serial rape investigations is that linking of cases occurs late in a series. By the time investigators have linked a series of rapes together, it is likely that there could be a high number of victims (Turvey, 1997). This is referred to as 'linkage blindness'. Linkage blindness can be described as a failure to recognise a pattern which links one crime to another through victimology, modus operandi, geographical location, the signature of the offender, or review of autopsy protocols (Gerbeth, 1995:46; Turvey, 1997). This delay in the linking of cases can mean that the necessary steps, such as formulating an investigation task team and activating the necessary resources, occur later, and valuable investigative time is wasted.

In an attempt to counteract the effects of linkage blindness, a number of investigative considerations have been compiled to assist future serial rape investigations.

An important aspect of eliminating linkage blindness is the co-operation between investigators across different police station areas. This is significant, because an examination of the data set indicated that, in the South African context, the serial rapists appear to move into and around

different policing areas within the same town or city. This compounds the complications associated with the identification of the particular series. The findings illustrate the investigators have to be aware of the fact that any given series can extend across several police station areas (precincts). Therefore, communication between various detective branches is essential. In South Africa, the recent closure of area offices and specialised units such as the Family Violence, Child Protection, and Sexual Offences (FCS) Units, and Serious and Violent Crime (SVC) Units that typically serviced numerous stations in an area, has further hampered identification and investigations of such series.

An important consideration when screening potential cases (new and old), is specific behavioural indicators that remain relatively consistent throughout the offender's series. The research has shown that the offender appears to remain consistent throughout the series, in terms of the methods of approach utilised. He might adapt and change his approach during a specific incident, depending on the circumstances. However, the findings would indicate that, across the entire series, he would remain consistent in his choice of methods, i.e. a con, delayed-con, or blitz/sudden attack. Those with a similar method of approach could be grouped together for further investigation. In the research, con stories were most often used, which would indicate that any stranger-rape case where a con was used should be red-flagged. A similar method of approach utilised by the offender could therefore be a good discriminating factor when selecting cases for linkage.

The research also illustrated that the offenders in the current research targeted victims from outside their own population group. However, in the majority of the cases, the offenders tended to select victims within their own population group. Therefore, the population group of the victims should not be used as a key factor to exclude cases in potential series.

The victim – offender relationship is also a significant linkage factor when screening cases. In the current research, the offenders targeted victims who were unknown to them 85% of the time, compared to general single rape statistics where 24.4% of the victims are unknown to the offender. Therefore stranger rapes could be set aside for further analysis when looking for or linking serial cases.

The geographical area or area of events is also an important factor, to be considered during the process of determining which cases could be connected. The study has shown that the

offenders in the data set demonstrated a high level of consistency in terms of the area/ location where the actual rapes were committed. During one series, the offender was caught with a victim as they were walking to the location where he had raped all his previous victims. In contrast, the offenders exhibited no fixed pattern in terms of the areas or locations where they first approached the victims. Therefore the location where the rapes occurred appears to be a better linkage factor than approach location.

A significant aspect which relates to predictive information for investigators with regards to the serial rape offender, is the victim's age. The research has shown that if the average age of the victims in a series is below 27, years the offender is likely to be older than the victim by approximately 11 years. In the cases where the victims' average age is older than 32 years at the time of the incidents, the offenders are likely to be significantly younger than the victims by approximately 12,9 years.

Another predictive behavioural indicator identified during the research is the frequency of sexual activities and the pattern of sexual appetite. The offenders showed a marked increase in their sexual appetites, either through an increase in sexual activities or an increase in victim frequency. An increase in sexual appetite could be utilised as a linkage factor by investigators when they are screening potential cases. It could also give an indication of how far advanced the series was. This could serve as an indication to the investigators of how far back they might need to search for old cases, or whether or not they should expect to find a marked increase in cases being reported.

One of the most significant behavioural features present in the research was the fact that the offenders made no attempt to hide their identities or to conceal any forensic evidence at the scene. In terms of future investigations, this is significant, because the victim could give a detailed description of her attacker. There could also be an abundance of forensic evidence that can link the offender to the crime and link the crimes together. It is important to note that more sophisticated offenders might have a higher forensic awareness and might take appropriate precautions.

The final investigative consideration relates to the basic procedure once a serial rape series has been identified. In order to ensure that valuable information is not lost, investigators could incorporate the elements of the behavioural checklist into their standard operating procedures.

The checklist was designed in such a manner that each individual aspect of the incident is covered. The checklist will ensure that relevant behavioural information is gathered. It will also serve as a general guideline for the investigator who is tasked with interviewing the victim.

The investigative considerations discussed in this section should not be viewed as mutually exclusive. No single behavioural indicator should be utilised as motivation to link one or more cases together. A single behavioural indicator can be used to support the inclusion of a case in a series, but any inclusion should be based on an overall analysis of the entire case.

7.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section recommendations on future research are made.

Due to the fact that this was the first study of its kind within the South African context, the research process involved dealing with many challenges. The most significant difficulty was the dearth of information regarding serial rape within the South African context.

In order to ensure a thorough description and exploration of the phenomenon, the research design had to be as comprehensive as possible. The researcher utilised existing research designs which were used in international research on the phenomenon as a basic template. However, instead of simply copying the design, the researcher allowed the richness of the information in the data set to determine the specific design structure. Any future research projects can follow the same basic design, but should focus more on specific aspects such as the demographical information of the victims. In the current research, the focus was on basic demographical information such as age and population group distribution, any future investigations should attempt to be more specific. Future research can focus on determining whether the victims share any specific physical features such as height, long hair, or body build, which could be a determining factor in the specific victim selection. Offender demographical information can also be expanded by future research. Research could be conducted on the personal relationships of the offender. Any interpersonal problems, or the lack of interpersonal interaction or relationships can be a contributing motivational factor. Future research should also be conducted on the phenomenon of women serial rapists.

