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**SPOTLIGHTING RAPE CULTURE IN GHANA THROUGH THE LENS OF DRAMA**

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<https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2022.0369>

**ABSTRACT**

This paper projects the deep-rooted veracity of rape culture in Ghana. Rape barely comes up in mainstream discourse in Ghana and there are no significant efforts to address this pervasive menace. Reported rape cases are often swept under the carpet and hardly sustained to logical conclusions. Victims are either blamed or stigmatised if they speak up and often, preventive overtures on rape are limited to cautioning girls to be careful not to get raped. In a bid to openly engage in conversation and examine the entrenched reality of rape culture in Ghana, we directed Danso Sakyi's play, *You Raped Me*, which highlights rape culture in Ghana. The play presents a controversial rape case in which the audience forms the jury to pronounce judgement after the accuser and accused are heard. Selected members of the audience were engaged in open forum discussion on why the culprit should be convicted or reasons to declare the victim's story incredible. With the play as a stimulus, the pertinent subject of rape was discussed offering an appreciable depth of insight into society's views on rape culture in Ghana. This paper illuminates the contents of the play in relation to rape culture and discusses the views of the respondents. The findings showed that *rape culture* is really entrenched in Ghana and people will believe or disprove one's claim of rape based on engrained biases of who raped, who got raped and the circumstances of the rape.

**Key Words:** Rape Culture; Consent; Victimisation; Stigmatisation; Objectification.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

It is sometimes difficult and even embarrassing for many Ghanaians to engage in conversation on rape. It is just understood by many ordinarily as shag, especially, if the rapist and the victim are both adults. In this seemingly moralistic society, sex is an unusual topic to discuss by many; it is sacred, private, and even shameful. In some situations, it is considered an aberrant behaviour when the participants are not married. For these and many other reasons, a lot of rape victims do not report for redress, and the few who do are often blamed or castigated for not being careful enough. In the play, *You Raped Me* (Danso, 2017), the writer projects the phenomenon of rape culture in Ghana, highlighting the perceptions, the role of family members and society, as well as ambiguities of the law provisions on rape. This paper discusses rape culture in Ghana in the lens of realistic issues projected in the play and views collected from selected members of the audience who watched the play.

## 2. DEFINING RAPE

In most countries, rape is considered a criminal offence and punishable by law, thus, there are specific definitions as to what constitute rape. In the UK “rape is when a person intentionally penetrates another's vagina, anus or mouth with a penis, without the other person's consent” (Metropolitan Police, UK, n.d.). In the United States of America, the FBI defines rape as “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim” (RAINN, n.d.). Nigeria’s criminal code of 1960 differentiates between rape and sexual assault. By classification “Any man who has unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman or girl without her consent, commits the offence of rape and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life” (Article 260). In the case of sexual assault by penetration the law indicates that “Any person who penetrates sexually, the anus, vagina, mouth or any other opening in the body of another person with a part of his body or anything else, without the consent of the person commits a felony and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life” (Article 261). Recently, “Lawmakers in Nigeria’s Kaduna State have approved surgical castration as punishment for those convicted of raping children under the age of 14”. This law is however awaiting endorsement from State governor of the north-western state of Nigeria for implementation (CNR, 2020).

In Ghana, “Rape is the carnal knowledge of a female of sixteen years or above without her consent” (Ghana criminal code, section 98; Mensah Bonsu 2008, p. 115; Amevenku, 2019, p. 46). The definitions of rape by the FBI, UK Police and the Nigeria criminal code provide specific body targets such as the vagina or anus and the offensive weapons as specific body part, object, or a penis. However, Ghana’s definition is quite vague, probably due to same reason of obscurity with sexual issues; words such as vagina or penis cannot be plainly indicated in the law books. As averred by Nlasia (2019), inadequacies in terminology on sexual violence lead to inconsistency in interpretations by judges handling such cases. The phrase ‘carnal knowledge’ is esoteric and could be understood by law enforcement agencies or the judiciary, but elucidation might vary. Despite the variations in the definitions however, “consent” and “sexual intercourse” or “carnal knowledge” - which is closely synonymous to penetration resonate in all the definitions.

