Omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] as a Pathway to School Engagement for Young Mothers in Rural Namibia

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents Christina and Andreas Shapaka who instilled in me uuntu womuntu [humaneness of a person].

*

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Abstract

School leaving is a significant social problem that undermines the short and long-term developmental goals of young mothers and their children. Informed by the ubuntu perspective, an Afrocentric philosophy, I employed a qualitative, postcolonial indigenous research paradigm to explore the experiences of young mothers who successfully reentered school, postpartum, in rural Namibia. My aim was to better understand their experiences of challenges and facilitators to school engagement to inform culturally relevant interventions. This study was conducted in two, rural, public high schools with a sample of 13 young mothers (17-23 years), of the Aawambo ethnic group, in 8th to 12th grade levels. A personal history questionnaire characterized participants and talking circle interview guide identified omayeletumbulo for school engagement. The conversational individual interview guide elaborated, contextualized, and provided in-depth understanding of school engagement experiences. Using thematic analysis, adolescent and emerging adult young mothers revealed common and culturally distinct experiences. They described school engagement challenges across sociocultural contexts including vulnerabilities due to lack of caregiver support, loss of ohungi [evening-talk], sexual coercion, and othering through stereotypes. Young mothers' descriptions included sources of resilience facilitated by extended family including fathers of the baby, educators, and peers. Subsequent analysis focused on wisdom sayings as a pathway to school engagement through four emerging themes: self-efficacy around school engagement, assertion of identity, successful parenting, and spirituality. I conclude with a discussion of implications for culturally relevant social work to promote high school completion of young mothers who reenter school following childbirth.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

School leaving significantly undermines the developmental goals of Namibian young mothers. This study uses the term school leaving because young mothers exit school without withdrawing formally from school. Globally, in 2019, sub-Saharan Afrika[1] had the highest adolescent birth rate at 99.6 births per 1,000 women for ages 15-19 (World Bank, 2022). Namibia in southern Afrika ranks amongst the highest (29%) in adolescent birth rates (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016). Despite a modest decline in Namibian adolescent birth rates (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014b), trends in school dropout due to pregnancy remain persistently high at 27.9% (2,233) in 2016, 27.7% (1,935) in 2017, 25.2% (1,937) in 2018, and 23.7% (1,542) in 2019 (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2017b, 2018, 2019, 2020). These dropout rates are largely concentrated among girls who are in their junior- to senior primary school years (equivalent to 4th to 9th grade in the U.S.) (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2018), unmarried (60%) (Odimegwu' et al., 2017), living in rural areas, and from low income families (Mwandingi & Pazvakawambwa, 2019).

Without a high school certificate, these young mothers face an increased likelihood of negative developmental outcomes relative to those who complete school. Out-of-school young mothers are more likely to endure poverty which affects their livelihood (Schulkind & Sandler, 2019). They have limited social capital during adulthood which would enable young mothers to access a network of social and economic resources (Berthelon & Kruger, 2017; Gigante et al., 2019; Kakal, 2015;

[1] Afrika spelled with a "k" (Madhubuti, 2021) is consistent with linguistics on the continent, used intentionally to shift to a desired-centered analysis (Tuck, 2009), and create space for Afrocentric worldviews.

Ntinda et al., 2014). They are more likely to be employed in low paying jobs, seasonal work, or be unemployed (Gibb et al., 2015; Gigante et al., 2019; Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016). This unemployed status may result in young mothers engaging in transactional sex to survive which predisposes them to HIV infection and gender-based violence (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016; Oxford et al., 2005). Furthermore, their children are at increased likelihood of negative developmental risks associated with lack of resources (Schyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2008). For example, they are at risk of poor health, family disruption, displaying behavioral challenges (Fall et al., 2015; Pogarsky et al., 2006) and also less likely to graduate from high school themselves, perpetuating a cycle of intergenerational poverty (Fall et al., 2015; Francesconi, 2008; Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014b; Neal et al., 2020).

The sociocultural contexts may also shape young mothers' developmental outcomes. Inconsistent education policies that increase barriers to school reentry and access to supportive resources can impede high school completion (Kapenda, 2012; Shaningwa, 2007). Young mothers who engage in school are stigmatized (*see* Goffman, 1963; Kayama et al., 2020) and discriminated against to the extent that they find it challenging to remain school connected and as a result leave permanently (Bhana et al., 2010; Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; SmithBattle, 2020; Smithbattle, 2013). Stigmatization can exacerbate othering (Dominelli, 2002) and mental health conditions (Dhaka & Musese, 2019; Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; SmithBattle & Freed, 2016). For example, young mothers experience suicidal ideation as they are often blamed for the pregnancy (Burton et al., 2011) disrupting their schooling. They also experience parenting stressors associated with school-life balance and adverse childhood experiences

(ACEs) which limit their ability to attend school or participate in school activities (Asheer et al., 2014; Cox et al., 2020; Yoon et al., 2019). Culturally nuanced family structures (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2020), the loss of guided talk and social norms in which young mothers are expected to leave school (David et al., 2017; Haufiku, 2014) may result in reduced psychosocial support for young mothers engaging in school (Bunting, 2005; Easterbrooks et al., 2010; Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Kaplan, 1997; Leerlooijer et al., 2013). Moreover, persistent community poverty and family economic disadvantages can accelerate young mothers' school leaving as they experience increased financial stressors (Mollborn, 2017) associated with childcare needs, nutritional, and health care support (Mollborn & Dennis, 2012; Musese, 2018).

Problem Statement

Although school leaving of young mothers is a global concern (Human Rights Watch, 2018; Tull, 2020), few studies in Namibia examine the school engagement of young mothers. School engagement refers to everyday tasks needed for learning that occur overtime (Finn & Zimmer, 2012), promote students' school involvement (Wang et al., 2019), and is multidimensional and context specific (Reschly & Christenson, 2012). Within schools, engagement involves three dimensions: 1) behavioral (e.g., attending school and classes, following teachers' directions, completing in-class and out-of-class assignments, and holding positive attitudes); 2) affective (e.g., positive peer and teacher relationships); and 3) cognitive (e.g., commitment to educational goals) (Christenson et al., 2012).

Existing Namibian research on young mothers focuses on school reentry (Kapenda, 2012), lack of school support, stigma, dual student-mother role (Nekongo-

Nielsen et al., 2015; Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013), and limited parental involvement (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011). Local research also describes young mothers' academic performance (Shaningwa, 2007), financial support (Chimere-Dan, 1997), childcare and parenting skills (David et al., 2017), as well as emotional and mental health (Dhaka & Musese, 2019). Less attention has been paid to resources young mothers utilize to facilitate engagement once they have reentered school. The paucity of Afrikan research creates a gap in understanding adolescents' and emerging adult[2] mothers' pathways to resilience in socio-cultural contexts.

Young mothers largely reside in the northcentral regions of rural Namibia (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2017a, 2018, 2019, 2020). Nationally, in 2011, the population size of Namibia was about 2,113,077 million of which children below 25 years represented 43% (910,081 children) (Namibia Statistics Agency and UNICEF, 2014). The Aawambo represented 49% of the population, they were one of 10 main ethnic groups[3], and predominantly reside in four northcentral regions of Namibia (Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto) (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2012). In these regions, 83% of the population lives in rural areas (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2012) and has the highest school leaving rate (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2020). In 2019, 1,542 girls, nationally, left school due to pregnancy, of them, 51% young mothers resided in the four regions (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2020).

[2] This term describes the roles young people (roughly age 18-25) gradually acquire on their way to adulthood in western contexts such as attaining socioeconomic stability and identity outside the family structure (Arnett, 2000). It is also applicable in Namibian contexts, where young people gradually assume the roles and responsibilities of adulthood, in the case of the young mothers, they are raising children, but are not yet economically independent or married.

[3] Namibia use language as proxy for ethnicity. The nine other main ethnic groups are: San, Nama Damara Tswana, Kavango, Herero, Zambezi (former Caprivi), Colored Baster (Mixed race), Afrikaner, and German. Other ethnic groups are Afrikan, Asian, and European (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014).

The Aawambo emphasize a relational way of life (Chilisa, 2020; S. Wilson, 2008). Individuals are understood from within their social contexts, collectivist ideals of and interdependency, community membership, and social justice are honored (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018). It is an oral tradition in which messages are communicated through sayings, songs, or talks (Brasche, 2003). Understanding how the sociocultural context shapes the experiences of young mother's school engagement can enhance culturally responsive interventions.

Purpose of the study

This qualitative study aims to explore the school engagement experiences of Aawambo young mothers who reentered school by contextualizing and describing factors that inhibit and facilitate their education. In this chapter, I will introduce the Ubuntu perspective as a conceptual framework to address school engagement and provide a literature review of the sociocultural contexts in which young mothers are embedded. Chapter two will provide a description of the research methods I used to conduct this study. Chapter three will present the first results of this study, focusing on young mothers' experiences with challenges and facilitators of school engagement in the socio-cultural contexts. Chapter four offers an elaborated discussion on the culturally distinct facilitator omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings], as a pathway to school engagement for Aawambo young mothers. Chapter five will conclude this dissertation with a discussion and implications for future interventions drawing on the descriptions of young mothers in this study.

Conceptual Framework: Ubuntu

In this study, I draw upon Stanley Samkange's (1980) Ubuntu perspective, an Afrocentric philosophy, to consider implications of existing cultural beliefs and practices on strengthening the school engagement of young mothers. Ubuntu or omuntu as used amongst the Aawambo ethnic group in Namibia, is translated as 'human' and given the meaning, "I am because we are" (Chilisa, 2020, p. 24). Bantu languages spoken in sub-Sahara Afrika all share the root word ntu or human (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019, 2020; Muwanga-Zake, 2009; Samkange, 1980).

In Namibia, the Aawambo, Herero, Kavango and Zambezi-region ethnic groups all share this translation. For example, the Aawambo describe ntu as uuntu womuntu or 'humaneness of a person.' Ubuntu advances a relational way of life (Chilisa, 2020; S. Wilson, 2008) and recognizes "others" in their uniqueness and difference constitute the meaning of being human (Gray et al., 2014; King et al., 2017; Moodley et al., 2020). It rejects the individual as isolated from the social context and honors collectivist ideals of being interconnected, community membership (Mayaka & Truell, 2021; Shepherd & Mhlanga, 2014; Theron & Phasha, 2015), inclusiveness, and social justice (Chilisa, 2020; Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018). Although these values may be shared across communities' other aspects may be grounded in local realities, beliefs, and practices.

The Ubuntu perspective is used to support the developmental outcomes of youth. In academia, Ubuntu is widely used in child welfare (Mayaka & Truell, 2021; Moodley et al., 2020), youth resilience (Cherrington, 2018; Henderson et al., 2016; Theron & Phasha, 2015; Ungar et al., 2013), social justice (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Ndimande, 2013), social work (Gray et al., 2014; King et al., 2017; Mugumbate & Chereni, 2020;

Mugumbate & Nyanguru, 2013) and mental health (Bartholomew, 2016; D. Wilson & Williams, 2013). When youth experience adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), the community considers it "through no fault of [their] own" (Samkange, 1980, p. 75). Young motherhood is one such experience that may stem from multiple factors (Human Rights Watch, 2018), and can negatively affect developmental goals of adolescent girls and emerging adults (Arnett, 2000, 2017). Hence examining the developmental goals of Namibian young mothers, can highlight culturally nuanced expectations to improve educational outcomes.

Developmental goals of Aawambo adolescents and emerging adults may influence young mothers' school engagement. Afrikan scholars suggest that chronological age does not capture the interpretations of human development in indigenous communities relative to western conceptualization (Bledsoe & Cohen, 1993; Hailonga, 2005; Macleod, 2003). Conversely, some scholars (Arnett, 2017; Nsamenang, 2002) argue that developmental stages are distinct with infancy from 0-2 years with care and breastfeeding, childhood from 2-6 years marked by weaning, play, and guided by mothers. Preadolescence is 6-8 years marked by gender division of labor guided by older siblings. Nine-18 years is adolescence with initiation rites guided by adults. Adulthood is 18-35 years marked by marriage with children, subsistence farming, and attaining stability (e.g., building an independent house). In this dissertation, I will draw upon indigenous developmental stages rooted in developmental goals to further explore societal expectations for Aawambo young mothers engaging in school.

Childhood in the Aawambo community is associated with social and relational functioning guided by adults with involvement of older siblings (Mayaka & Truell, 2021;

Oxford et al., 2005). Children are viewed as active agents and expected to contribute to light domestic chores through accompanying and copying older siblings on tasks that are gendered (Abebe, 2019; Nsamenang, 2002). For example, boys will be involved in yard work and livestock whilst girls engage in cooking and cleaning activities (Hailonga, 2005).

Adolescence is culturally nuanced as it involves emerging adult roles. This developmental phase is marked by the onset of biological changes of puberty, participation in, and realizing expected gender roles (Hailonga, 2005; Macleod, 2003). Relative independent engagement in social, community, and family activities are encouraged with guidance from adults geared towards preparing the adolescent for independent living (Nsamenang, 2002). For example, boys and girls will change sleeping arrangements by moving into their independent huts or rooms. Initiation rites that end childhood are performed by adults and involve the community to indicate this transition (Kautondokwa, 2014; Schlegel & Herbert, 2015).

Although changes are occurring, girls still are largely expected to take on roles of motherhood, marriage, and discontinue school (Bledsoe & Cohen, 1993; Kautondokwa, 2014). For example, mixed reactions and reports exist after the Aawambo reclaimed in 2012, girls' initiation rites to adulthood (H. Becker, 2004; Groop, 2014; Kautondokwa, 2014; Kuoppala, 2019; Mufune, 2003; Sasman, 2012; Staff Reporter, 2017). The Lutheran Church mainly criticizes girls' initiation rites as contravening country laws because they involve minors and adult men performing sexualized practices to launch girls into a "full sexual life" (Groop, 2014, p. 90). In contrast, some Aawambo political and traditional leaders argue that initiation rites reduce unmarried young motherhood

(Kautondokwa, 2014) by encouraging girls to complete high school, prepare them for womanhood, marriage, and to bear children (Hailonga, 2005; Mufune, 2003). Kuoppala (2019) conducted ethnographic interviews with girls aged 15-25 following initiation and found no actual sexual acts, that they remained in school, and were not married. These conflicting meanings of adolescence may increase barriers for educational engagement if policymakers, educators, and social work practitioners decontextualize (Gherardi et al., 2020) the cultural context in which young mothers are socialized.

In addition, adolescents are expected to represent adults at events, and be involved in caring roles with the elderly and other children (Ruiz-Casares, 2010). Their role in the family becomes more prominent and reciprocal between parent and child due to the division of labor between genders, adults, and youth (Nsamenang, 2002). Reciprocity revolves around adults availing resources to facilitate the socio-economic position of the adolescent specifically through education (Brown et al., 2020).

It is unclear what marks emerging adulthood among the Aawambo. Afrikan scholars suggest emerging adulthood could be associated with resourcefulness through engagement in economic activities (Nsamenang, 2002) to help support the livelihood of the family and community (Mayaka & Truell, 2021). Nsamenang (2002) discusses that youth often become street connected to assert their identity by "working for their families and … for their own" well-being (p.76). While poverty may largely drive economic engagement (Abebe, 2019; Abebe & Ofosu-Kusi, 2016), it is common for emerging adults to contribute to the family financially and or in-kind through small business or street vendor activities (Nsamenang, 2002). Thus, utilizing the ubuntu perspective to

understand culturally nuanced expectations on young mothers may expand our understanding to address challenges that promote their educational engagement.

Literature Review: Challenges and Facilitators of School Engagement

This review presents an overview of literature concerning the educational experiences of young mothers in Namibia specifically within the Aawambo socio-cultural context. I also draw on U.S. and other Afrikan studies to conceptualize school engagement due to the paucity of empirical research (14 studies) focusing on Namibian school-going, parenting girls. Extant research suggests that Namibian school-going young mothers face challenges across their family, school, and cultural contexts, but that these may be addressed by culturally widespread and distinct practices.

Family Contexts

The family structure of Namibia is largely shaped by unmarried individuals (62%) in the age range 15-49 years (Ministry of Health and Social Services and ICF International, 2014; Palamuleni & Adebowale, 2014). Existing studies show that family characteristics such as living independently without either caregiver, lack of reliable childcare, and strained relationships all create vulnerabilities for young mother's school engagement. Yet the okutekula[4] [kinship care] system practiced by grandparent, single mother, and fictive kin family structures including babies' fathers buffer the impact on young mothers' educational engagement.