Future research could also change the type of research to incorporate a single methodology. The current research employed a combined qualitative-quantitative research methodology. This allowed the research to explore the phenomenon within the South African context and also to give detailed descriptions of the behavioural variables observed in the data set. One of the drawbacks of a combined methodology is that the researcher had to compromise between using a large data set and generating qualitative data. In terms of the current research, the biggest potential point of critique is the limited sample size. However, the smaller, more manageable sample size allowed for a more in-depth and thorough description and exploration of the phenomenon. Utilising a single quantitative methodology will allow future research to focus on specific elements and to generate empirical data from a larger sample size. Another point of criticism in terms of the current research is the use of multiple theoretical frameworks. The behavioural profiling framework incorporated several theoretical aspects, which would ensure a comprehensive profile. However, the framework did not focus on determining the motivational aspects of the individual offenders. Future research should be conducted by utilising psychologically grounded theories to focus on the specific behavioural motivation of serial rapists.

One significant aspect that came to the fore during the research was the geographical areas within which the offenders committed their crimes. Canter and Larkin (1993:65) hypothesised two general models which describe the relationship between the offender's area of offending and his residence. The 'marauder model' assumes a close relationship between the offender's home and his criminal range. This model stipulates that the offender moves out in random patterns from his home to commit the crimes. The 'commuter model' assumes that the offender's 'crime range' is an appreciable distance from his home. The model also stipulates that the 'crime range' is completely separated from the area where he lives. Canter suggested that the offenders rarely travel long distances to commit their crimes, but will rather operate within a small geographical area around his or her home base (Ainsworth, 2005:86). In the case of the current research, the offender's home ranges were not incorporated into the research.

Future research is also recommended into the total lack of forensic awareness or any precautionary measures taken by the offender. Compared to international findings, the South African serial rapists made no attempt to hide their identities from their victims or to take any measures to hide their identities from law enforcement. In the current research, one of the offenders' reluctance in taking any form of forensic precaution could be attributed to traditional

beliefs. Future research projects could focus on the influence of traditional beliefs by conducting interviews with serial rapists.

Further investigation into the behavioural differences observed between the international offenders and the South African data set is also recommended. The international findings illustrated that in the majority of their incidents, the offences were committed indoors, usually inside the victim's own home. This could be attributed to the fact that the offenders had previous experience of breaking into homes. This gave them the confidence to enter the victim's own home while she was alone. It could also indicate a higher level of criminal sophistication on the part of the international offenders. The majority of the offences in this research occurred across two distinct locations. The first was the location where the offender approached his intended victims. This was usually when the victim was alone, or even in some cases in populated areas. The second location was where the actual attack occurred. The offender and his intended victim would make their way towards this location by utilising public transportation systems or walking. In the majority of the cases, the location where the actual attack occurred was outside in an isolated location, usually a field or a plantation of some sort. Some of the offenders did commit their crimes indoors, or inside a car. However, the incidents still had a separate location where the offender approached the victim. Only two offenders in the data set exhibited similar behavioural consistencies as the international offenders.

One significant feature observed during the research was the behavioural variations relating to the types of aggression observed in the data set. Some of the offenders exhibited behavioural variations which could not be explained by existing theories. The offender initially displayed instrumental types of aggression, which ensured that the victims did what he wanted. However, as the incident progressed, the levels of aggression escalated and continued past the point where it was functional, and even expressive, in nature. Further research is recommended in order to determine whether it is simply a behavioural variance of the expressive type of aggression, or a distinct type of aggression not just simply aimed at harming the victim.

Further research should also be conducted into the occurrence of multiple behavioural indicators relating to the motivational typologies of the offenders. Several of the offences which comprised the data set exhibited behaviours which could be attributed to multiple behavioural and motivational typologies. Further research is recommended in order to determine whether or not multiple behavioural-motivational indicators are observed in a larger data set. The results

could also be compared to international offenders, to determine whether multiple behavioural-motivational indicators occur in them as well.

7.4   CONCLUSION

The objective of the research was to explore and describe serial rape as it occurs within the South African context. The aim was to create a detailed description of the phenomenon as it presents itself within the South African context. In order to achieve this, six research objectives were created to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon within the South African context.

Due to the nature of the research and the dearth of information, the research had to be innovative and creative, in order to be as comprehensive and thorough as possible. A behavioural-profiling framework was developed, and it incorporated several theoretical elements from various authors. This allowed the framework to be as inclusive and complete as possible. A combination of both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods were utilised, allowing the researcher to achieve a more structured and coherent description and explanation of the phenomenon. Each individual series was analysed thoroughly, and an integrated analysis, which incorporated the entire data set, was also conducted.

The research illustrated the usefulness of the behavioural-profiling framework in constructing a thorough behavioural profile of a given offender. Such a profile could assist law enforcement in recognising and apprehending serial rapists in future investigations. The structured and inclusive nature of the framework will also contribute to the available body of knowledge regarding serial rape.

The research showed that the South African serial rapists exhibited similar behavioural characteristics as those observed in international research findings. The research also illustrated that, although similar in many respects, the South African offenders differed from international offenders in several aspects.

'To see what is right, and not to do it, is want of courage or of principle', Confucius