### 2.1 The Law on Rape in Ghana

Ghana’s criminal code specifies that “a person who commits rape commits a first-degree felony and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment of not less than five years and not more than twenty-five years” (Ghana Criminal Code, section 99; Mensah Bonsu, 2008, p. 115). Despite this provision in the law, the “police often lack capacity to investigate and prosecute cases effectively” (US report on crime and safety in Ghana, 2020). Granted that dealing with rape cases is a herculean task for even well-developed countries such as the UK as indicated in (Grittos, 2015), Ghana’s dynamics are quite peculiar. The police have a role to play but the bottleneck that hinders successful processing of rape cases in the county does not lie at the door of the police alone. The procedure is to report at the nearest police station that you have been raped. The police will then request for a medical report, often after attempts to convince you to drop the case. The victim now must see a medical doctor for examination and submit a report which becomes the main evidence for prosecution in court.

In their research however, (Cannon *et al*, 2020) report that some medical facilities and staff in Ghana lack required logistics and expertise to efficiently carry out this test. Surprisingly, a victim of rape has to pay GHC800 (current equivalent of \$105) for this examination. “Sometimes victims who cannot afford this do not report back to the police leaving the case to hang or die a natural death” (Larnyoh, 2020). The few cases that receive due attention are those that involve minors and that of multiple perpetrator rape where there are apparent injuries to the victim (Badasu *et al*, 2018). A popular Ghanaian lawyer, Maurice Ampaw has bemoaned that “a lot of women have incessantly been sexually assaulted at their workplaces or in the quest of getting employment but have remained mute for years due to lack of evidence to seek legal redress”. He indicated that sadly, “most sexual assault cases have been nullified, leaving the victims stranded due to lack of material evidence to support their claims in court” (Ghanaweb, 2020a). Ampaw has advised victims to do an audio or video recording of the act; a suggestion which invariably is tantamount to a wild-goose chase.

## 2.2 Rape Culture

Although the law is clear on the definition of rape and specifies the repercussions of the crime, as established early on in this paper, most rape cases are not reported to the police. A few cases are processed to court and only a few of these are able to proceed to adjudication. The attitudes of society and prosecutors’ inability to prosecute rapist in Ghana has culminated into the silence of rape victims. The unwillingness of rape victims to report for redress and the attitude of blaming the victim have produced what propounders term rape culture. By definition, “rape culture is the social environment that allows sexual violence to be normalized and justified, fuelled by the persistent gender inequalities and attitudes about gender and sexuality” (UN Women, 2019). In other terms:

Rape Culture is an environment in which rape is prevalent and in which sexual violence against women is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. Rape culture is perpetuated through the use of misogynistic language, the objectification of women’s bodies, and the glamorization of sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women’s rights and safety (Marshall University).

Similarly, Cole (2020) indicates that rape culture designates a society where “rape and other forms of sexual violence are common and pervasive, when they are normalized and viewed as inevitable, and when they are trivialized by authority figures, the media, and cultural products, and by the majority of members of the society.” According to Ridgway (2014) rape culture involve “cultural practices that excuse or otherwise tolerate sexual violence.” The following are among 25 everyday examples that according to her ensconce rape culture:

- Publicly defending celebrities accused of rape just because they are celebrities and ignoring or denouncing what the victim has to say.
- Sexual assault prevention education programs that focus on women being told to take measures to prevent rape instead of men being told not to rape.
- The ubiquity of street harassment, and how victims are told that they are “overreacting” when they call it out.
- Calling victims who have the courage to report rape liars.

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- Journalists who substitute the word “sex” for “rape” – as if the two words mean the same thing.
  - Victims not being taken seriously when they report rape to authorities.