In sub-Saharan Afrika, the odds of staying in school are lower (5%) for girls in the general population when their mothers are working (Huisman & Smits, 2015), and are significantly lower when they don't live together (Grant & Hallman, 2008). In Namibia,

[4] Okutekula translated as kinship care refers to the Aawambo child fostering system rooted in affection, mutual trust, and benefit where extended family and fictive kin foster children irrespective of whether the birth parents are alive and without termination of parental rights.

35% of households in 2013 provided care for children below 18 years through fostering away from both parents. In total 32% or 18,392 Namibian children experienced fosterage and the majority live in rural Namibia. Of them, 30% children lived in poverty and 28% were fostered away from both parents (Ministry of Health and Social Services and ICF International, 2014). One of the common reasons children are fostered is poverty. For example, Aawambo families value relationality in which reciprocity between families is typically demonstrated by fostering a child and providing educational opportunities to avert poverty (Brown et al., 2020; Musese, 2018). The expectation is that the fostered child will reciprocate during adulthood by caring economically for their parents and siblings (Brown, 2011). However, persistent social inequalities have overextended family self-help practices such that children are viewed as a burden, and the government is held accountable for the care of those in need (Ruiz-Casares, 2007, 2010).

Namibian young mothers do share these and other potential vulnerabilities to early childbearing and failure to engage in school. For instance, Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) found some Namibian adult caregivers in rural areas set-up makeshift shelters for school-going young mothers to reside around schools or in households with new kin relationships. Although the goal is to overcome the obstacle of distance to school these living arrangements make young mothers vulnerable to leaving school (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013). When young mothers move away from their familiar environments to reenter school, they are more likely to experience limited livelihood resources because they lack access to stable family networks (Ruiz-Casares, 2010).

Family-level risks. There are several family-level risks for young mothers' school engagement.

Socio-Economic Disadvantages. The relationship between young motherhood and social inequalities is well documented in Namibia (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Somefun & Odimegwu, 2018). In the U.S., educational gains of young mothers are less likely to benefit their children as they too navigate persistent family disadvantages such as chronic neighborhood poverty, violence, inequalities, and early school disengagement (e.g. enrolled but not participating) (Mollborn, 2017). In Malawi (Baird et al., 2011) and Kenya (Duflo et al., 2015; Mason-Jones et al., 2016) economic disadvantages are linked to truancy and the underachievement of school-going young mothers.

Living Arrangements. In the contexts of rural Namibia, young mothers' vulnerability appears to be linked to living with grandparents who subsist on government social pension grants (Garcia & Moore, 2012; Levine et al., 2011). Typically, grandparent families receiving a universal monthly old age pension grant from the state (Levine et al., 2011) utilize personal resources to provide financial assistance and care to young mothers (Chimere-Dan, 1997). Kalomo and colleagues (2017) indicate that grandparent caregivers raising children due to HIV reported financial strains and depressive symptoms. Given the strain on already scarce resources young mothers in grandparent living arrangements are more likely to report financial stressors.

Sexual Coercion. Young mothers are also exposed to sexual coercion in new living arrangements. Sexual coercion is a form of sexual violence involving "any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act unwanted sexual comments or advances or acts to

traffic that are directed against a person's sexuality using coercion by anyone, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including at home and at work." (World Health Organization, 2014, p. 84). In 2013, 37% of Namibian women aged 15-24 experienced sexual violence and an overwhelming proportion (45%) lived in rural Namibia (Ministry of Health and Social Services and ICF International, 2014). Because physical changes are used as an indicator of adolescence, Namibian caregivers aim to prevent sexual coercion. Some parents in North Central regions walk, enlist paid transport, or temporarily withdraw from school girls when they transition to adolescence (Brasche, 2003).

Data from the 2019 Namibia Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS) indicate that school and family context expose young girls and women to physical, sexual, and emotional violence (Agathis et al., 2021). At the family-level sexual violations particularly occur, in living arrangements where young women and girls are exposed to new kinship relations with male relatives and friends (Pilgrim et al., 2013). To reenter school young mothers are more likely to leave their familiar community to access school (Shaningwa, 2007), live in new kinship families or live alone in makeshift shelters set-up around their school sites (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013).

Intersection of Socio-Economic and Cultural Vulnerabilities. Similarly, the intersection of socio-economic and cultural vulnerabilities may also impact young mothers' educational engagement. In the U.S, studies indicate that families with strong moral beliefs that unmarried pregnancy is an egregious moral failure may react with sanctions by reducing material and emotional support to young mothers (Kaplan, 1997; Mollborn & Dennis, 2012). When these relationships are strained or disappear, it is

disruptive to young mothers' schooling (Hoffmann et al., 2021; Mollborn, 2017) and may result in their school leaving. Parents may expect that young mothers enter into marriage consistent with gender roles (David et al., 2017; Hailonga, 2005). School administrators in the Kavango confirmed that when girls become pregnant some parents' consent to early marriage and expect girls to discontinue their schooling (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011). Bunting (2005) argues that those who facilitate early marriage of adolescents turn a blind eye to the psychological and emotional maturity needed to enter marriage. Young mothers may also fulfill cultural expectations that the father of the baby should sustain them as a way of paying damages to the parents when they experienced pregnancy outside marriage (Nduna & Jewkes, 2012; Shivute, 2008) including being cut off by their families. Moreover, socio-economic disparities may also accelerate parents insisting that young mothers enter into marriage to ease caregiving and financial stressors on the family (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016).

Failure to Name a Baby. In addition, failure to name a baby can impact young mothers' school engagement. Rooted in the Aawambo cultural practice of accepting a child through naming by the father (Nakapunda & Nakapunda, 2020), this act is associated with validating the young mother's identity as accepted, and restoring her hope for a better future (McAmbi, 2010). The failure to name a child is associated with denial of paternity, shaming the family, betrayal of the young mother by her caregivers, and sanctions from adults (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; McAmbi, 2010). For instance, Eloundou-Enyegue and Magazi, (2011) found that caregivers in the Kavango region of eastern Namibia sanctioned young mothers when a child was not named. A traditional leader in the community explained that a child whom

the father does not name is a denial of paternity and may result in adult caregivers reducing their care. In a qualitative study, some South Afrikan parents and teachers reported that withholding support is one way for caregivers to punish young mothers for the shame they brought to the family when a child is not named (Chigona & Chetty, 2008).

Gender Roles. Some family members of Aawambo young mothers requested that schools not reenroll them so that they prioritize their motherhood (David et al., 2017). School administrators in the Kavango region confirmed that when girls become pregnant some parents' consent to early marriage and expect girls to discontinue their schooling (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011). Bunting (2005) argues that this expectation and facilitation of early marriage overlooks the psychological and emotional maturity needs of the adolescent to enter marriage.

Lack of Reliable Childcare. Without reliable childcare, young mothers' educational engagement is nearly impossible. Although Namibian childcare types remain undocumented, there are classifications in the U.S. to understand how young mothers access reliable childcare. The four types of childcare includes "(1) center-based care, (2) family-based care, (3) home care in the child's home by a nonrelative, and (4) home care provided by the mother or a relative" (Domond et al., 2020, p. 3). In Namibia many young mothers who are in school rely on family-based care (Chimere-Dan, 1997; Hubbard, 2009; Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; Shaningwa, 2007; Tull, 2020).

Relative childcare can be an unstable arrangement (Shaningwa, 2007; Tull, 2020), especially when persisting through high school completion. David, and colleagues (2017) found that among Namibian out-of-school young mothers, none of the adolescent

mothers (16-17 years) returned to school because of childcare difficulties with some expressing that, “I have to forget about school because there will be no one to take care of my baby if I go back to school” (p.47). Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) found that 41% of school-going young mothers with childcare issues and subsequent pregnancies challenges live independently and are orphans, and those who were out-of-school left school altogether due to childcare issues.

Moreover, relatives providing childcare are disproportionately overextended. For example, Chimere-Dan (1997) found that Namibian grandparents on social pension grants largely provided child care for unmarried young mothers. This finding is consistent with Namibian qualitative studies that explored barriers to school reentry (Dhaka & Musese, 2019; Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014; Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; Shaningwa, 2007). In Zambia, the lack of childcare disrupts young mothers’ school attendance, grades, and ability to concentrate on their school work (Chiyota & Marishane, 2020).

Family-level facilitators to school engagement. Despite persistent challenges, there are several family-level facilitators to young mothers’ school engagement.

***Supportive Extended Family Structures*.** The extended family in Namibia, like in many Afrikan communities (Nsamenang, 2002; Samkange, 1980; Tchombe et al., 2018), remains a protective factor for child wellbeing (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2020; Levine et al., 2011). Among the Aawambo, studies show that the extended family system can change the life course of children who are fostered as well as their parents (Brown, 2011). The parents of the child may gain power, status, and access to benefits because the extended family would provide access to a supportive family network (Brown et al.,

2020). School engaged young mothers also increase their social capital through extended family support (Amod et al., 2019). The type of family structure determines the support young mothers are provided.

Fictive kin. Fictive kin support may facilitate the educational engagement of young mothers. Some Namibian ethnic groups also view children as belonging to the community as a whole and not only nuclear families (Samkange, 1980). In her biography, Libertina Amathila (2012) describes the tradition of childrearing by grandparents until children were ready to attend "real school" (p.4), meaning pre-school, while the parents work in other towns. This shared community responsibility is a critical support system for some Namibian young mothers searching for education opportunities.

To date, little research describes how young mothers may draw upon fictive kin for support. However, some evidence suggests that they may intersect with community self-help practices. Brown, et al., (2020) conducted a case study analysis of two Aawambo families practicing okutekula [kinship care], and revealed a unique practice rooted in affection, and mutual trust and benefit. They found that okutekula involves many children (e.g., neighbors' children, nieces, nephews, or cousins) living in a household with adults. It is an agreement between families based on trust that develops across generations due to community and kinship relations (Brown et al., 2020). Family ties are prioritized through child visitations, and decisions about the child's needs are made by the rearing family. Families involved in kinship care felt their social position was elevated "because somebody is trusting me" (p.185). These findings are consistent with Ruiz-Casares' (2010) finding that fictive kin provide the largest support to Namibian school-going children who are young caregivers, orphans, and vulnerable.

Grandparent Families. Research also shows that Namibian grandparents provide numerous supports beyond childcare to school-going young mothers (Chimere-Dan, 1997; Hubbard, 2009; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Shaningwa, 2007). Grandparents who are 60 years and receive a universal monthly social pension grant from the state (Levine et al., 2011) provide financial support to young mothers (Chimere-Dan, 1997). Similarly, Musese (2018) conducted a mixed-methods study with young mothers ages 14-19 in 6-11th grade with one child and living with unemployed parents in the Kavango. The author found that most girls who maintained their educational engagement did so because grandparents provided financial support that improved their ability to meet their infant's material needs. They offered emotional support, which enabled young mothers to identify a trusted adult and share their concerns. Grandparents also were significant in providing stable child care, which allowed them to ease their worries and focus on their academic performance (Musese, 2018). A South Afrikan study found that young mothers with grandparent support received daycare scholarships through a community member, material assistance, and emotional support from church groups that improved their self-images (Amod et al., 2019).

Single-Mother Families. Living in a single-mother family also may facilitate young mothers' educational engagement (Grant & Hallman, 2008; Macleod & Tracey, 2010). Studies suggest that in rural settings of sub-Saharan Afrika including Namibia, being raised in families with the presence of the young mother's own mother predicted educational engagement. Further, Odimegwu and Mkwananzi (2016) found that in sub-Saharan Afrika, living in a single mother-headed household increased school reentry of young mothers. Single mothers were more likely than those in male-headed households

to guide their daughters to delay subsequent pregnancies (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016). This finding contradicts studies conducted in the U.K. (Hotz et al., 2005) and U.S. that indicate young mothers reared in non-intact families, that is, divorced, separated or single-parent families, are less likely to engage in school (Francesconi, 2008). Further research is needed to understand the strategies employed by Namibian single mother families to inform interventions for young mothers' education engagement.

Father of the baby. Aawambo parenting is highly gendered. Mothers are primarily responsible for the day-to-day care of children with little if any involvement of the father of the baby (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016). Although these norms exist, some scholars suggest that there is a dearth of research on the role of the father in Afrika (Makusha & Richter, 2015; Mwoma, 2015). Similarly perceptions about the involvement of the father of the baby are rooted in stereotypes (SmithBattle et al., 2020). Instead, young mothers do receive support from fathers of the baby. Literature in the U.S. found that close emotional relationships between a caregiver and father of the baby was associated with high school completion of young mothers (Assini-Meytin et al., 2018). In South Afrika, the involvement of fathers in the general population was a protective factor against economic vulnerability, child neglect, and harsh parenting due to stressors among women (Makusha & Richter, 2015). Fathers are more likely to have a stable income and access to a network of resources, enabling them to provide educational opportunities to their children (Makusha & Richter, 2015).

School Contexts

This section reviews structural barriers imposed by educational policies resulting in inconsistent policy outcomes, stigmatization, and othering by peers and teachers, and

an under-resourced school system. It advances social work as a strengths-based profession to enhance young mothers' educational engagement.

School-level risks to young mothers' school engagement. There are a number of school-based risks to young mothers' engagement in school.

Policy. In 1994 punitive policies that expelled pregnant girls from school were abolished (Hubbard, 2009; Iipinge & LeBeau, 1997), but policy implementation is still inconsistent. The Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy policy of 2009 requires school reentry within 1-year from the date of leaving school irrespective of age (Ministry of Education, 2010). In contrast, another education policy allows deregistration after 20-30 days absence from school (Ministry of Education, 2010; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). The *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* only compels schooling for children below 16 years, but rural youth typically attend school until the age of 25 (Bledsoe & Cohen, 1993; Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2019). Huisman and Smits (2015) found that about 67% of girls who are 7-years-old start school late, suggesting that they experience longer school careers. However, there is a dearth of research exploring factors explaining the length of schooling among girls in general. Existing Namibian literature suggests that a lengthy school career is pervasive in rural areas and compounded by multiple factors such as distance to school and repeating a grade (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2019; UNICEF, 2018).

For young mothers, a persistent denial of school reentry resulting from inconsistencies between policies is a barrier to school engagement (Burton et al., 2011; Kapenda, 2012; Musese, 2018). Inconsistent policies likely increase educational engagement barriers, which may leave young mothers without the resources they need to

navigate educational opportunities. Indeed, studies suggest that administrators exclude girls systemically (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). In Shaningwa's (2007) dissertation research using document analyses and interviews, four young mothers (18-22 years) in 8th to 12th grade, their caregivers, and educators described the readmission process. The girls from the rural school reported that they were put on a waiting list and referred to the regional education office without recourse. Their educators explained that some girls were above school age, others disengaged from school for more than 20 days, and some had not met the 1-year-stay-at-home requirement.

In contrast, young mothers from the urban school were reenrolled without delay. Similar results were reported by Kapenda (2012) in an evaluative study, using a self-report measure within a sample of six schools (4 urban and 2 rural) in which 67 girls became pregnant in the 2005 – 2009 academic years. The study found that young mothers in rural Namibia maintained lower school reentry rates. Only 26.32% reenrolled in school relative to 73.68% in urban settings (Kapenda, 2012).

Distance to School. Distance to school, meaning the proximity of students' homes to school, also can impact parents' decision to enroll girls late in school because many high school students walk approximately 15 miles (25km) to and from school daily (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2021). In fact, distance to school was the second most cited reason in Namibia for school drop-out (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2019; UNICEF, 2018). Repeating a grade due to leaving school and reentering, or not mastering the required competencies to be promoted to the next grade level, may

also contribute to the average length of schooling years among females in rural Namibia (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2019).

***Moral beliefs*.** Many practitioners hold moral beliefs that diverge from those of youths' communities (Bialostocka, 2017). For instance, Hubbard (2009) described the use of moral beliefs by a court to disenfranchise a 12th grade young mother who attended a formerly "white only" public school in Namibia's capital, Windhoek. In 2005, Utjiua (17 years) whose ethnicity is Herero, wrote her 11th grade exams while pregnant, passed, and had her baby during school holidays in December. In January, the school principal who is white and male, refused Utjiua's reentry citing the 1999 guidelines which required young mothers to reconnect with the school system after "at least a year" (p. 228). The high court judge who is Black and male, found that the guidelines were not binding and asked the principal to use his "discretion" (p. 230). The education permanent secretary who is Black and male upheld the exclusion of Utjiua noting that grandparents who provide childcare "contribute to the erosion of moral and parental obligations" (Hubbard, 2009, p. 230). Haufiku (2014) also found that Aawambo teachers cite moral beliefs as a hindrance to providing support to young mothers. Some teachers "believe that what teenage mothers did, - be sexually active before marriage – is against their norms and values" (p. 90). Systems that ignore local realities, values, and practices may also maintain young mothers' educational barriers.

***Stigmatization*.** Emerging Namibian studies report that young mothers are stigmatized. Stigma may be defined as the co-occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, negative emotional reactions, and discrimination. According to Goffman (1963), individuals with socially defined "undesired differentness" experience

varying degrees of stigma. Furthermore, their difference from "normal" people may affect not only others' attitudes and behaviors toward them (social stigma) but their own concepts of self (internalized stigma).Young mothers may experience negative emotions when they are discredited as socially undesirable by being isolated, labeled, teased, called names, and ostracized (David et al., 2017; Dhaka & Musese, 2019; Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Haufiku, 2014; Shaningwa, 2007). Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) describe the Namibian context in which stigma occurs and the perpetrators involved. The study was conducted in 58 schools of the Kavango region[5] and involved interviewing students (131), teachers (138), and parents (2). Most student participants (83%) were young mothers who reentered school. Those who were out of school reported that they were teased and bullied by peers who reported that pregnant girls slow the class down because they are not keeping up. Although teachers were present they failed to intervene when students made fun of and humiliated young mothers, rather, friends protected them (Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Dhaka and Musese (2019) also found that peers degrade young mothers, especially when class topics relate to sex or reproductive health.

Othering. Research also suggests that young mothers are "othered," i.e., their status is used to exercise power over them, dehumanize them, and assign them a subordinate status (Dominelli, 2002). In the Kavango region, teachers explicitly pressured young mothers to leave school and made discriminatory remarks such as," [they] might as well drop out because they cannot handle both" [motherhood and school]" leading to girls' feelings of being unsupported (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013, p. 61). Teachers legitimized young mothers' low position through the stereotypes they hold. For example, Haufiku (2014) explored eight high school teachers' experiences

[5]In 2013, the Kavango region was split in two regions Kavango east and Kavango west.

supporting young mothers in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. Most teachers assigned a subordinate status to young mothers and believed that their school presence encouraged other schoolgirls to become pregnant because they were in school. Interestingly, teachers had divergent views about the school reentry of young mothers. Teachers from the remote school expressed, "we are not happy to have them, because, as I said, these people are causing problems" (p.61), while those from the town center school argued that "teenage mothers should be in the system, …like any other group" (Haufiku, 2014, p. 62). For young mothers, stereotypes undermine their ability to participate meaningfully in school. Teachers in the Kavango region (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; Shaningwa, 2007), and in South Afrika (Malatji et al., 2020) also held othering views. In Zambia, Chiyota and Marishane (2020) found that discrimination occurring in the school context was most hurtful for young mothers.

Under-Resourced Educators. In Namibia, school counselors who are qualified teachers with professional development training delivered by educational psychologists largely serve as school counselors and also life skills teachers (Mushaandja et al., 2013). They self-identified to serve in these positions and were not registered with the Health Professional Council of Namibia (Bialostocka, 2017; Mushaandja et al., 2013). Teachers expressed that they do not have adequate resources to respond to the needs of school-going young mothers. In a study by Haufiku (2014), teachers reported feeling overwhelmed and burdened because "teachers are becoming counsellors or social workers" (p.54), but they "were not trained and that is the problem that most of us are facing" (p.49). They also felt unqualified to provide academic support to young mothers because their schedules were inflexible.

Further, teachers reported lacking empathetic language needed to connect with young mothers and observed that young mothers instead resent it when teachers address infractions (Haufiku, 2014). They also did not possess the competence to offer culturally relevant services because their values maybe consistent with dominant narratives in which educators were trained or socialized (Bialostocka, 2017). The lack of supportive services (e.g. counselling pre- or postnatal, reentry) is consistent with qualitative studies with young mothers, caregivers, and educators in the Kavango region (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; Shaningwa, 2007). Under-resourced staff inhibit well-intentioned educators' capacity to provide academic support and resist harm caused to young mothers.

School-level facilitators to school engagement. There also are a number of school-based resources.

Flexible Reentry Process. Although low numbers of rural Namibian young mothers' reenter school, there is promising evidence that some schools actively enroll young mothers through flexible reentry processes. Nekongo-Nielsen and Mbukusa (2013) found that administrators in 18 schools out of 63 allowed pregnant girls to remain in-school and reentered young mothers within two months postpartum. They reported that the flexible reentry process increased young mothers' likely return to school and subsequent academic performance. This approach is consistent with the educational policy provisions that requires pregnant girls to remain in school and reenter school within 1-year post-partum (Ministry of Education, 2010).

School Social Workers. School social workers are trained to enhance young mothers' educational engagement. According to the National Association of Social

Workers (2003) one of the hallmarks of adolescent focused social work is the application of strengths perspectives. This perspective requires social workers to collaborate at micro, mezzo and macro levels and provide behavioral, mental and emotional health services, academic support and promote a respectful environment for students (National Association of Social Workers, 2012).

In Namibia, social workers are accredited by the Namibia Qualification Authority and certified by the Health Professions Council of Namibia (Ananias & Lightfoot, 2012). It is unclear how many social workers with a generalist BASW serve public schools. Although there is no specialized program for school social work, the University of Namibia curriculum was reviewed in 2015 to provide culturally relevant services and respond to the child welfare sector (University of Namibia, 2016). Building from the U.S., school social workers' are required to have a Council for Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited graduate degree or a specialized training program, with knowledge about education systems, and licensed through relevant social work boards (National Association of Social Workers, 2012).

School social workers in the U.S. provide an array of services. High school social workers seek equitable education opportunities to safeguard students' mental, physical, and emotional presence in the school environment (National Association of Social Workers, 2012). These include school retention, academic achievement, community resources, and mentoring opportunities among young mothers (Van Pelt, 2012). In addition, social workers implement distinct school programs using cognitive behavioral therapy and strengths-based perspectives (Harris & Franklin, 2003). The programs may be multi-component such as supporting school completion goals, parenting needs (e.g.,

childcare and school policies), and celebrating teen mothers achievements (Zief et al., 2020). Services that are family-centered focus on promoting positive parenting skills and modeling through mentorship (Sadler et al., 2007).

Trauma-Informed School-Based Programs. School-based studies suggest that adverse childhood experiences (ACE) (e.g., maltreatment, parental impairment, underserved communities, poverty, unstable household) may have long-lasting effects that may span into adulthood (Felitti et al., 2019; Hillis et al., 2004; Noël & Whaley, 2012). If unaddressed ACEs may result in complex trauma outcomes associated with academic challenges (e.g., attendance, withdrawal, inattention), behavioral issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, aggression, attachment, defiance, perfectionism), and strained relationships (e.g., with teachers and peers) (Bartlett & Steber, 2019; Cavanaugh, 2016; Cole et al., 2005). Among young mothers, trauma-informed programs aim to restore academic functioning (Bartlett & Steber, 2019), promote feelings of self-control, develop coping skills, create safe spaces for sharing experiences and hold positive relations (Bartlett et al., 2017).

Trauma-informed programs are likely to increase the resilience of school engaged young mothers. Resilience is defined as "the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully through multisystem processes to challenges that threaten the function, survival, or development of the system." (Masten et al., 2021, p. 16). This definition suggests that, the adaptation of children is embedded within the cultural context in which they function (Theron et al., 2020; Theron & Phasha, 2015).

Within the school context, trauma-informed programs considers how the environment in which children live, learn, and grow shapes their wellbeing (Bartlett &

Steber, 2019). In a critical analysis, Gherardi and colleagues (2020) found some U.S. schools overlook their role in enabling harm (e.g., bullying, school suspensions, classism, racism, sexual assault and harassment, gun violence, assimilation of Native American children through boarding schools). Schools offer trauma-informed programs that consider the intersection of cultural norms, family, gender, oppression; and a social justice education that underscores power relations sociocultural and historical contexts (Gherardi et al., 2020). The assumption is that a supportive school climate (Blodgett & Dorado, 2016) with a culturally responsive trauma perspective (Gherardi et al., 2020) will increase students' academic achievement. This may result in the attainment of improved school performance and cultivate young mothers' educational engagement.

Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, Safe (DREAMS). Although Namibian research on the exposure of young mothers to trauma and other ACEs remains underdeveloped, some research suggests that the DREAMS school-based program addresses challenges of parenting girls (Agathis et al., 2021; Saul et al., 2018; UNFPA, 2020; USAID, 2017). The program aims to avert new HIV infections, reduce gender-based violence, and reduce the impact of HIV among adolescent girls, and young women (AGYW) aged 10 to 24 (Saul et al., 2018). DREAMS uses physical, emotional, and sexual violence, parental loss, and high-risk behaviors as a criteria to enroll participants. Nationally, 62% AGYW in 2019 met one eligibility criteria for DREAMS (Agathis et al., 2021). Studies indicate that among AGYW, HIV infections were associated with sexual violence (Matthews et al., 2018) and socioeconomic vulnerabilities (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016).

In Namibia, AGYW represented 71% of new HIV infections nationally in 2018 (Harases, 2021). The program is implemented by a non-profit organization in three regions with high levels of HIV new infections among AGYW that is the Oshikoto, Khomas, and Zambezi regions (USAID, 2017). The Oshikoto in northcentral Namibia, had the second highest population living in poverty nationally, representing 43% in 2015 (National Planning Commission, 2015). DREAMS was implemented in three health districts and several public high schools (USAID, 2017). Namibian young mothers who engage school also live in poverty, and experience many other adversities (Burton et al., 2011; Chimere-Dan, 1997; Ministry of Health and Social Services, 2013; Mwandingi & Pazvakawambwa, 2019).

Cultural Contexts

This section reviews a complex moral framework and culturally distinct facilitators of young mothers' educational engagement.

Cultural-level risks to young mothers' school engagement. Complex moral frameworks present culturally embedded risks to young mothers' school engagement.

Moral frameworks. The transition of Aawambo girls out of childhood is fraught with complexities that intersect with multiple moral frameworks. Developmental cultural psychologists postulate that context shapes meaning making throughout the lifespan (Gaskins et al., 1992). During tribal rule young, unwed motherhood was rare due to initiation rites that permitted marriage, and the belief that marriage is for procreation (Kautondokwa, 2014; McKittrick, 1997). When pregnancy occurred in some tribal[6]

[6] Eight tribes constitute the Aawambo: Ndonga, Kwambi, Ngandjela, Kwaluudhi Mbalantu, Kwanyama, Nkolonkadhi, and Unda.

kingdoms, unmarried mothers were burnt to deter non-marital pregnancies (Mufune, 2003).

Christianity was introduced by Finnish missionaries into northern Namibia (Kuoppala, 2019). These moral frameworks used biblical beliefs to abolish indigenous practices including the killing of unmarried women who experience pregnancy (Hailonga, 2005; Kuoppala, 2019). Despite these differences, Christian and indigenous beliefs converged on the purpose of marriage for procreation (Korang-Okrah, 2015). Only this time, marriage was facilitated through the church and stigmatized children by branding them illegitimate (Samkange, 1980). At Namibian independence in 1990, social justice programs were introduced to abolish punitive laws and promote rights to education including young mothers (Mashishi & Makoelle, 2014; Ministry of Education, 2010; National Planning Commission, 2004). These beliefs persist and continue to facilitate the exclusion of parenting girls from learning in school (Haufiku, 2014; Iipinge & LeBeau, 1997).

Cultural-level facilitators to young mothers' school engagement. There are a number of culturally grounded facilitators to young mothers' educational engagement.

Guided talk. In the worldview of the Aawambo, guided talk is rooted in oral traditions. Oral traditions (Ndume, 2020) involve storytelling, dialogue, relationality, and co-creating knowledge that aims to share story as a way to guide others and transfer knowledge (Kovach, 2020). Relationality (S. Wilson, 2008) is based on the idea of uuntu womuntu [humaneness], a derivative of the ubuntu perspective (Samkange, 1980) that all life things are interdependent (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Samkange, 1980). It involves having a connection with the land, people, practices, and ancestors through spirituality

(Chilisa, 2020). Not being relational for the Aawambo is associated with "lost" wellbeing ('omuntu okwa kana' translated as 'a person is lost'). To address this lost state of mind, the Aawambo may suggest 'kakonge omulilo' [find your fire] or 'shuna kegumbo'[find your home']. This process of 'finding fire' or 'finding home' facilitates relationality—in this case receiving guidance to achieve wellbeing.

Regarding family relations, the Aawambo have no terms such as auntie, birthmother, or step-aunt or birthfather, uncle, or stepfather or cousin. All are referred to as meme [mother] and tate [father]. This has implications for who is consulted to restore the wellbeing of youth. Within the extended family and kin, elders, who are trusted adults, are tasked to provide guidance and problem-solve (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Ndume, 2020). Maternal elders, specifically trusted aunties primarily play the role of counselors (see Samkange, 1980) to guide behavior, as well as psychological and emotional health wellbeing. Young mothers navigate these family structures that influence their school engagement.

Omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings]. Omayeletumbulo or wisdom sayings are a guided-talk method Aawambo families use to facilitate wellbeing. Omayeletumbulo, refers to sayings, metaphors, and parables rooted in non-literal language that are intergenerational and primarily used by elders to pass on knowledge to youth and convey messages (Ndume, 2020). Studies show that wisdom sayings serve multiple functions, are context-specific, and amenable to cultural values (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Ndume, 2020).

Globally, the wisdom of oral traditions is represented in diverse cultures. African Americans have expressions that are conceptualized to assess the strengths of

clients in psychosocial therapy (Gibson & McRoy, 2004). The Anishinaabe Ojibwe indigenous people uses ‘mino bimaadiziwin or the good life’ to assess the wellbeing that is physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual (Day et al., 2014). The Latina community have dichos or metaphors grounded in cultural beliefs and are utilized in psychotherapy to provide culturally responsive therapy. The purpose is to support meaning making of complex psychological, social, emotional, and behavioral experiences. (Zuniga, 1992).

Positive psychology scholars also refer to wise reasoning (Peetz & Grossmann, 2021) or wisdom (Staudinger & Leipold, 2019) to study interpersonal relations, meaning making, and complex human conditions. They suggest that the study of wisdom is associated with reflective and relational wellbeing that extends beyond personal knowledge or general cognitive abilities (Peetz & Grossmann, 2021; Staudinger & Leipold, 2019). Individuals with increased wisdom knowledge are more likely to report personal growth (e.g., reorientation after life experiences, empathy, self-regulation, self-awareness, and honesty) (Staudinger & Leipold, 2019) and self-efficacy that involves an individual’s belief in their capacity through personal efforts and persistence in working towards successfully achieving a goal (Bandura, 1977, 2008; S. Naidoo & Taylor, 2021).

Young mothers’ perceptions on enduring challenges and perceptions of self-efficacy related to wisdom sayings can provide an in-depth understanding about pathways to school engagement. For instance, in the U.S. young mothers who benefitted from supportive programs and graduated from high school attributed their self-efficacy with school engagement to mentors and trusted adults, motivation to be a positive role model for their child, commitment to goals, future aspirations and hope, and supportive school-based programs that address their needs (Jamal, 2014).

Ohungi [evening-talk]. Another guided-talk method used by Aawambo families to facilitate wellbeing is ohungi. It is an intergenerational story-telling session, conducted by elders, when family members congregate in the evening around a campfire (like a bonfire in the U.S), and involves sharing cultural practices, and providing guidance to the younger generation (Amkongo, 2020; Brasche, 2003). Children ask questions, receive guidance (Brasche, 2003), and actively co-construct their development and learning (Nsamenang, 2002).

Consistent with Vygotsky's socialization theory, Gaskins and colleagues (1992) suggests that guidance is illustrated through stories passed on to daughters by mothers to guide self-assertion and persistence in the face of adversities. For instance, in Uganda school-going young mothers experienced increased confidence and hope when they learned the stories of successful young mothers and the support they received (Leerlooijer et al., 2013). Given that childbirth is a life changing event, it is expected that young mothers are socialized to participate in ohungi. Although this cultural practice is slowly dying, reports indicate that in urban areas ohungi is being re-introduced to restore its usage (Siririka, 2019). Young mothers' educational engagement is also shaped by these local realities as they receive guidance and counselling on navigating education systems and ultimately complete high school.

Study Approach and Research Questions

This study uses a postcolonial indigenous research paradigm to advance the local realities of groups who are "historically silenced" in research (Chilisa, 2020, p. 23). It privileges culturally grounded epistemologies and addresses systems that perpetuate social inequalities (Romm, 2015).

Research Questions

The study asks two research questions:

1) What are Aawambo young mothers' experiences pertaining to school engagement?

2) What challenges and facilitators to school engagement do these young mothers identify?

Chapter 2

Methods

The chapter describes the site of the study, participants, researcher positionality, procedures, data processing and analysis, and ethical considerations.