### **2.3 Prevalence of Rape Culture in Ghana**

Rape culture has prevailed in Ghana for many years. Rape victims are blamed for allowing themselves to be raped. In a lot of cases, especially, where the victim and culprit know each other, it is assumed the woman’s consent for sex is not relevant. It is generally believed that women would normally play ‘hard to get’ and therefore opposing a sex demand is considered a mere bluff. It is also presumed women will give in to sex for money and as such a ‘no’ might be considered a subterfuge. Rape cases are often settled at home, strengthening sexual objectification of women. Relatives would readily accept compensation from the culprit, which members of the family make use of without considering the trauma the victim might be going through; for them, it is just sex. Stigmatisation is another problem that militates against rape victims and subsequently their unpreparedness to readily report rape cases. The society will ridicule the victim and make her feel miserable. It is also common for rape cases against people of certain status in the country to attract panel discussions on radio stations where listeners can call in to share their views. Unfortunately, this is the time the victims often get backlash from the public. Such situations become embarrassment to the victim who then decides to withdraw the case to avoid further criticism. Quite often however, if a victim withdraws a case for such reasons, it is interpreted that she has received ‘shut-up money’.

Rape culture is getting entrenched in Ghana also because of utterances by persons in high positions that legitimize rape. For instance, the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection has attributed rape to a way of dressing that she referred to as irresponsible (Ghanaweb, 2017). An issue which has generated even a bigger national debate is Reverend Geroge Lutterodt’s statement that “every rape victim enjoys the sex” (Ghanaweb, 2020c). Lutterodt, who is a popular Ghanaian counsellor, has ignited outrage for making such statement on a television show, with a stern call on appropriate authorities to castigate him.

In some instances, traditional rulers become the adjudicators and make judgements on rape cases disregarding the legitimate laws of the country concerning rape. An example is a case involving a 26-year-old who lured a 23-year-old banana seller to a cemetery and raped her. The chief of the area had a meeting with the family of the culprit and asked them to provide “three sheep and six bottles of Schnapps to perform rituals at the cemetery and the forest so they can have peace as a family” (Ghanaweb, 2019a). In this instance, the chief has not considered the effects this act could have on the victim. What he is concerned about is the possible ramification for desecrating the cemetery. In another example, a Ghanaian songstress accused a renowned pastor of raping her in his office. However, she decided not to file charges against him after she received a substantial amount of money as compensation. Although she claims the money was not paid to her directly by the culprit, she acknowledges that she received that money as compensation otherwise known as ‘Shut-up money’ (Ghanaweb, 2020d). In a similar situation, the father of a 17-year-old rape victim decided to withdraw a rape case he filed with the police against a 43-year-old man who had returned from France retracting the claim that his daughter was raped. Although the police had started processing the case for court, the complainant decided to discontinue with the case

(Ghanaweb, 2020e). It was obvious to those who followed the story that some compensation had been paid.

As rightly pointed out by Ridgway (2014), it is often the case that the rich and influential persons normally get away with rape. For instance, the public lambast of the 19-year-old rape victim involving an ace broadcaster Kwesi Kyei Darkwa (KKD) led to the eventual dismissal of the case. In a communiqué, the attorney general explained that the decision to drop the case was taken because “the victim ... is still very unwilling to testify in court. The victim states that she is highly traumatized by the events of the day of the incident and its aftermath and so is not in the right frame of mind to appear before the court” (Modern Ghana General News, 2015). The culprit subsequently organized a party at the hotel that the incident happened to celebrate his freedom and probably to disparage the victim and the rape case. Four years after this incident, the culprit wrote more humiliating doggerels in an article he titled; *these hungry small girls will give you all the bedroom acrobatics and accuse you of rape later* (Ghanaweb, 2019b).

Rape victims’ inability to seek justice also borders on fear of further harm due to delayed justice. In a case where a rape case was being processed to court, the culprit was granted bail and had the audacity to threaten the complainant to withdraw the case (Ghanaweb, 2020f). Unfortunately, there is not much help for people like this victim to follow this case to its ripe conclusion.