Site of the Study

This study was conducted in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. The population size of the region was 181,973 in 2011 with most people (87%) residing in rural areas (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014a). Eighty-six percent of the population identified as Aawambo (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014a). Nationally, Oshikoto was the 2nd most impoverished region (National Planning Commission, 2015). From 2017 to 2019, it was ranked 5th for most girls leaving school due to pregnancy (Ministry of Education Arts and Culture, 2017b, 2018, 2019, 2020). Oshikoto was selected because it was the only region in north central Namibia tracing young mothers' school reentry. In 2018, only 48% of young mothers in Oshikoto returned to school (V. Ashipala, personal communication, August 6, 2019).

Two rural public high schools within Oshikoto were selected to maximize diversity of school reentry rates of young mothers. I used the 2021 school reentry database provided by the Oshikoto education regional office to select Combined Schools covering grades K-10 and Senior Secondary Schools covering grades 8-12. Oshikoto had eight school districts with a total number of 228 young mothers between the age range 15-22 who reentered school across all school levels. Tamba[7] High School had a student body of about 900 students in 2021. It was selected from a school district that ranked fourth regionally in school reentry rates of young mothers (29, 13%). Ekem[6] High School

[7] Pseudonyms not real names of schools

had a student body of about 200 students in 2021. It was selected from a school district that ranked sixth regionally in school reentry rates of young mothers (22, 10%).

All participants were recruited through the Oshikoto Regional Education Office. I contacted the school principals following receipt of a referral letter from the regional office. School principals identified the school counselors and provided contact details to me. I then contacted school counselors. The school counselors identified young mothers who were above 13 years and had a live birth. They also identified a private room in the school where recruitment meetings took place. Recruitment meetings were attended by young mothers whom I provided with bilingual (Oshiwambo and English) recruitment materials. Bilingual materials were helpful to facilitate a transparent recruitment process (Akella, 2015). All young mothers preferred English materials, but also requested to keep the materials in Oshiwambo. Eligible participants who were less than 18 years were provided with a consent letter for their guardians to sign before they could participate in the study.

Participants

Thirteen young mothers participated in this study. Twelve participants self-identified as Aawambo, with one young mother self-identifying as Omuwambo[8] due to fosterage. All were unmarried. Twelve participants had one child and one participant had two children.

Table 1 indicates that the participants' ages ranged between 17- 23 years (M = 20.46). Their grade level ranged between 8^{th} to 12^{th} grade. The average number of months young mothers took to reenter school after childbirth was 5.5 (range two weeks to 24 months). Ten participants (77%) returned to the same school after childbirth, and three

[8] Omuwambo is the singular for Aawambo

(23%) transferred from other schools to the current school. None of the young mothers lived their own two parents. Four participants (31%) were living with their mother, three (23%) with their auntie, and three (23%) lived with their grandparents. One participant (8%) lived with her kinship grandparents, another one (8%) with her uncle and step-aunt, and another one (8%) with family friends who are grandparents.

Participants depended on financial support from various relatives. Three young mothers (23%) were receiving financial support from their fathers, and three (23%) from their mothers. Two young mothers (15%) were receiving financial support from the father of the baby, one (8%) from the father of the baby and her mother, and another one (8%) from the father of her baby and former employer. One young mother (8%) received financial support from her grandparents, another one (8%) from her grandparent and mother, and another one (8%) received financial support from the father, grandparents and a government funded orphan and vulnerable children's grant. Nine participants (69%) had parents with no high school completion certificate. Seven participants (54%) were enrolled in the DREAMS school-based program. Eight young mothers (62%) had an involved father of the baby, who provided financial and emotional support. The fathers of three babies (23%) were uninvolved, and the involvement of two fathers (15%) was unclear.

Young mothers (77%) depended largely on their extended families for childcare. Five participants (39%) were provided childcare by their mothers, two (15%) by their mothers and grandmothers, and one (8%) by their grandmother. One young mother (8%) was provided childcare by the father of the baby and paternal grandmother, and another one (8%) by her mother and unpaid relative babysitter. Three young mothers used mixed

paid and mother childcare. One young mother (8%) accessed childcare through a daycare center, another one (8%) through a paid babysitter, and another one (8%) through the mother and paid babysitter.

Researcher Positionality

I am a native of Namibia and was educated through my bachelor's degree in Social Work in Namibia and received my master's in development studies in South Afrika before coming to the U.S. to complete my Ph.D. in Social Work. I hold multiple roles, identities, and perspectives (Kanuha, 2000). I had five years post M.A. professional experience as a social work instructor, 14 years working in the field of HIV promoting psycho-social care for adolescents and families, community systems strengthening, project management, conducting HIV and child welfare training, and research in Namibia. I was raised in a multi-cultural setting in the //Karas region of southern Namibia. My ethnic roots are in the Oshikoto region where I conducted field visits for social work fourth year students and engaged in identifying indigenous wellbeing practices. Prior to implementing this project, I conducted international research in Ghana and in the U.S. with emerging adults. My crosscultural experience in practice and academia enabled me to conduct conversations in Oshiwambo and English, as well as bringing insider and outsider perspectives (Haight et al., 2014; Patton, 2015) to interpret the findings of this study.

Procedures

I conducted two types of interviews during the summer from June – August 2022.

Talking Circle Interviews

Young mothers first participated in a talking circle. The talking circle is a group

approach that gives an equal opportunity for all members to be heard uninterrupted and ease power relation (Chilisa, 2020). The talking circle was selected to be consistent with the oral tradition of storytelling (Kovach, 2009) within the Aawambo ethnic group (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018). The Aawambo use this method to discuss matters of communal concern (Ndume, 2020) and ease power relations. Most young mothers contributed freely; but some passed on their opportunity to speak suggesting some un-ease.

I used a semi-structured interview guide to conduct two talking circle discussions with 11 young mothers. The circles were conducted in two separate public high schools in private rooms provided by the school counselors. The first talking circle was conducted during school hours with seven young mothers who insisted that the circle occur immediately because they already took leave from their classes to attend the recruitment meeting. As such I did not offer any refreshments and had no handmade basket [okatungwa] in the center. The basket weaved in a bowl-shape is used to represent the kitchen [elugo] where Aawambo mothers and their daughters congregate to discuss matters in private. The basket is also viewed as the container of private matters of the household. Typically, the basket may be used for domestic purposes, to store or carry food items, or collect harvest. Instead, I placed a piece of cloth in the center to represent a handcrafted basket. Upon arrival at the school the school counselor invited the young mothers to the room and introduced me as their "guest". We sat in a circle facing each other. I described the purpose of the research, consent, enrollment process, and asked to schedule the group meeting. The young mothers then suggested that the talking circle be conducted immediately.

Following COVID screening (Appendix B), COVID information (Appendix C), and signing of consent (Appendix D), participants filled in a personal history form (Appendix E). The form asked questions such as age, grade, marital status, sources of income, parental employment, childcare, and parent education. I used Appendix F to introduce the storytelling approach and wisdom saying about uushiinda [neighborliness] with examples (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018). The saying about neighborliness is commonly used by the Aawambo to describe a collective approach to problem-solving. I then asked participants to share sayings that are communicated to young mothers who are in school, their meaning, and how helpful wisdom sayings were after they reentered school. Young mothers also described challenges and resources they utilized to cope in school, and lessons they learned. Participants responded in the Oshiwambo and English language as they preferred. The first talking circle lasted approximately 90 minutes and was audio recorded.

The second talking circle interview was conducted post-COVID-19 lockdown after school hours with four participants. Hence, I could offer refreshments to participants, but experienced time constraints because exam preparations had started. I recruited six young mothers during a session organized in-school. Of them, two participants withdraw due to childcare issues. Young mothers suggested that I schedule the talking circle in two-days. Upon arrival, the young mothers were waiting outside a classroom. I shared a meal that was prepared for all to share. After the meal, participants seated in a circle with a crafted basket [okatungwa] in the center.

I utilized the same procedure as described in the first talking circle to introduce a common way the Aawambo communicate messages using the uushiinda [neighborliness]

saying (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018). Then, I asked participants to share sayings and their meanings that are communicated to young mothers who are in school. They also described challenges the sayings created lessons they learned, and sources they utilized to adjust in school. The discussion was conducted in Oshiwambo. The second talking circle interview lasted approximately 95 minutes and was audio recorded.

Conversational Interviews

I conducted 13 individual follow-up conversational interviews using a semi-structured guide. I selected the conversational approach to ease power relations (Matlala, 2017), create dialogue (Kovach, 2009) between the participant and researcher, and enable young mothers to elaborate on previous topics with in-depth explanations and examples. Conversations were also more feasible for young mothers because they could choose the time and location for conversations. Young mothers who were recruited for the talking circle in the two separate public high schools participated.

Conversational interviews described school engagement experiences within the family, school, and cultural contexts. Conversations included retrospective and current events and were not in a particular order. Many conversations started with ‘small talk’ (S. Wilson, 2008) with participants expressing their feelings on being part of the research, recounting childhood or pregnancy experiences. School engagement experiences were explicitly marked by participants such as “when I returned to school”.

First School. I had conversations with seven young mothers, in-person. I interviewed three participants in a private room provided by the school and five participants in private locations that they identified because of school locked down due to COVID-19. Following COVID screening, young mothers were asked to describe their

experiences with school engagement after childbirth within the school contexts, and then the family contexts (Appendix G). For example, “Can you please share a story on how you returned to school after having a baby?”; “Tell me about how your family or community helped your learning in school.” Participants used a mixture of the Oshiwambo and English language during conversations. The conversations lasted approximately 30– 90 minutes and were audio recorded. Young mothers received US$10 (N$140) cash gifts for their time (Appendix H).

Second School. I had conversations with six young mothers, in-person, in a private room provided by the school one day following the talking circle. This timing was necessary to prevent interference with exam preparation of students after schools reopened following a COVID -19 closure. I followed a similar question format as in the first school to conduct conversations (Appendix G). Following COVID screening, young mothers were asked to describe their experiences with school engagement after childbirth within the school, and then the family. Two participants used a mixture of the Oshiwambo and English language and four used Oshiwambo during conversations. The audio recorded conversations lasted approximately 30– 90 minutes. Young mothers received US$10 (N$140) cash gifts for their time.

Data Processing and Analysis

Processing

All interviews were transcribed verbatim in Oshiwambo or English. A fourth-year bachelor’s in education student at the University of Namibia transcribed the Oshiwambo recordings. English recordings were transcribed by me. To verify the quality of transcripts and strengthen interpretation of data, transcribers conducted weekly peer

debriefing discussions (Patton, 2015). All transcripts were then de-identified and stored on the University of Minnesota server using Box.

Analyses

All transcripts were analyzed in the language in which interviews were conducted to best represent the meaning of the experience (van Nes et al., 2010). I used QSR International NVivo 12 Software to manage the data analyses (QSR International, 2022). Analysis then proceeded using three approaches as guided by relational accountability (S. Wilson, 2008).

Thematic Analysis. I first identified emerging themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2015) to describe common and culturally distinct factors and developmental histories (Arnett, 2017; Nsamenang, 2002). I engaged in open coding to induce emic codes through repeated readings (Schwandt, 2015) of all individual conversational interview transcripts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This involved identifying the interdependent relationships of participants within "the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live" (Mauthner & Doucet, 2011, p. 127).

The next step in the thematic analysis was to describe salient themes based on their repetition within and across participants and emotional intensity (Anfara et al., 1995). Through the constant comparison method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I clustered similar themes, assigned descriptive labels, and developed a coding framework. The coding framework was organized in themes, and sub-themes consisting of common and culturally distinct practices. I used this framework to discuss my interpretations with the cultural expert and my dissertation advisor, to modify themes and codes as they emerged,

select direct quotes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and reconstruct developmental histories and relationships. This codebook continued to evolve during the writing process.

Metaphor analysis. I used the talking circle group discussion transcripts to interpret young mothers meaning-making (Van Manen, 2001) of the culturally distinct practice of omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] (Appendix A). Metaphor analysis is a meaning-making process about sayings to explore "the means by which one thing is described in terms of something else" (Low & Cameron, 1999, p. x). The meanings conveyed by these sayings requires interpretations of the message and are shaped by the social, cultural, and discourse contexts in which individuals are embedded (Horta, 2017; Shinebourne & Smith, 2010).

First through repeated readings (Schwandt, 2015), I compiled a list of all the omayeletumbulo participants identified in the talking circle discussions when they were asked to "write down one saying." To keep track of individual stories, I assigned participants the same identification as the individual interviews. *Second,* I indicated the meaning the sayings conveyed as described by each participant when they were asked "give me a brief explanation about the meaning of the saying?". Some participants indicated lessons learned. *Third,* I induced emic codes through repeated readings (Schwandt, 2015) of the omayeletumbulo to identify themes as they emerged. *Fourth,* I contextualized the omayeletumbulo by indicating the physical and social settings, the user and relationship to the participant. *Fifth,* I developed a wisdom sayings coding framework organized in themes and sub-themes. *Sixth,* I used this coding framework to develop a coding sheet for each participant.

This process enabled me to interpret young mothers' school engagement experiences with wisdom sayings by re-reading and re-coding (Schwandt, 2015) conversational and talking circle interviews. It also facilitated selecting direct quotes and merging of data for analysis across the two types of interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Case Study Example. Finally, I chose through discussion a case study example (Patton, 2015). The inductive thematic analysis deconstructed (S. Wilson, 2008) the stories of young mothers. I then use the case study narrative approach to reconstruct one exemplar that shows the relationships of the themes to one another (Patton, 2015). The case study places themes in their broader sociocultural context (Mauthner & Doucet, 2011) by illustrating local realities and contextual variations (Chilisa, 2020; Mayaka & Truell, 2021). Above all, it demonstrates multiple strengths and resilience (Masten et al., 2021; Theron & Phasha, 2015) of young mothers who are students.

Trustworthiness and Relationality

Relational accountability (S. Wilson, 2008) and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) guided my interpretations.

I enriched relational accountability through the three R's: (1) respect by undertaking active listening; (2) reciprocity by giving back to those who share their stories and knowledge; and, (3) responsibility by being accountable to connections the researcher made (Huaman & Martin, 2020; S. Wilson, 2008). I used talking circles and conversational methods consistent with the Aawambo community context to demonstrate responsibility. In addition, the case study exemplar and direct quotes clearly explained concepts from an indigenous perspective. Peer debriefings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) enabled me to show respect by including critique offered by an indigenous Namibian

elder who is a retired teacher. The elder critiqued cultural descriptions, attended to issues of meaning, and completeness (Reviere, 2001). I demonstrated reciprocity by revealing my community relations (S. Wilson, 2008) and positionality to participants.

I enhanced credibility through record keeping, thick descriptions, member checking, peer debriefing, and reflexivity. I maintained a record of sources of data and memoed my interpretations of the data through Nvivo 12 (Anfara et al., 1995; Schwandt, 2015). Transferability of data was enhanced by providing thick descriptions of participants' school engagement experiences including using direct quotes (Standing, 2011). Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with two young mothers who were identified by participants as contact persons, further enhanced the interpretations of the results. Attempts were made for each participant to verify the accuracy of their transcript through WhatsApp telephone application. Peer debriefings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) enabled me to share my insider and outsider perspective (Kanuha, 2000), thoughts and feelings about the data analysis process with others. I enhanced peer debriefings through my reflexivity notes recorded before, during, and after the interviews (Vagle, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

The University of Minnesota IRB provided final approval of this study. To ensure ethical compliance, this study approval is consistent with Shawn Wilson's (2008) three R's: respect, reciprocity, and responsibility.

First, the study was granted oral approval through community elders who consulted school board members in the Oshikoto region of Namibia. The researcher used pre-existing relationships to gain entry (Kovach, 2009). Trusted community elders familiar with school board policies facilitated respectful and reciprocal collaboration by

introducing me and the research project to schools in identified districts to confirm support for the study. This approach is congruent with Liamputtong's (2008) “knowing the person” approach, that aims to locate the researcher’s relations within the community. Second, the Oshikoto Regional Education Office in Namibia provided written approval of this study. Third, the University of Minnesota’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided final written approval for the study.

COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic safety requirements shaped the study procedures. I implemented the study from June 16, 2021, to August 15, 2021 in rural Namibia. At the time, COVID-19 was being managed in schools through periodic lockdowns of schools meaning closing schools for at least two weeks. To comply with COVID-19 protocols, I provided all participants with masks, individual pens, and screened participants before interviews using the CDC screening guideline (Appendix B). The purpose of the screening was to facilitate self-reporting of signs and symptoms, re-scheduling of interviews if exposure occurred, and contact tracing by the school counselor. Participants were also provided with the University of Minnesota COVID -19 information letter (Appendix C). All schools provided hand sanitizer or had multiple spaces to wash hands with soap. Interviews were socially distanced.

When schools were closed due to COVID-19, young mothers had greater control over their participation in follow-up interviews. I did not collect telephone numbers of selected participants to ease power relations and avoid coercion to volunteer for the research. Participants used the details on the flier to contact me by phone and schedule individual interviews. All interviews were conducted at private locations provided by the

schools such as offices and classrooms or identified by participants such as a library or community meeting points. Community meeting points were secluded open spaces identified by participants such as a parking lot with rooftop or a tree with adequate shade. Although telephone interviews were offered to all participants, all preferred face-face interviews.

Table 1

Description of Participants

Name[9]	Age	Grade	Reentry after birth # of months	Return to same school	Living arrangement	Financial support	Parent High School Completion	Enrolled DREAMS program	FoB involved	# of Children	Childcare[10]
1. Feni	22	10	12	No	Mother	Mother	No	Yes	Yes	1	Mother and unpaid relative babysitter
2. Nampa	22	11	6	Yes	Auntie	Mother and FoB[11]	Yes	No	Yes	1	Father of the Baby and paternal grandmother
3. Napo	23	12	1	Yes	Kinship grandparents	FoB & Former employer	No	Yes	Yes	2	Day care
4. Ada	22	11	12	Yes	Mother	Mother	No	No	No	1	Mother and paid babysitter
5. Tuli	21	10	1	Yes	Uncle and step-auntie	Grand mother	Yes	No	Yes	1	Paid Babysitter
6. Lina	20	10	24	Yes	Grandmother	FoB	No	Yes	Yes	1	Mother and grandmother
7. Tala	20	11	1	Yes	Grandmother	Father	No	Yes	Unclear	1	Mother
8. Siku	20	10	8	No	Grandmother and auntie	Mother and grandmother	Yes	Yes	No	1	Mother and grandmother
9. Desiree	18	10	1	Yes	Family friends	Mother	Yes	Yes	Yes	1	Grandmother
10. Nangi	20	11	5	Yes	Auntie	Father	No	Yes	Yes	1	Mother
11. Penina	17	8	Unclear	No	Auntie	Father	No	No	No	1	Mother
12. Pombi	18	11	1	Yes	Mother	FoB	No	No	Yes	1	Mother
13. Peno	23	11	0.5	Yes	Mother	Father	No	No	Unclear	1	Mother

[9] Pseudonyms used to mask identity of participants
[10] Young mothers' relationship with caregiver
[11] FoB – Father of the baby

Chapter 3

Results: Challenges and Facilitators of School Engagement

Chapter three describes the challenges and facilitators of academic engagement young mothers experienced across socio-cultural contexts.

Challenges of School Engagement

Young mothers identified factors that inhibited their school engagement in family, school, and broader cultural contexts.

Family Contexts

Consistent with existing literature on socioeconomic vulnerabilities (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Somefun & Odimegwu, 2018), young mothers identified a lack of caregiver support, loss of ohungi [evening talk], and sexual coercion as factors that inhibited their school engagement.

Lack of Caregiver Support. In their narratives, young mothers described how a lack of caregiver support was associated with persistent community poverty and gender norms, consistent with the literature (Hailonga, 2005; Kautondokwa, 2014; Mufune, 2003; Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016). Some young mothers indicated that their caregivers viewed the young mothers as adults and expected the father of the baby to sustain the young mothers in their parenting and school needs. As a result, some caregivers would terminate psychosocial and financial support for the mother.

When caregivers terminate support, it can create enduring socioeconomic vulnerabilities that inhibit young mothers' school engagement. Without caregiver support, young mothers can become dependent on the father of the baby for survival, yet some of the babies' fathers were unemployed, rejected the baby, or were still in school

themselves and remained uninvolved. In some cases, preexisting socioeconomic disadvantages before the baby's birth intensified vulnerability specifically if the caregivers of young mothers were on the government-funded universal old age pension grant (e.g., grandparent caregivers) unemployed, or subsistence farmers.

Furthermore, a lack of support can also stem from caregivers withholding financial support contributed by extended family, which creates another barrier to school engagement. Young mothers reported feeling pressured to maintain a relationship with the father of the baby for economic survival and school engagement. For example, one young mother explained how her caregiver withheld financial gifts sent by extended family members and expected school materials to be provided by the father of the baby: "My Auntie from Swakopmund donated money so that I buy a school bag and other supplies, but if I ask my Auntie where I live for something she says, 'You have a husband.' She didn't give me the money." An inability to access extended family support negatively influence young mothers' school engagement.

Loss of Ohungi, [Evening-Talk]. In line with the literature on Aawambo problem-solving approaches (Amkongo, 2020; Brasche, 2003), the loss of ohungi also elevated young mothers' vulnerability and served as a barrier to school engagement. Some young mothers persistently referenced the loss of these familial evening sessions as depriving them of much needed advice, guidance, and solutions. They reported that the loss of ohungi reduced the ability of young mothers to face developmental challenges (e.g., guidance during or following pregnancy).

Moreover, young mothers perceived the loss of ohungi as linked with the failure of caregivers to hold meetings with extended family members. For example, one young

mother described how the lack of extended family meetings is limiting to young mothers' access to educational and socioeconomic support: "I could drop out of school because my family does not come together and discuss issues like, 'Do we know that the child of this meme [mother] is experiencing difficulties?' None of my aunties or my uncles does that."

Sexual Coercion. Young mothers' meaning-making about their sense of vulnerability also highlighted how living arrangements to remain engaged in school can expose them to sexual coercion, consistent with literature on new kinship families (Pilgrim et al., 2013). For example, one young mother referenced feeling unsafe accessing high school after she transferred to a school distant from her parents and community. At the time, the young mother was pregnant and her parents arranged with family friends so that she could live with them. However, the young mother reported that this new family living arrangement exposed her to male family friends who sexually coerced her. This in turn also affected her ability to study, as she explained: "They sell alcohol in that house. While studying some people [boys] would come and would be beating [knocking] where I'm sleeping. Like 'give me your number,' because there is a lot of boys that come in that house."

School Contexts

Consistent with existing literature on stigmatization (Dhaka & Musese, 2019; Dominelli, 2002; Goffman, 1963; Haufiku, 2014; McGarty et al., 2002; Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013; Shaningwa, 2007; Smithbattle, 2013), young mothers portrayed their challenges in school through othering frameworks. They discussed how perpetrators scapegoated and excluded them by invoking stereotypes, commenting on their "spoiled identity", shaming them, and revealing private information. Young mothers identified the

perpetrators of othering as non-parenting student peers as well as educators including principals, general education teachers, and school counselors who are also life-skills teachers.

Peers. Young mothers indicated that their peers would refer to their student-mother status to invoke insulting stereotypes. These included peers saying that young mothers were failures and a negative influence on others, as well as name-calling such as "you are old," "you gave birth," and "you are worthless or used." To an extent that some young mothers internalized these beliefs about themselves as true. Such persistent name-calling can contribute to a deficient and flawed sense of self. Some young mothers reported feeling ostracized in school and limited in their ability to freely associate with other students. For example, during a Talking Circle Interview, one young mother explained that stereotypes of them as low achievers who do not study and whose futures are bleak contributed to a sense of being othered and impacted their learning in school. Non-parenting students would use biases about young mothers' behavior to isolate, make derogatory comments about, humiliate, and exhibit their power over them, thus discouraging other peers from being friends with them. Another young mother elaborated: "I think these students treat us [young mothers] harshly to show off to their friends and it may be their way of showing they have power."

In addition, young mothers described experiencing shaming from peers who divulged information about their identity as student-mothers and gossiped about or humiliated them in front of other students. When shaming occurred, some young mothers would transfer to another school or internalize stereotypes about their spoiled identity. For example, another young mother reflected on the impact of peers exposing their

motherhood status, saying: “Friends will expose you [as a mother], and you will experience negative emotions because you were exposed or humiliated by them.”

Educators. Consistent with literature on spoiled identity (Goffman, 1963; Smithbattle, 2013), young mothers also identified educators as invoking and enabling stereotypes through hurtful comments. Being othered by educators who young mothers expected would inspire hope made engaging in school more challenging and affected their self-esteem. Young mothers reported one principal engaging in public scolding of them during assemblies in front of all students in the school. Some young mothers felt insulted because the principal used them to discuss the low academic achievement of students as well as questioned the value of having them attend school. Participants discussed how these scoldings created internalized conflicts and negative self-images. For example, one young mother reported: “The principal would say: ‘Like this school is known to enroll most young mothers but I am unsure why some parents are in school.’”

As with peers, young mothers reported experiencing shaming by educators who revealed private information, asked intrusive questions, and made offensive comments in front of classmates. Some young mothers reported that school counselors leveraged their position to disclose their status as student-mothers to other teachers. Revealing private information without consent deterred young mothers from seeking psychological support. General teachers’ shaming of young mothers—especially in an intrusive manner and in the presence of others—also exposed privileged and personal information about them that was then used by peers as fodder for bullying. Young mothers thus experienced increased hopelessness, described feeling disgusting and wanting to bury themselves, and expressed a fear of approaching general teachers for help with schoolwork. For example, one young

mother indicated that: “I expect a teacher to say things that sooth my soul or give me hope.”

Broader Cultural Contexts

Shaped by the Aawambo culture, young mothers discussed challenges across social contexts that undermined the engagement of adolescent and emerging-adult girls reentering school after childbirth.

Peers. Young mothers described how rejecting to name a baby enabled bullying by peers, consistent with the literature on naming as confirming paternity (Chigona & Chetty, 2008; Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Nakapunda & Nakapunda, 2020; Tull, 2020). Some participants described being bullied by peers who heard about their family secret and revealed this private information in school without consent. Disclosing confidential family information resulted in the othering of young mothers, which in turn affected their self-esteem and limited their ability to engage in school. For example, one young mother described how some peers shared her secret about her child’s paternity with other students in the school, who would then use slurs or indirectly talk about all young mothers when the young mother walked by to make her aware that they knew private information about her.

Educators and Caregivers. Consistent with literature on existential crisis and internalization (Arnold-baker, 2020; Bateman & Fonagy, 2013; Goffman, 1963; Malatji et al., 2020), young mothers discussed how adults scolding them without providing guidance created internal conflicts. They indicated that some principals and caregivers scold young mothers to hurt and discourage them while ignoring the effects of maltreatment, poverty, parental divorce, or the stressors of being a student-mother.

Adults scolded young mothers by linking their behavior to stereotypes such as being a negative influence, inexperienced, and low achievers. Young mothers reported feeling unseen, unheard, and not listened to when adults scold them without providing guidance. The inability of principals and caregivers to teach them how to navigate developmental challenges—including educational engagement—increased young mothers' sense of being othered in school and being vulnerable within the family.

Young mothers explained that caregivers enlisting school counselors to restrict their behavior was most hurtful. Young mothers reported that some caregivers feared they would influence the family's children to start romantic relationships and engage in sexual relations. For example, one young mother described how her kinship grandparent, perceived her as a threat and tried to curtail her school engagement by involving the school counselor and her kinship cousin in isolating her. She felt that the kinship grandparent acted on biases about young mothers and failed to guide her, thus leading to her experiencing othering in school and feeling vulnerable within the family.

Case Study Napo

Table 2 summarize the developmental history of Napo's case study. The case study illustrates multiple challenges to school engagement that young mothers experienced in family, school, and cultural contexts, as well as some of the unique vulnerabilities young mothers faced in the okutekula [kinship care] system.

At the time of the interview, Napo was a 23-year-old twelfth grader who reentered school one month after her second childbirth and lived with her kinship grandparents. As a child Napo was initially raised by her maternal grandmother after her mother died when she was a baby and her father, whom she had not met, died during Napo's childhood.

Napo's grandmother placed her in the okutekula [kinship] care system outside her community and ethnic group. She entered the okutekula care system at the age of four and spent six years with the first family. She experienced significant maltreatment within this home: she was physically abused and starved, and her labor was exploited by her furloughed kinship father. She described her kinship father as aggressive, having beat her until she started bedwetting. It is noteworthy that Napo did not name her kinship mother as a perpetrator but rather described her "fearing" her kinship father due to his violent nature. She started first grade as a seven-year-old but subsequently left school at the age of 10 when she ran away from her kinship family and returned to her maternal grandmother.

Napo described her maternal grandmother as a loving and good woman who made sure she had food, did not go to bars, healed her with herbs when she was sick, and was the only one to affectionately call her nkelo [lastborn]. A year after returning to her maternal grandmother, however, persistent community poverty and her community's alcohol use led Napo to secure paid childcare-work at the age of 11. For the next seven years, she worked for multiple families and at a bar selling alcohol in Oniipa, a village in the Oshikoto region, Windhoek, the capital city, and Swakopmund, a coastal city. Napo described her Swakopmund childcare-work as the first time she felt a sense of self-worth and valued as human because this employer treated her like "a person." She left the Swakopmund employer after experiencing her first pregnancy at the age of 17, while out of school, and returned to the grandparents of her first employer in the Oshikoto region in north-central Namibia. Since Napo's maternal grandmother died, she asked these

grandparents to reenter okutekula care with her baby and to facilitate her school reentry. This would become Napo's second kinship family.

Napo described how she endured preexisting socioeconomic disadvantages during her first pregnancy because her kinship grandparents' limited finances impacted her ability to acquire school and hygiene supplies. She explained that she understood, because: "My grandparents are receiving the [old age universal] pension grant. I cannot blame them. I asked for shelter. I am happy. I am eating, I never starve in that house." Beyond socioeconomic challenges, Napo identified enduring challenges within supposed social systems of care and services—family and school contexts entrusted with her developmental outcomes—including parenting struggles, lack of caregiver support, loss of ohungi, shame, stereotypes, and scolding without guidance

Like other participants, after Napo's second childbirth and reentry into school, she experienced multiple challenges extending across family and school contexts. After Napo's second childbirth, she experienced parenting struggles as she was in school. She described how learning to be a parent while in school affected her school-life balance, especially school attendance, saying:

> We have sleepless nights. I must go to school. I must breastfeed. If you are staying [parenting] your kids and don't have grandmothers and mothers to raise [the child], you have sleepless nights. You must manage school. It is really tough having a baby when you are attending to school. There is the hospital; I must skip school sometimes to take the baby to the hospital.

Napo's kinship care home was a stable placement with experienced grandparents, and yet they were emotionally unavailable and unable to conduct ohungi, or the family evening-talks through which problem-solving occurs, with her.

> Grandmother shows strictly she is not emotionally helpful. She only liked to be listened to and not to listen to the other person's problem. She will just keep quiet. No advice, no questions. What are you going to do? She won't give you solutions, she will just leave you to solve your problems yourself. It is always good to have family meetings to just talk the reality of things [life]. To tell young mothers this is wrong. Because nowadays I will ask you why. [A] long time ago the child wouldn't ask why, but now we ask why, we want to know, we want to know where I am stepping. I want to know where I am going. For example, the mother of my kinship cousin said: "If you get pregnant you must leave that house." But where must my cousin go? I thought my cousin must approach her mother with any problem. You have to be with your child, connect with her. Parents must contribute by preventing pregnancy and babies in schools by talking. So, parents must teach their children, please.

In addition to the loss of ohungi, Napo experienced a lack of caregiver support associated with Aawambo caregivers' cultural expectation that the father of the baby must sustain the young mother. As she explained: "Our parents have this thing, if you give birth, the person that helps you is the one that got you pregnant."

When asked to elaborate, Napo described persistent socioeconomic disadvantages, replying:

> I don't have any income. I have been staying with my grandparents and they did not buy me any cosmetics or body lotion since I came to live with them. Like last year [2020] when I was pregnant, she [my former employer] sent me N$300 [US$20] to help me, and this year when my baby was being baptized. When I was in eleventh grade, she [my former employer] sent me N$500 [US$33] at the beginning of the year to buy school shoes. I also bought basic things that I needed.

Another significant challenge to school engagement that Napo experienced was internalized beliefs of being deficient and flawed which perpetuated self-shame at school and limited her engagement. Self-shame was especially intensified when educators and peers saw her while pregnant in school, as she explained:

> I was pregnant [in] this school; do you know the shame of you being pregnant and attending school? You are so ashamed to walk alone, while you are pregnant. When you see somebody pregnant you want to bury yourself. Especially when you are wearing a uniform, you feel disgusting.