It is against the background of the foregoing evidence of prevalent of rape culture in Ghana that the play, which is going to be our next focus was written.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The verbatim contributions of respondents were key to drawing conclusions of this research, therefore in line with the provisions in (Babbie, 2005), the qualitative approach was employed. Data was collected through focus group post-performance discussions on the final night of the performance of the play. The respondents were purposely selected as the criterion was to get views from audiences who had watched the play from the beginning to the end. We were convinced they understood the play and would provide well informed contributions as required of focus group members (Morgan, 1998). There were 32 respondents, and this was made up of the 12 members of the jury plus 20 members comprising 10 males and 10 females purposely selected from the audience. The views deduced from the audience on why the rape victim’s claim of rape was false, and the views on why the suspect was seen as guilty of the offence are summarized in tables and analysed. Findings are discussed in relation to existing literature.

### 4. THE PLAY, YOU RAPED ME

The play “You Raped Me” is a final year playwriting project written by Desmond Danso Sakyi. The play converts comprehensive research on the prevalence of rape culture in Ghana into a thought-provoking creative work. It presents Ghanaian misconception of rape, and how the law enforcement agencies find it difficult to prosecute rape perpetrators. In this social drama, DEDE accuses WAYO ABOABU of rape after they sexually indulge each other. She visits the home of WAYO ABOABU after sex-texting on Facebook. One thing leads to another. Thereafter she accuses him of rape and the two appear in court to battle it out. The *onus probandi* or burden of proof becomes the responsibility of the lawyers and their clients. Both lawyers provide evidence to prove their case. Witnesses called include a doctor who examined and submitted a medical

report on the victim. The accused and accuser both agreed they had sex, but the contention is whether it was with or without DEDE's consent.

The uniqueness of this drama was that the jury were randomly selected from the audience after the case was heard and all arguments were presented. There were 12 members each night, made up of 6 females and 6 males. The play was directed by Patience Nupkezah and Faustina Brew and staged for four consecutive nights for varied audiences at the Amu Theatre, Central Campus, University of Education, Winneba from 12-15 October 2017. In directing this play, the directors sought an authentication of the prevalence of rape culture in Ghana.

#### **4.1 The characters and what they represent**

WAYO ABOABU is a famous music producer. Although he is not abundantly rich, his recording and music production business earn him quite a good deal of money. His type of job makes him a very popular figure adored by many, the reason the media quickly picked the news on his alleged rape case. He is handsome and plays around a lot with girls, although not ready to settle down with any. He has a personal soundproof studio for the purposes of music recordings which is also the location of alleged rape. The sound of a scream in a soundproof space will definitely be drowned in the acoustics. As a playboy, he engages in Facebook intimate conversation with DEDE ending in a promise to project a music career that DEDE is interested in and subsequently, an invitation to his recording studio. When he is accused of rape, he initially rubbishes it with a level of pomposity but later realises it was not going to be easy sailing for him. He hires one of the best lawyers to defend him. Lawyer KUNTU BLANKSON knows how to win a bad case, but he does not do a poor man's work. WAYO ABOABO can afford to pay for his services, so he hires him. WAYO ABOABO represents the influential and rich people in society who often get away with many crimes including rape.

DEDE is a young lady who has interest in a music career. She is classy with high level of confidence. On her first appearance she is seen as a vivacious lady who would go all out to achieve her aim. WAYO ABOABO promises to help her succeed in the career she is interested in. This conversation was initiated on social media (Facebook) where they first met. The two engage in sex-texts that suggested to WAYO ABOABO that DEDE was interested in having an intimate affair with him. In the performance the audience were showed a video in which they saw WAYO ABOABO and DEDE in a very compromising posture. DEDE had done some singing that WAYO ABOABO had extolled and made a toast to after which they engage in a close-range dance. The song selected is one of the sexist songs identified by Moshood (2019) as a contributor to rape culture in Ghana. Moshood opines that "any society that demonstrates this level of enthusiasm about such a song is a society where rape culture is normalized, and therefore, thrives." Playing this song, the mood seemed so set for further intimacy. What the audience were not privy to was what actually happened between the two afterwards. The next thing they know, DEDE has accused WAYO ABOABO of rape. From this time on, she is portrayed as a very principled person, refusing an offer of compensation for rape and other suggestions. She decides to go all out to seek justice for WAYO ABOABO's disrespect of her rights and demeaning her dignity as a woman. In the latter scenes DEDE is seen as very aggressive and belligerent as she cannot tolerate the

intimidation and infuriating gimmicks of lawyer KUNTU BLANKSON. DEDE represents the many women who have suffered rape and endured public harassment instead of sympathy.

MAAME is WAYO's sister who is a public relations officer with specialty in image management. She understands the gravity of the accusation against her brother and tries various means to prevent conviction. She takes the initiative to strike a deal with the accuser on behalf of WAYO ABOABO in what she described as 'women's talk', but the attempt fails as the accuser refuses to accept her offer. She helps WAYO ABOABO to do some damage control by making donations to charities and advises him to stay off social media since it has a lot of triggers. On her advice, WAYO ABOABO hires KUNTU BLANKSON to defend him in court. MAAME represents the society which although knows rape is a criminal offence, will do everything possible to aid the freedom of the culprit.

KUNTU BLANKSON Esq, represented the accused, WAYO ABOABO in court. KUNTU BLANKSON is a renowned lawyer and has never lost a case in court. His experience and ability to intimidate his opponents and direct a bad case to winning makes him an astute lawyer and famous for his skills. He trivializes the important issues, picks on minor issues and sentimentalize them to gain attention. He is a good orator and endowed with admirable charisma, an attribute that sometimes aids astute lawyers to win cases in court. Rich and influential people have the means to hire lawyers like KUNTU to aid them win otherwise bad cases such as rape for their clients.

On the other hand, Lawyer HANSEN NTIM, who represents the accuser (the victim), is a young lawyer whose experience in law practice comes nowhere near that of his learned senior colleague KUNTU BLANKSON, but the belief that a win against KUNTU BLANKSON would put him in the limelight in law practice fired up his determination. As a young lawyer, he believes the law works. And in a rape case, so long as he can gather enough undisputable evidence, the judge would rule in his client's favour. Lawyer HANSEN NTIM represents the voice of the vulnerable in society; the need to struggle to win if one does not have experience and money to manoeuvre their way through.

CAPITALIST ABOABO is the father of WAYO ABOABO and MAAME. He trivializes the rape case and cites a myth to support his claim:

The truth is, when it comes to sex, the order and meaning of words change. Thus, a woman's NO to sex is said to actually mean YES to sex. And it is the same everywhere, from the streets of Harlem, where I worked tirelessly to make ends meet for my family- to Tripoli – to Timbuktu - to Tutubika, my very own village (Sakyi, 2007, p. 38).

MENA MANTEBEA, DEDE's aunt and BORBOR, her male friend try to persuade DEDE to make some good money out of WAYO ABOABO and withdraw the case from court. MANTEBEA also suggests DEDE marries WAYO ABOABO since he is a spinster. By extension, she could have a good life and have grandchildren soon. She strangely shows sympathy towards WAYO ABOABO and questions: "Why do you want him to go to jail? If he were your brother, would you want him to go to jail?" In a rebuttal, DEDE contends marrying a man who raped her as demeaning and that WAYO ABOABO's money cannot pay for her dignity. The positions of MANTEBEA and

BORBOR typically represent many in society who take reconciliatory positions in such matters. But of course, it is not the entire society that thinks this way, the play makes room for objectivity by involving NAA ATSUEI, DEDE's friend, who supports DEDE in her stance and encourages DEDE to seek justice.

Characters FIRST WOMAN, SECOND WOMAN and MAN also represent the society. They speak all their lines from the audience space. MAN supported the accused, due to the fact that the accuser had gone to the accused's studio on her own accord and turned on the accused by her actions. FIRST WOMAN and SECOND WOMAN however rebut MAN's stance in the ensuing dialogue:

**MAN**

How do you dress like that to a man's house and expects that he won't touch? Women do these things and when it backfires, they cry foul. The man has done no wrong.