Napo also elaborated on challenges she faced shaped by the Aawambo culture. Napo described how hurt and isolated she felt when her kinship grandmother bought into stereotypes about young mothers being a negative influence and acted to prevent her kinship cousin from associating with her in school:

> Kuku [grandmother] accused me that I am teaching [her granddaughter] to have love affairs. I am really hurt because people don't want to be near me, and the information is a lie. I am the one preventing her from having boyfriends. Comments such as those hurt, and the person won't come to you and tell you like

that. You will hear it from other people. What hurt me is that Kuku accused me of something that I didn't do. She did not come and talk to me. She went to school and said those things that I am the one teaching her granddaughter. The school counselor called me because she came to see the school counselor.

In addition to culturally shaped challenges to school engagement, Napo discussed her experience of scolding without being provided guidance by comparing the principal with her kinship grandmother, saying:

> The principal will not tell you directly what they want. The principal solves problems by scolding people. That is not life. Like the principal want to talk everything to you and thinks that is the way. They don't understand there are people that can be physically hurt. I am not stubborn. I just got hurt. The principal is like grandmother. Grandmother would be like, "You don't know anything," but will not call me to encourage and say, "Come, let me teach you how things are done."

Table 2

Developmental history of Napo

Developmental Context	Theme	Events
Childhood	Okutekula [kinship care]	*0 years:* Mother dies. Cared by grandmother and placed in okutekula care system outside community. *4 years:* Entered kinship care system and start school at age 7. Starved, labor exploited, and physically abused resulting in bedwetting. *10 years:* Runaway from first kinship family, leaving school in 4th grade.
Adolescence	Employment and first pregnancy	*11 years:* Entered paid work in the Oshikoto region Oniipa village, the capital city Windhoek, and coastal city Swakopmund. *17 years:* Become pregnant, return to first employer in Oshikoto region, and reenter okutekula [kinship] care with 2nd family.
Emerging	School	*18 years:* Reenrolled school, through Namibia College for

adult	reentry and second pregnancy	Open Learning. *22 years:* 11th grade, experience 2nd pregnancy, and reenter school after one month. *23 years:* 12th grade, lived with kinship grandparents with one child, has supportive father of the babies, and enrolled in DREAMS school-based program.

Facilitators of School Engagement

When Aawambo young mothers in rural Namibia were asked what has helped to overcome the challenges they experienced in school, they frequently referenced personal strengths, the extended family, educators, and peers as critical resources to increase resilience.

Personal Strengths

Consistent with literature on turning points (S. Naidoo & Taylor, 2021; Reyes, 2020; SmithBattle & Freed, 2016), young mothers discussed their aspirations to avert poverty and provide a better future for their children by drawing on their personal strengths and successful completion of high school. They described personal strengths that helped them to reenter and persist in school. Turning points included having babies which strengthened their motivation to succeed in school. Insights gained from becoming a mother, and the desire to prove people wrong also strengthened their motivation to succeed. In addition, young mothers' motivation was increased by achieving academically including being ranked among the top performing students in class and tutoring other peers. Indeed, more than one-third (31%, four) of the young mothers described performing well in school. Two young mothers were ranked among the top two students in class at the end of the semester, one young mother achieved the eleventh-

grade requirements to progress to the advanced level in twelve grade, and another tutored other students in an entrepreneurship course.

Family Contexts

Young mothers discussed how extended family offered practical problem solving skills and shared lived-experiences with them to help them navigate educational challenges, in line with literature on Afrikan extended family networks (Assini-Meytin & Green, 2015; Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2020; Chimere-Dan, 1997; Leerlooijer et al., 2013; Levine et al., 2011; Makusha & Richter, 2015; Musese, 2018; Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016; Ruiz-Casares, 2010; Samkange, 1980; Shaningwa, 2007).

Father of the Baby. Young mothers identified the father of the baby as providing practical problem-solving strategies to reduce school engagement challenges and fulfill family expectations. Some fathers of the baby would provide financial support to pay child caregivers or the daycare center, which eliminated barriers to the young mothers attending school. The fathers of the baby also involved paternal grandmothers to parent the baby and consult with the caregivers of the young mothers to remove challenges that may inhibit her learning in school. In addition, these fathers ease the worries of young mothers by encouraging them to persist in school, being emotionally available, paying transport fees to eliminate long walking distances to and from school, and sharing ideas to overcome challenges such as time schedules or providing smartphones to access schoolwork online. For example, one young mother indicated: “He encouraged me to ask for help on topics that are unclear, which gave me the courage to consult classmates. He gave me ideas on how to work with money like use some for taxi, the baby, and keep

some." Young mothers reported that these practical problem-solving approaches increased their ability to address school engagement challenges.

Aunties and Mothers. Young mothers also reported their aunties and mothers providing guidance through sharing life stories on how they navigated complex interpersonal relationships, which increased their resilience in school. Some aunties would share stories about experiencing paternity issues, which enhanced young mothers' own ability to adapt to school and cope with the fathers of the baby who were delaying confirmation of paternity for their children. In some cases, aunties and mothers played a role as counselors for young mothers — especially aunties who listen, are not easily angered, and provide examples to understand intergenerational talks. For example, one young mother discussed how her perseverance in school was enhanced when her auntie promoted a positive relationship between the young mother and the principal who she perceived insulted young mothers at the school assemblies. The auntie explained that an elder talking within the Aawambo culture is one who cares, loves, or is standing up for them.

Grandparents. Similarly, young mothers attributed their ability to navigate adversities to their grandparents whom they described as loving, wise, and having a close relationship. In their reflections, young mothers reported grandparents advising them to ignore and walk away as a strategy for navigating negative statements about their student-mother status. They discussed with young mothers what it means to be a child who was in the okutekula or kinship care system through sharing personal stories of their own upbringing. For example, one grandparent explained that a fostered child is perceived as being in-the-wrong, treated in a strict manner, especially when there are no

blood relations. They would advise young mothers not to follow examples in the family that derail their goals in life. Young mothers reported that these processes for navigating complex family relationships and adversities promoted their ability to face adversity, to enhance their understanding of life events, and to increase their commitment to learning in school.

School Contexts

Young mothers identified educators, peers, and the DREAMS school-based program promoting inclusive and safe spaces in schools as other critical resources for navigating school engagement challenges, congruent with literature on trauma-informed services (Bartlett & Steber, 2019; Blodgett & Dorado, 2016; Gherardi et al., 2020; Zhou et al., 2019).

Educators. Young mothers described educators sharing personal lived-experiences with guidance, engaging in the-truth-telling-talk, and demonstrating empathy. Young mothers reported that general teachers demonstrated inclusion of young mothers when they responded to questions asked with examples, provided study resources, listened to all students, and guided students to problem-solve. In addition, some general teachers promoted safe spaces by denouncing name-calling and coaching young mothers on dealing with slurs from their peers, teachers, or family members. For example, one young mother indicated that a biology teacher motivated her to seek help and promoted her mental health, saying: “Our biology teacher likes to talk about name-calling and says, ‘I do not want any person calling others names in my class. You cannot question someone, why did you come back to school while you gave birth?’” Young mothers reported that intentional approaches disapproving of discrimination made them

feel protected in school, promoted respect between parenting and non-parenting students, and improved the ability of young mothers to seek relief.

Some young mothers also discussed life skills teachers sharing in class the ways in which they successfully navigated challenging school experiences related to early childbirth. They encouraged young mothers to persist in school, avert poverty, attain a better live, and avoid being discouraged to attend school. After learning about these life stories, young mothers reported developing the courage and affirming their decisions to reenter school. In addition, some young mothers also discussed some school counselors demonstrating empathy as a practice that enabled inclusive and safe spaces schools. School counselors listened to, never judged, and encouraged young mothers to persevere in school.

Like other educators, principals also promoted inclusive and safe spaces in schools for young mothers by engaging in the-truth-telling-talk and sharing their own personal lived experiences. Some young mothers described that the principal illustrated the-truth-telling-talk during school assemblies where all students gather. The principal shared an example of parenting a young mother in their family who reentered school, studied, and successfully completed high school as the best academic performer. This talk, one young mother reported, is truth-telling, saying: “The principal provided an example saying, ‘In my household we had a pregnant girl who became a mother. She reentered school and was the best performer that year.’ The principal talks are honest and telling the truth.”

Some young mothers described the-truth-telling-talk as okunyenyeta [scolding], okukumagidha [teaching], or advice given in such a way that young mothers would

reflect on their purpose in school, feel encouraged to study, persevere, learn something, be uplifted, and may typically initiate or intensify efforts in their academic engagement. According to the young mothers, when the principal and other educators engaged in the-truth-telling-talk, young mothers felt accepted, guided, and had hope because the speaker cared about them. For example, one young mother said: "If an adult does not scold me, it means they don't care. You will continue and have that attitude of saying, 'Why don't they talk or say something?' You will not learn what is wrong and what is correct."

Peers. A sense of belonging in school was also reported as a factor enhancing school engagement. Young mothers indicated that peers who are non-parenting students would demonstrate acceptance by being seen with them in and off the school grounds, avoiding gossip, keeping confidences that young mothers shared with them, and speaking up for them when others talk about them. Acceptance of young mothers was specifically demonstrated during study group sessions created by educators or students themselves. Some young mothers reported increased levels of engagement with their academic work because they would study before participating in study groups which facilitated learning. Young mothers would also ask questions and engage in discussions with peers to improve their understanding of unclear topics during study group sessions.

Classmates of young mothers were particularly helpful when they offered to explain homework after school hours. In some cases, study group participants offered young mothers' opportunities to tutor other students, which they reported made them feel good and in turn enabled them to learn as well. Moreover, some young mothers elaborated that study groups increased positive emotions about school because they felt motivated, encouraged to focus on their schoolwork and empowered to build

relationships with non-parenting students. In some cases, relationships developed during study groups transcended the school environment.

DREAMS School-based Program. Consistent with literature on school-based interventions (Bartlett & Steber, 2019; Blodgett & Dorado, 2016; Fall et al., 2015; Francesconi, 2008; Saul et al., 2018; Schulkind & Sandler, 2019), young mothers described the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, Safe (DREAMS) school-based program as increasing their resilience with school engagement. Some young mothers reported benefitting from the DREAMS program that offered services to "vulnerable adolescent girls and young women". To assess vulnerability, they referenced being screened for a history of physical abuse, sexual violence, and coercion, if their pregnancy was a result of rape, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and barriers to in-school learning. Eligible adolescent girls and young women were given the option to enroll in the program before services were offered. The program also provided young mothers lessons on how to remain HIV-free, prevent second pregnancies, and be in romantic relationships where they communicate openly and negotiate safe sex practices. In addition, the DREAMS program provided psychological support that is delivered by community care workers and mentors who coach young mothers on coping with life challenges. For example, one young mother was asked: "Do you have any doubts about school?"

Young mothers also detailed that the DREAMS program offered academic resources to facilitate successful high school completion and reduce barriers to learning. Some young mothers reported that DREAMS availed stationaries (e.g., posters, pens, pencils, and calculators) and textbooks to the school counselor that they could access for

a specified period, like a library system, and STEM tutors who are college students. They reported that having access to textbooks increased learning during study groups, and helped them to follow teachers' class lectures, revise work they did not understand, and study for assessments. In addition, access to textbooks enabled young mothers to schedule meaningful consultations with teachers about work they did not understand. Similarly, connections to STEM tutors were particularly helpful when peers experienced time constraints to offer young mothers academic support.

Young mothers also identified the provision of hygiene and nutrition support by the DREAMS program as reducing hunger as well as increasing school attendance. Some young mothers described being asked questions assessing family food status and answering yes to some questions, before they are provided with meal packs. For example, questions included "Is there food to eat?" or "Do you come to school without eating a meal?" When young mothers get their monthly menstruation, they reported the DREAMS program provided sanitary pads to increase their school attendance and prevent truancy. For example, one young mother was asked: "What barriers to learning do you experience?"

Broader Cultural Contexts

Collectively, Talking Circle and Conversational interviews with young mothers highlighted the omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] cultural practice that enabled thriving across socio-cultural contexts and restored their wellbeing, congruent with culturally relevant approaches (Day et al., 2014; Kĩeti & Coughlin, 1990; Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Mundy & Compton, 1991; Ndume, 2020; Peetz & Grossmann, 2021; Saul et al.,

2018; Staudinger & Leipold, 2019; Zuniga, 1992). An in-depth description of Omayeletumbulo will be the topic of Chapter four.

Case Study of Napo

Returning to Napo's case study demonstrating challenges of school engagement, she also reflected remarkable resilience by accessing multiple resources. Napo had supportive grandparents, fathers of her children, former employer, peers, educators, and the DREAMS school-based program.

Napo reentered school after seven years when she experienced her first pregnancy at the age of 17. In her story, she described drawing strengths from her babies because they are a source of encouragement, and inspiration. They are also a source of love and attachment because she lost both her parents during childhood and grandparents during adolescence, contributing to her feeling lonely.

When it comes, specifically, to Napo's school reentry, she credits that motivation primarily to her kinship cousin who was a teacher and was raised in the okutekula care system, saying:

> I gave birth in July 2016, and the need of school started coming in me. One day I drew a bicycle for one of the children in our house, it was homework. I said come let me draw for you, and there was this woman, the granddaughter [to my kinship grandparent]. She said: 'You have a talent. You must go back to school'.

The above conversation resulted in Napo seeking information on how to reenroll school from family friends who visit her home:

> One day while we were at the kitchen this woman [who] came to practice her nursing in the Onandjokwe [state hospital] said: 'I read [in] the newspaper that

there was this man [who] left school in grade 7 and went back to school. He is [attending] university. You can just go to the head office of NAMCOL [Namibia College of Open Learning] and explain your situation.

Napo indeed enrolled in NAMCOL attending part-time classes, attained enough credits that enabled her to enroll as a full-time student in ninth grade where she made remarkable progress. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Napo experienced her second pregnancy. At the time, she was in 11th grade, served on student council, and described a supportive kinship grandmother and flexible school reentry process that enabled her to continue her 12th grade education one-month following childbirth:

> For you to be admitted to school, you have to inform the school meaning that the principal has to be informed by your parent. It is to pave your way of coming back to school again next year or any year. So, I told my grandma that you have to go to the school and talk to the principal that I am pregnant … My grandma came and told the principal that I am pregnant [and] when I gave birth. It was not hard because we followed the process. When people were registering for grade 12, I just came.

In addition to a flexible reentry process, Napo's kinship grandfather instructed the father of the baby to ensure her school reentry and his responsible for sustaining her:

> My grandfather told me that he was angry, furious when I said I am first breastfeeding the baby before returning to school. So, he told the father of the baby: "My child must return to school, see what you do with the baby." The man was really scared saying, "Your grandfather said you must go back to school so let us find a day care [center]. It is the father [that] pays for the daycare." The

> fathers always try all means to support their babies. I will say I am lucky because the men that I have babies with, always help. They love their babies, in a way that they are giving me. The [father of the] first [baby] use to send money and I buy things myself. He mostly sends N$500 [U$33 monthly] because he doesn't have a fixed job. The second [father of the baby] doesn't send money. He buys the [baby's] things himself and for me. I just write a list, and he buy everything. The baby comes first for him. He made sure that I come back to school, I should finish my school that is how he want it.

When asked to elaborate what helped to develop the close relationship between Napo and her kinship grandfather, she discussed his personal life story that encouraged Napo to persevere in school:

> My grandfather came to me and was like, "To be fostered in a house where you are not related by blood is very difficult. But you should not copy what they are doing. Those who are with you in this house were born in this family. The reality is you were not born from people who are here." He said, "I was also fostered in a family where I had no blood relations, and it was harsh. Because they would see you doing everything wrong. But they never see themselves making mistakes. However, focus on your goal so that you attain a better life and prosper."

Napo also discussed her former employer from Swakopmund as providing financial support:

> Meme [mother; former employer] helps me when I ask. Last year [2020] when I was pregnant, she sent me N$300, and this year [2021] when my baby was being baptized, she sent me N$300 again, imagine for a person sending you such

money. When I was in grade 11, she sent me N$500 at the beginning of the year. I only called her asking her to help me with N$100, to buy shoes for school. I was not having school shoes, then she sent me N$500 and I bought all the things that I needed.

In school, Napo described several educators supporting her emotionally, and encouraging her to persist in school:

> My biology teacher sees that you can do it. When I tell [my teacher] I don't feel confident, the person just say, "You will make it!" That motivates me. My teacher looks at me like I am their spiritual child. That's how we say it when somebody is not your child by birth. My teacher has confidence in me.

Napo also referenced the principal encouraging her through the-truth-telling-talk:

> The principal indirectly motivated me. That is how I see it. He called me direct and said: "I want you to pass because I want to feel proud. I want to say that at our school there was this girl that was motivated." Because through that principal love is passing and he is a person that cares about others. [The principal], is always talking about passing, studying. The person cares like that because other principals won't talk about that [passing]. Some people work because it is their job but, they don't work in a way that they are [motivating] people. They just work because, "I am the principal, and I will just come and announce what had to be announced."