**FIRST WOMAN**

Moslem ladies dress from head to toe, every part of the body is covered, but they still get raped. What about that?

**SECOND WOMAN**

That is the problem with our culture. Instead of teaching our sons not to rape, we rather expect our daughters to know how not to get raped.

**MAN**

Women should write 'I'm ready for you' on their forehead so the man can respond to it. (Sakyi, 2017, p. 47).

It was same way that DEDE and WAYO ABOABO communicated, followed by an invitation to his house and the subsequent complaint of rape. Extracts from the Facebook message from DEDE reads; "If I were with you right now where would you want me to touch? "I'm listening to a song that makes me think dirty thoughts about you! If I were with you, we'd probably make some of them reality \*wink\*." (Sakyi, 2017, p. 42). It could be easily assumed that DEDE was pushing towards intimacy. But even if she had such intentions to begin with, is it not possible to change her mind no matter how close they are to the deed? Is it also not possible that a lady could take a man through this path only to accuse him of rape? Ironically, while the news of the rape was all over the airwaves, the two ladies working in MAAME's office were interested in WAYO ABOABO and try to get his attention even when they were aware of the pending rape case. Quite weird! Why will any lady try to entice a man who is awaiting jail? This is a foreshadowing of the outcome of the court case; a true representation of society that popular people will never go to jail for rape.

The main witness in court is the medical doctor who examined DEDE after she made the report of rape to the police. The doctor submitted her report and answered questions by both lawyers. Also, in view of WAYO ABOABO's earlier narration that he went with DEDE to a pharmacy to buy emergency contraceptive pills because both did not want a pregnancy out of that affair, the pharmacist is also a witness in court to give account of his observation when the two came to his shop. The lawyers present their cases and cross examine accuser and accused; each trying their



best to win sympathy and points from the jury. The jury, who are selected from the audience, are then asked to submit the verdict.

For all the four nights the play was performed, the jury set the accused free. Table 1 shows the voting results for each night. Reasons for the verdict as obtained from the audience after the production are also shown in Tables 2 and 3.

**Table 1: Voting results of the juries.**

Nights	Guilty	Not Guilty	Total
12/10/17	2	10	12
13/10/17	1	11	12
14/10/17	1	11	12
15/10/17	0	12	12
Total for 4 nights	4	44	48

**5. RESPONSES FROM RESPONDENTS**

**Table 2: Votes for WAYO’s freedom**

	<b>Why WAYO ABOABO is not guilty</b>
1.	Someone who has such a promising future should not go to prison because of sex.
2.	DEDE should not have reported in the first place, she should be ashamed of herself.
3.	The accused is a bachelor, and the accuser is a spinster, they should be talking about marriage not prison.
4.	The victim should make some good ‘shut up money’ from the accused just like what the others do.
5.	The accuser is not a child, how can a man rape her?
6.	The man is handsome and popular, why not marry him. Others are even desiring him.
7.	The accuser started the sex texting, she spurred him on.
8.	The accuser had gone to the culprit’s studio by herself.
9.	The accuser and accused were seen having a good time together – alcoholic drink and romantic dance.
10.	The victim just wants to bring culprit’s hard reputation into disrepute.
11.	The two had gone to the pharmacy together to buy emergency contraceptive after the act. How could it be rape?
12.	LAWYER KUNTU discredited the witnesses - the pharmacist and the doctor. He also proved more credible by showing the video and Facebook chats in court.
13.	Although, the evidence produced by DEDE's lawyer looked authentic his arguments were just based on the law without shenanigans.
14.	DEDE tried to physically fight in court, but it was obvious she was lying.
15.	A woman's ‘no’ sometimes means yes.
16.	DEDE is not a virgin; this is no big deal.

17.	DEDE's outfit were seductive and erotic. And her demeanour was coquettish.
18.	DEDE was actually expecting sexual intimacy.
19.	Facebook message from DEDE to WAYO ABOABO used as exhibit in court is suggestive.
20.	DEDE's outfit to the courtroom was indecent and offensive to many.
21.	DEDE is rather aggressive, a behaviour exhibited in court. He physically attacked WAYO ABOABU at a point in court.
22.	WAYO ABOABO is a nice gentleman, showed in his behaviour in court. He would not rape a woman.