Napo also described how the school counselor is nonjudgmental and leverages the strengths of young mothers to motivate them:

> I overcome my hurtful feelings by being close with my life skills teacher. I always go to the school counselor because she never judges. She always give you the way to go forward. She listens to you when you tell her all the things. I think that is what she is meant to do because she loves her students. We had a parent meeting one day and everyone was only talking about the bad things, and the school counselor concluded by comparing our lives [young mothers] with this kind of animal that sheds its skin when it is tired. She said, "This bird fly high in the air because it preys on meat that it hunts itself." She was telling us that we are going through a difficult time, but do not fear, just compare your life to this bird. The bird does not eat meat that was hunt by another bird. So, we should also motivate ourselves when we are going through hard times. She said, "It is true you are being called names and made angry, but you must be able to pick yourself up." I love the way she motivates people because it calms everyone.

It is not only adults that increased young mothers' capacity to remain in school but also peers:

> I had two ladies by my side. They stayed by my side. We walked together when I was pregnant and my classmates, they never made me feel uncomfortable. They laughed with me, they never bullied me in the way that you are pregnant, you are dirty, because I was the only girl that is big in that class, I am with 17, 16, 18 [year old] learners in school and I am 23. They accepted me in a way that I was not even scared of them. I would always walk with them wherever I go, it makes you feel more power like I had somebody.

Napo also described benefitting from the DREAMS school-based program which implement trauma-informed activities saying:

> They help vulnerable people whereby they screen you. They have forms and ask you questions, like who help you? Have you ever been physically abused? When they see that you qualify for DREAMS, they put you in the program. Sometimes [if] a child is abused they helped. [For example] when we were in grade 10, they helped a girl who used to be raped by her father from grade three to grade nine. DREAMS help vulnerable people. If a child doesn't have anything in school. They can give calculators. Like in grade 11, we were in new curriculum there were books that the school could not afford for all the learners, but DREAMS bought the books and brought it to the school counselor. Those books are the ones I have been using last year. DREAMS can also provide you with something [resources] to start a business and help you proceed to big institutions like UNAM [the University of Namibia], they can pay for you.

When asked if there are words or sayings in the Aawambo culture Napo reflect on as a young mother who reentered school after childbirth? She explained a culturally specific source of strength and guidance:

> Omayeletumbulo or wisdom sayings are like idioms. Idioms give you courage, inspire you, or they just raise you up. You must think of that. You encourage yourself. I encourage myself. I will be like; I am going to school [and] I have a baby. So, I must carry my baby, the bag of the baby, and the plastic with milk [to take the baby to the day care center]. And when I feel like these things are a lot. I ask myself, but what if I was alone? I can't expect someone to help me. I must do

it myself. Because I don’t know that person, that is not their baby. I remind myself about an idiom to show me what to do.

Chapter 4

Results: Omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] as a Pathway to School Engagement

> Long ago people [elders] did not talk the way we [youth] do. They would talk indirectly and will use a saying to express something pertaining to your [behavior], to guide or counsel you about something, to make you think deeply or make you aware of something [you have done]". **(*Tala, 20-year-old, 11th Grader*)**

This chapter focuses on omayeletumbulo—translated as wisdom sayings—that can facilitate young mothers' school engagement in rural Namibia. The definition of omayeletumbulo, given by the young mother in the quote above is consistent with Namibian literature that defines wisdom sayings as metaphors and parables (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Ndume, 2020). From the perspective of young mothers who reentered school following childbirth, omayeletumbulo are "idioms", indirect expressions, and guided talk used by elders to encourage personal effort and increase self-awareness about the emotions, thoughts, and behavior of the individual with whom they are talking. When asked to describe the omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] that supported their learning in-school, participants identified wisdom sayings that conveyed multiple meanings and teachings (*see* Appendix A).

Wisdom meanings encouraged young mothers to increase their resilience (Masten et al., 2021; Theron & Phasha, 2015) to achieve educational success, adapt to the school environment, navigate interpersonal relations, overcome negative emotions, and resist "othering," that is, discrimination against individuals considered socially undesirable (Dominelli, 2002). The ways in which young mothers described that omayeletumbulo helped them to accomplish resilience are through the development of: (1) self-efficacy

around school engagement, (2) assertion of identity, (3) successful parenting, and (4) spirituality.

Self-efficacy around School Engagement

Consistent with existing literature on self-efficacy with school engagement (Jamal, 2014; Leerlooijer et al., 2013; J. Naidoo et al., 2019), young mothers identified omayeletumbulo that conveyed teachings pertaining to achieving educational goals, self-reliance, and agency development.

Achieving Educational Goals. Young mothers described three omayeletumbulo that portrayed achieving educational goals as a pathway to averting poverty, consistent with literature that prioritized education among communities who are low-income (Gibson & McRoy, 2004; Kuoppala, 2019). First, young mothers identified, oto longele aawa yaali [you are serving two rulers simultaneously]. Second, they identified, oonkandanga mbali ihadhi dhipagwa mesiku limwe [you cannot kill two skunks in one day]. Third, they identified uudhila uyali ihawu dhipagwa nemanya limwe [you cannot kill two birds with one stone]. The common theme of all three sayings is that a person should focus on doing one action at a time to achieve a goal.

To focus on achieving one goal at a time, in this case staying engaged in school, young mothers described the importance of being determined to complete high school, by attending classes, "showing" those who doubt them, and proving wrong assumptions that young mothers are not focused. This is illustrated by Napo, a 23-year-old twelfth grader who reentered school one month after her second childbirth. She lived with her kinship grandparents, benefitted from the DREAMS school-based program, had supportive, non-parenting peers, and was provided emotional and financial support by the fathers of her

children. As a child Napo entered the okutekula [kinship] care system at the age of four after her mother died. She experienced significant maltreatment within this home, and ran away, returning to her grandmother and leaving school at the age of 10. At the age of 11, she secured paid childcare-work. She had her first child at 17 while out-of-school and asked the grandparents of her first employer to foster her. Napo reentered kinship care for the second time and asked her kinship grandparents to facilitate her school reentry into 9th grade. Napo discussed how her willpower and school performance was increased by understanding and applying the concepts of the omayele[12] that, you cannot kill two skunks in one day and that one cannot kill two birds with one stone. Napo applied these sayings through affirming her determination to focus on one goal reporting:

> The principal will make you not quit school, and has those words, idioms like two skunks are not killed in one day. So, my shame was really full, but I didn't give up. I was like, I will show you that I will still pass with my belly. That's what made me. I attended my school, wrote exam with my belly, and I gave birth in January. They [teachers] said for you to [be] admitted to grade 12 you must pass with C upward. In February the results came, and I passed six subjects, I had four C's and two B's. It was unbelievable, some teachers be like, "Uh, you did it with that [pregnancy]." [I was like] "Yes, I did it because of the principal and myself." The principal be like, you cannot kill two skunks in one day. And I was like, I will pass. He would say it's either you pass, or you fail and have a baby. I did pass. He [the principal] encouraged me with idioms. I have that personality, I do not like proving people right.

[12] Omayele [wisdom] is a short version for omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings]

Young mothers also used the omayeletumbulo described by Napo as a part of positive reframing. They did not internalize negative comments made by classmates, but rather perceived such comments as cues or opportunities to motivate themselves to prioritize educational goals, which subsequently increased their determination to remain in school. For example, Lina a 20-year-old tenth grader, reentered school two years after childbirth. She lived with her grandmother and benefitted from the DREAMS school-based program. As a child, Lina was raised by their father and stepmother from the age of two but experienced unstable parenting when her stepmother withheld material support due to marital problems with her father when Lina was 17. As a result, she returned to living with her mother at the age of 18 where she experienced childbirth. The father of the baby provided emotional and financial support. Lina explained how she ignored inappropriate comments by peers aimed at her, which increased her grit to remain in school:

> In school, other students made comments in my presence that they will never return to school after giving birth, which made me consider leaving school. However, I did not lower my head in shame. I ignored those negative comments. I do not carry it too much on my heart as long as I am focused on my studies. Because even if they tarnish my name [by talking bad about me], the principal already encouraged me saying, “You should come back to school”. They [peers in school] like to make comments towards me saying, “You cannot kill two birds with one stone.” I learned that it might be true because having a boyfriend and focusing on school may not work. I decided to use most of my time and concentrate on schoolwork while spending some time with my boyfriend.

Self-reliance. Consistent with studies on self-reliance as a transformative experience (Cheung et al., 2020; Reyes, 2020), young mothers identified three omayeletumbulo. First, magadhi ihaga lilwa peke lyamukweni [honey or butter cannot be eaten from someone else hand]. This saying motivates a person to work for their own benefit. Second, uuwanawa ihau zi pokapala ka yela [good things don't come from a clean face]. This saying encourages a person to put personal effort if they want to have a good life. Third, they identified, waa kambadhala ku sindi [if you don't try you cannot win]. This third saying motivates an individual to persist to achieve their purpose or attain a better life.

The salient theme for all three sayings is that a person should exert personal effort toward their own benefit to attain a good life. In their narratives, participants stated or implied that they did not want to be dependent on other people. Young mothers discussed the concept of self-reliance by emphasizing their personal capacity to study for their own benefit without relying on others like a parent or a peer in school. This awareness created a shift in the perception of participants about the value of high school completion. The shift proved evident in the case of Tala, who described how her grandfather's perspective about the omayele, honey or butter cannot be eaten from someone else hand, contributed to her renewed interest in attending school.

Tala, a 20-year-old 11th grader lived with her grandmother. She reentered school one month following childbirth at the age of 19 and benefitted from the DREAMS school-based program and supportive parents who provided childcare. As a child, Tala was raised by her parents but transferred from her familiar community in the village to a

semi-urban-based high school in eighth grade where she experienced childbirth. Tala, reported:

> When kuku [grandfather] advised me, for example about what my peers are achieving in school or studying, he would say, “Honey or butter cannot be eaten from someone else hand.” Then I ask, Kuku what exactly do you mean? And he will say, “Those are not your things, when the other person has honey or butter in their hand you cannot eat from it, because the honey or butter is not yours. You must work for yourself, study yourself, put in your personal effort so that you eat from your own hand, have your own things.” That [explanation] made me understand the importance of working or studying for myself in school even if my fateher works in Swakopmund and provides for all my needs.

In addition, young mothers reported using these omayeletumbulo to engage school with a purpose. In their narratives, young mothers clarified that engaging school with a purpose revolves around their aspirations to sustain their child or children in the future and reciprocate the empathy and efforts of the caregivers of their children. Reciprocating the efforts of caregivers refers to appreciation of an action rooted in expressing gratitude (Brown et al., 2020) that involves another individual or the spiritual presence (Emmons et al., 2019; McCullough et al., 2008; Payir et al., 2017). The practice of reciprocating caregivers’ efforts among the Aawambo may increase affection, sharing of resources, and achieving a goal that strengthen family and social relations in children, adolescents, and adults (Brown et al., 2020). Tala, who discussed the omayele related to personal capacity, elaborated on the meaning of good things don’t come from a clean face saying:

> If we [young mothers] don't try to do something, we will not achieve anything. Like we gave birth, and many of our parents are caring for our babies so that we can return to school full-time. They took the child since infancy so that we are not distracted, yet, if I am not trying my best to study to show I am someone who has a support system and from whom a responsibility was removed, this means I don't have a purpose because I do not recognize that my elders felt sorry and supported my decision to return to school.

Another young mother also used the omayele waa kambadhala ku sindi [if you don't try, you cannot win]—to describe the importance of putting personal effort into her studies. Like her counterpart, Peno, expanded on the empathy demonstrated by caregivers as a reason to invest her individual effort. Peno, a 23-year-old 11th grader lived with her mother and reentered school two months after childbirth. At the time of her interview, Peno benefitted from a caring extended family (auntie and grandmother) who encouraged her school reentry and offered to pay childcare, as well as a very caring father who gave advice, called to check in about her school progress, and would ask, "My child what do you need?" She did not respond to questions regarding the father of the baby. According to Peno, this omayele, if you don't try you cannot win, is a reminder of the efforts required of her to succeed and persist in school. The omayele contributed to her gathering the courage to persist in school, the desire to attain a better life, and extricate herself and her child from poverty:

> If you don't try, you cannot win, speaks to my elders because they helped me when I experienced difficulties that I could not overcome on my own. I am extremely grateful because they tried their best and treated me well during that

> difficult period in which I could not do anything. My elders provided guidance saying, “We don’t want people who are not educated, we want our children to be qualified and be able to choose jobs that they want to do like being a teacher, a doctor who treat the sick.” I also want to further my studies like Dr. V. V. Nambala [former Lutheran church bishop].

Agency Development. Consistent with the literature on acting intentionally to effect change (Bandura, 2008; Cheung et al., 2020), some young mothers reported three omayeletumbulo that promoted agency development. First, they described, kakangwa wu tonde oko nozigitha [the piece of clay pot you hate can be your utensil one day]. This saying caution others not to discount anyone because that person or those people may help you when you are in need. Second, they identified kapena kakombo okaposi, [there is no blind goat]. This saying suggests that every person has something to offer. Third, they identified, uuyuni owuna ngula [the world has a tomorrow]. This saying gives hope to a person that their life can be better. A common theme among all three omayeletumbulo is that despite young mothers’ adverse experiences, engaging in school requires the belief in and tenacity to shape one’s future outcomes by engaging in school.

Young mothers describe how the school engagement experiences enabled meaning making of the low social position they held, which supported agency development. Peno, who earlier described benefitting from the support of a caring extended family and intending to exit poverty, exemplifies this phenomenon. She discussed the omayele ‘the piece of clay pot you hate can be your utensil’, to express her commitment to school. Saying:

> This omayele encourage me to study very hard [in school]. I leave my child at home daily to attend school. So, I must work hard so that I can care for the needs of my child in future and any other needs my child may have.

Another young mother reported on the omayele there is no blind goat to acknowledge her capacity as an active agent and to mentor non-parenting students. This action to influence others is rooted in the concept of interdependence that emphasizes the importance of relationships (Chilisa, 2020; Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Ruiz-Casares, 2010; Samkange, 1980). Lina, who previously discussed prioritizing educational goals, reported how she endorsed the capacity to give advice about romantic relationships as agency, saying:

> When I saw her [a non-parenting student] behavior is changing like she was going behind walls or in corners with boys. I advise her saying: "My girl, choose wisely because when we started school here [meaning for the first time], we started with great confidence and feeling good about ourselves. But I left school feeling broken. The best thing you can do is to prioritize your education and not your boyfriend." She agreed with me because we were in the same study group, and I noticed she was not performing well and scoring low in her tests. After my talk with her, I observed she is improving. She was participating again in our study group discussions and scoring high in tests.

Another young mother also discussed how adapting to the complexities of being dependent on caregivers for basic needs, decision-making, and with the demands of motherhood supported agency development. These challenges point to the intersection of gender roles and the socio-economic position of young mothers. For example, Nampa is

22-year-old 11th grader reentered school six months following childbirth at the age of 20. She reported a stable relationship with the father of the baby who is parenting their child with a supportive paternal grandmother who offered childcare and encouraged her school engagement. At the time of the interview, Nampa lived with her maternal Auntie who maltreated her by withholding financial gifts sent to Nampa by other extended family members instead giving them to her son, withholding material support because Nampa has a "husband", or expressing anger when Nampa visited her child. Nampa experienced unstable parenting when her parents divorced at the age of 13 and experienced the okutekula [kinship] care system, through multiple maternal extended families starting at the age of 14. Nampa described how her mother reflected on the omayele, 'The world has a tomorrow', to provide guidance on navigating living with her Auntie.

> Then my mom said: "Accept and persevere the manner in which you are fostered by your Auntie, which is the reality of okutekula [kinship] care system. You don't need to be angered, for example, when she buys things for her son and does not do it for you. Don't feel bad by thinking mother bought me this and that. Just accept the situation as it is. Also remember that the world has a tomorrow. If she [Auntie] is ill-treating you while I am alive, what about the day when I am dead? I want you to persist and accept the manner in which you are fostered the way it is." Then I understood [what my mother said].

Assertion of Identity

Consistent with studies on identity development (Erikson, 1968; Gaskins et al., 1992; McLean & Syed, 2016; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978) young mothers identified

omayeletumbulo that conveyed teachings regarding overcoming hardships in life, and attaining voice and hope.