**Table 3: Votes against WAYO ABOABO's freedom**

	<b>Why WAYO ABOABU is Guilty</b>
1.	A woman's no must be respected as no.
2.	It does not matter how compromised a woman has been, or whatever level a man's arousal has reached, the woman has every right to change her mind at any stage.
3.	A woman's dressing should not be a reason to be raped.

**6. DISCUSSION**

It is obvious that the biases inculcated in rape culture were exhibited in the responses of the audiences as shown in Tables 2 and 3. Such a case needs to be the woman's fault and as such there are so many allegations against her, which normally contributes to rape victims shying away from seeking redress. This validates the reality of rape culture in Ghana as rape is justified based on who raped who (UN Women, 2019). A number of those who voted not guilty had gathered sympathy for the culprit. The man was well to do and attractive, a media expert and a lovable bachelor. This gives credibility to the claim that celebrities escape prosecution in rape cases (Ridgway, 2014). Others felt DEDE had intentions of making some good money out of the man, although she had refused vehemently when the sister suggested that to her. There were suggestions that DEDE should have rather asked for marriage, after all they were both unmarried. Although, DEDE's aggressive behaviour in court could be because of rape trauma syndrome which "may be expressed as anger, fear or anxiety" (WHO guidelines, 2003, p. 14), it was highly used against her by the jury and the other respondents.

One of the men who voted for WAYO ABOABO's freedom indicated that the law on rape is ambiguous. According to him, communication towards sex is often nonverbal and a couple act on responses of body language. "You don't ask permission to do it, when you are up to it, you just go ahead." According to him, "when the engagement gets to a certain level it will be too late to especially for the man to stop." A Reverend Minister who had voted for WAYO ABOABO's freedom explained that "if a woman makes noise about rape; she might not find a husband." He would prefer a woman who was raped and kept quiet to the one who makes the world aware of it by going to court. Although, it is a rape victim's right to seek justice in court, he as the husband would also be ridiculed by society.

The popular myth which was stressed by WAYO ABOABO's father in the play came quite strong in the discussions. Strangely more than half the number agreed to the myth, especially if the woman is an adult. This corroborate the assertion that rape culture is entrenched in societies where rape cases are underplayed by people in authority (Cole, 2020).

As indicated in the Table 3, it was not everyone who thought WAYO ABOABO should be set free. One of the respondents who judged WAYO ABOABU guilty indicated that the vote was based on the fact that DEDE's provocative dressing as well as her rude and aggressive behaviour in court, does not justify abuse of her rights. If she said no at any point, the man should have respected that view.

## 7. CONCLUSION

One major reason why rape culture persists in Ghana is that a man's status/stature often earn him freedom if he raped someone as depicted in the play. As portrayed in the play and confirmed by the respondents, the culprit is a famous music producer, handsome and relatively rich. He is a bachelor and well composed in court. It looks like certain people have admiration per their looks or the kind of work they are engaged in. For such, they are perceived untouchable and responses from the public can often defeat a rape case initiated against such people in court. They have fans who can go all out to defend them and fault the victim. Contrarily, a lady's status and attitudes could militate against her if she decides to seek justice for rape. As showed in the play, the victim is a young lady, a spinster and someone who desires fame through a music career. Per her dressing and demeanour, she is perceived an easy-going lady. The video tendered created an image that suggested automatic follow on to sex.

The responses from the audience have substantiated the entrenched reality of rape culture in Ghana; an environment in which a victim is blamed, and the culprit freed. Where rape victims do not get the needed support but advised to take compensations and even marry the culprit. It has also proved that if society were to be the adjudicators, sentimentalities could win over facts, especially if those involved are adults. There is therefore the need to trigger conversation on rape culture with the view to stimulating further deliberations towards the fight against rape in Ghana and beyond.

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