Overcoming Hardship in Life. Young mothers identified omayeletumbulo that assert their ability to overcome hardship, consistent with literature on addressing ACEs (Burton et al., 2011; Chimere-Dan, 1997; Dhaka & Musese, 2019; Erdmans & Black, 2015; Mwandingi & Pazvakawambwa, 2019; Tull, 2020). First, they identified, kapena shikukutu shaa hulu, kape na shidhigu shaa shuna mpadhi monima [there is no drought without end, there is no hardship without going backwards]. This saying motivates a person by presenting hardship as temporary. It will end. Second, they identified, shidhigu iha nyenge mwene, shila ongele we shi humbatekwa [hardship in life cannot overpower you unless it is for someone else]. This saying is intended to inspire a person to believe they can overcome hardship because it is malleable. Third, young mothers reported, shiwanawa ihaku tiwa landa [just because it is good, it does not mean buy it]. This saying suggests that a person can always learn something from a bad experience. Fourth, sha lya yina yamukweni, inashi kuta [what has eaten one is not satisfied]. This saying reminds a person that errors or mistakes are part of being human.

In their elaborations, young mothers used these omayeletumbulo on overcoming hardship in life to make sense of complexities within their cultural context. For example, Siku described how persevering through the complexities of her child not being acknowledged or accepted by the father through naming the baby. Siku is a 20-year-old 10th grader and lived with her grandmothers and auntie. She reentered school eight months following childbirth. Siku benefitted from the DREAMS school-based program, and a supportive mother and extended family who is providing childcare and auntie that

is coaching her on how to cope with the paternity delays of her baby. At the time of the interview, Siku experienced delays in confirming paternity and naming of her nine-month-old baby, resulting in the baby not obtaining a birth certificate. Siku described how interpreting the omayele,—there is no drought without end, there is no hardship without going backwards enabled her to remain hopeful, saying:

> For me this omayele there is no drought without end, there is no hardship without going backwards, is a reminder that although I may have difficulties in life, my hardship will have to end because it will not endure forever. It must just end.

Similarly, Nampa a 22-year-old 11th grader who earlier discussed navigating challenges with being fostered by her Auntie, described how adopting a positive self-concept of motherhood status enabled her to resist messages of spoiled identity from peers, overcome negative emotions, and increased her confidence. She reflected on the omayele, hardship in life cannot overpower you unless it is for someone else, explained:

> Although something might be difficult you don't need to back down or be fearful. You should persist and move on even though life is hard, and you are living in a way that you don't have control over your life. Raise yourself up confidently and know that it is not the end of the world. [Hardship] is part of life and every girl may give birth, you don't need to get negative attitudes from others. Cause like sometimes friends would like to expose you [mother status], and you will experience negative emotions, but it does not mean, now that you have been exposed or humiliated by them [other students], you should back down. You can still rise.

In addition, young mothers also reflected on these omayeletumbulo on overcoming hardship in life to construct an alternative identity within the family context. This is evident in the case of Lina a 20-year-old tenth grader, reflected on the omayele, because it is good it does not mean buy. She reported how her decision to resist internalizing offensive remarks from her sister contributed to her academic performance, which support her identity as a mentor, student, and young mother. Lina experienced unstable parenting herself and described mentoring non-parenting students:

> I decided to focus on my school, that I should not think about those things [offensive comments] because I usually would feel sad, suppress my emotions, and feeling distressed. I decided to let her [my sister] talk and that I would simply ignore her comments and focus on my education. When I told my sister that I passed [at the end of semester], and that I am ranked third out of 27 students in my class she was surprised and realized that I am serious about school. This [passing] contributed to our close relationship.

In addition, young mothers also described the need for non-judgmental treatment from non-parenting students. For example, Siku who reported delays in confirming paternity, reflected on the saying —what has eaten one is not satisfied—to articulate the challenge of judgment by peers: “Like when we are in a group some students don’t have children and some may say something hurtful to you. But that person can also make the same mistake [become a young parent].”

Expanding on the emotional challenge of handling being judged, Desiree an 18-year-old 10th grader, commented on how the omayele interpreted by Siku can be a source of harm *and* strength for young mothers’ mental wellbeing: “This omayele [what has

eaten one is not satisfied] is useful for us to understand anyone can make this same mistake we did but, it can make me feel distressed."

Further, Penina suggested that other students can be more tolerant to young mothers. Penina is a 17-year-old eighth grader and lived with her Auntie. She reentered school one month following childbirth at the age of 16. Penina benefited from supportive parents who are parenting her child, a father who provided financial support, and the DREAMS school-based program. She indicated that the father of the baby was uninvolved. Penina described how non-parenting students can accept young mothers' childbirth experience: "When a person sees someone had made a mistake you don't need to remind them all the time because you too are likely to make the same mistake."

Attaining Voice and Hope. Young mothers extended their descriptions of omayeletumbulo that convey teachings on assertion of identity to attaining voice and hope, consistent with literature on positive psychology (Emmons et al., 2019; Gillham et al., 2011). First, participants reported, Kokanenge (a proper name) hamiti dha kala ko [there are not only trees]. This saying means a person should show what they are capable of. Second, they identified, Pohaulwoye oponguyo ngele pwa pomboka ongoye mwene to hondjo po [for your benefit stich the torn clothing]. This saying is aimed to motivate an individual to persist and to help themselves.

Reflecting on these omayeletumbulo, young mothers described how having hope increased their capacity to overcome bullying, which affirmed their identity of being smart and being a student. For example, Lina who reported being ranked third in her class, discussed the omayele there are not only trees, stating:

> What has helped me to stay in school is hope. For example, when you are bullied in school it is easy to lose hope because other students are calling you names but they may be doing that because of the mistake I made [becoming a young mother]. I decided to let me show them that, from my community, Kokanenge, there are not only trees. Meaning let me show them that I am smart when it comes to performing in school.

Further, Lina also elaborated on how her desire to attain voice increased her school performance, both of which supported the assertion of her identity. She reported on the omayele for your benefit stich the torn clothing, by explaining:

> This omayele means you alone can make your life better! If you don't move your life forward, no one can do it for you. Hence you must work on it. For example, if you are attending school, in class you are all competing, and you also get the desire to study. So, if you don't study no one can study on your behalf. So, to have a voice like other people you must study hard.

Successful Parenting

Consistent with studies on psychosocial resources mitigating the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Easterbrooks et al., 2010; SmithBattle, 2018; SmithBattle & Freed, 2016; Theron & Phasha, 2015), young mothers described two wisdom sayings that elaborate on parenting and guidance for everyday living. First, they identified the omayele, kashipile oho ti ka sha li nankuni [it cannot burn because there were no wood]. This saying means that the child was not raised well or learned little from their parents. Second, they identified, she kutsile oho ende po wa zala olukaku [once poked, next time you will walk over it with shoes. Or, once your hat is snatched off, next

time you will walk by bent]. This saying means a person must learn from the past, to inform the present.

Young mothers described how becoming a parent resulted in them reorienting their identities and life course. For instance, Napo reflected on how the loss of her parents during childhood, experiences with unstable parenting, and feeling alone in this world may have contributed to her early childbirth. She explained her interpretation on the saying, it cannot burn because there were no wood, reporting:

> This idiom [it cannot burn because there were no wood] applies to my life when a child is not raised well, you will say they did not live with its parents. In other words when something is not well prepared or ready. For example, for me as a [young] mother. I have a child. It could be because my caregivers did not raise me well which leads me to give birth at an early age that is the way I understand it.

When Napo was asked how the second childbirth influenced her learning, she described her children as a source of motivation and inspiration for her to persist in school and create a better future for her children, stating:

> I am different. I don't see my baby as a disturbance. I had my first baby when I was not in school and then I enrolled in school 2017. So, I see my babies as motivation and inspiration. They encourage me when I look at them than I want a better future for [them]. I always tell people like when I have my child beside me here, I lack of nothing. The reason is, I was alone. I have been alone in my life for a long time. I never saw my mother, she died when she was breastfeeding me. I saw my father once in my life, and he died. My grandma also died, and my great

> grandma she died last year [2020]. We were only two and I am the last born to my mother.

In addition, young mothers also emphasized the need for guidance when learning to be a parent. Lina,who ranked third in academic achievement for her class, and mentor to non-parenting students reflected on the omayele—once poked next time you will walk over it with shoes, or, once your hat is snatched off, next time you will walk by bent. She expressed how guidance can help students learn from the past, stating:

> I am asking our elders to continue advising us although we made mistakes. It is true we did make mistake but the omuwambo has a saying 'she kutsile oho ende po wa zala olukaku'. Let them continue to support us and guide us when we make bad choices.

Spirituality

Consistent with literature that emphasizes the importance of spirituality as a source of strength (Dole, 2009; Haight et al., 2009; Malindi, 2018), young mothers identified one omayeletumbulo that emphasize spirituality. They identified, Kalunga iheku etha nganyoko, or God will not abandon you while your mom [parent] can. This saying suggest that God cares about you. Ada, a 22-year-old, 11th grader discussed how her perspective of this omayele helped her to develop a close relationship with her mom and contributed to her perseverance in attending school. Ada lived with her mother who she described as very supportive, paid for childcare, and provided financial support. She experienced isolation at school and the father of the baby was uninvolved, explained:

> In my case, I live with my mother, and she encouraged me to return to school. She motivates me and she does not really get angry easily. Because of that I like to tell

her what happened at school, and she will give me advice or try to solve my problem. For example, when my calculator go lost. I explained that it was stolen, and she said, “As long as you are studying, I am willing to provide what you need for school.” I would say our close relationship is because of my behavior, and how I study in school by passing. When my mother attend meetings at school, I want her to receive a positive report about me.

Napo, who previously discussed her children as a source of strength, also described how her understanding about God enhanced her purpose to study hard in school, explaining:

> [When attending] the other [earlier] grades I was just coming to school and going home, I didn’t know the reason why I am coming to school, but now that I have children, my kids are the ones that are forcing me to have a better life. I am seeing how life is changing. I am seeing that you won’t have a better life when you don’t school, the world is changing unless you have skills and are intelligent. There are people in school, but they are not meant to be in school, they are meant to do other things, drawing, and other things but for me I know I am not capable of drawing. I know I am intelligent, that is how God created us, we just don’t explore our intelligence. So, I told myself that if God gave me this intelligence, let me try. God does not assist a person that does not put in the work. I want a better future.

Young mothers also referenced prayer as a source of forgiveness that facilitated school engagement, consistent with literature on forgiveness as a prosocial internal process (Thompson & Snyder, 2019). Lina, who identified the omayele you cannot kill

two birds with one stone, described how forgiveness supported her capacity to maintain peer relationships and adapt to her school environment. She identified the source of her forgiveness as another young mother who advised Lina to use prayer after her classmates questioned her presence in class:

> I consulted another young mother in our class who asked me, “Do you know the Lord’s Prayer?” and I said, “Yes.” Then she replied, “Why do we pray ‘forgive us our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us’? How is it that you don’t forgive them and find inner peace?” I decided to follow my friend’s advice. Those girls noticed that I have moved on and don’t make negative comments about me. We have developed a friendship, and I forgave them. I don’t have bad feelings about them.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the school engagement experiences of Aawambo young mothers aged 17-23 who reentered school. *Omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] as a Pathway to School Engagement for Young Mothers in Rural Namibia*, fills a gap in culturally relevant approaches. There is growing recognition that for social work to remain relevant in Afrika (Twikirize & Spitzer, 2019) and internationally (Gray et al., 2016; Haight et al, 2019; Henderson et al., 2016), researchers, educators, practitioners, and policy makers should create space for indigenous methods. This study begins to address this growing concern through indigenous research methods that are culturally grounded, context specific, and consider local realities (Chilisa, 2020; Kovach, 2010; S. Wilson, 2008).

Chapter five discusses findings that advance the literature by exposing culturally widespread and culturally distinct school engagement challenges and facilitators, it presents study limitations, and future implications it has for our understanding of young mothers' school engagement, child welfare practice, and social work research, and education. But let us first discuss the significance of indigenous research methods in Namibia.

Significance of Indigenous Research Methods in Namibia

This qualitative, postcolonial, indigenous research design (Chilisa, 2020) presents significant opportunities for approaches that are culturally grounded, context specific, and consider local realities.

Culturally Grounded

This study is a model for conducting research that is culturally grounded. It is the first Namibian based social work study that demonstrate a systematic way in which scientific inquiry is rooted in indigenous knowledge systems to co-create new knowledge. Consistent with the worldview of the Aawambo, the ubuntu perspective (Samkange, 1980) known as uuntu womuntu [humaneness] in this community guided this research. Collectivist approaches emphasizing relationality, the interdependence of life (Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; S. Wilson, 2008), are viewed as essential to address child welfare (Mayaka & Truell, 2021). Collectivist approaches further recognize the uniqueness of each individual, significance to avail resources, and restore wellbeing to enable thriving (Gray et al., 2014; King et al., 2017; Moodley et al., 2020; Samkange, 1980). Ubuntu revealed family-focused models (e.g., extended family meetings) and individual-level practices (e.g., wisdom sayings) as a pathway to school engagement, consistent with communal and culturally grounded methods (Henderson et al., 2016; Theron et al., 2020; Theron & Phasha, 2015).

Context Specific

Indigenous methods are context specific. The Aawambo culture is an oral traditions through which knowledge and wisdom is transferred to the younger generation (Brasche, 2003; Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018). This study used talking circles, conversations, uushiinda [neighborliness] saying, and okatungwa [crafted basket] to conduct this study. These methods enabled participants to relate their stories to unique daily experiences and practices (e.g., the truth-telling-talk, ohungi [evening-talk].

Participants shared examples and wisdom sayings) to address the school engagement of young mothers.

Local Realities

Indigenous methods consider local realities. Developmentally, the concepts of adolescent and emerging adulthood refer to the roles young people gradually acquire on their way to adulthood (Arnett, 2000, 2017). Findings suggest that these concepts are also applicable to the Namibian contexts. In the case of the young mothers, they are raising children, but still finishing high school, and not yet economically independent or married. To understand the acquisition of these roles, I considered descriptions of emerging adults in western and indigenous contexts. In western contexts emerging adults are roughly 18-25 years old, attaining socioeconomic stability, and identity outside the family structure (Arnett, 2000, 2015). Indigenous contexts do not describe emerging adulthood but rather adulthood as roughly 18-35 years, married with children, attaining stability by building an independent house, and engaging in subsistence farming (Mayaka & Truell, 2021; Arnett, 2017; Nsamenang, 2002). Researchers in Namibia and Afrika in general should utilize indigenous methods to inform interventions such as socio-economic resources for emerging adults to attain stability. Shifting to indigenous methods is not only rooted in local reality but also reveal contextual variations and contributes to cross-cultural collaborations that is reciprocal.

Discussion of Results

School engagement experiences of young mothers are shaped within sociocultural contexts. Consistent with the ubuntu perspective that advances relationality (Chilisa, 2020; S. Wilson, 2008) and uniqueness in being humane (Gray et al., 2014; King et al.,

2017; Moodley et al., 2020), young mothers' pathways to school engagement are broadly supported by an emphasis on uuntu womuntu, or the humaneness of a person. Consistent with existing literature, Aawambo young mothers identified school engagement challenges and facilitators that are culturally widespread. In addition, they identified omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings] as a culturally distinct facilitator. Findings and existing literature provide insights into the challenges and facilitators for school engagement.

Family Contexts Challenges and Facilitators of School Engagement

Although the extended family remain a critical support for young mothers school engagement, structural vulnerabilities diminish educational gains.

Challenges with Vulnerabilities. Increasingly, research in Namibia highlights challenges in the extended family as a source of vulnerability for adolescent girls and emerging adult women. Findings in conjunction with existing research suggest that young mothers in Oshikoto region encountered culturally widespread vulnerabilities in family contexts (e.g., sexual coercion) (Agathis et al., 2021; Burton et al., 2011; Gentz et al., 2021; Ministry of Health and Social Services and ICF International, 2014) after transferring out of familiar family and community environments (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013). They also experienced socio-economic hardships (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016) linked to limited access to extended family, social, and financial support at home, where they are supposed to feel and be protected.

Such vulnerabilities were also reported in Uganda where new living arrangements exposed girls and young women to male relatives and friends (Pilgrim et al., 2013). In the U.S. girls experienced sexual violence before becoming teen mothers (Erdmans & Black,

2015) including emerging adult mothers involved with foster care systems (Haight et al., 2022) in the family home. Like their counterparts in the U.S. (Erdmans & Black, 2015; Haight et al., 2022) and Uganda (Pilgrim et al., 2013), in this study, young mothers in the okutekula care system were more likely to describe limited access to extended family (e.g., the loss of ohungi and extended family meetings) as a deprivation of much needed guidance, practical problem-solving, and financial support. This finding also is consistent with research in Namibia indicating that, HIV affected youth families are more likely to report a lack of extended family support (Ruiz-Casares, 2010).

Interestingly, none of the young mothers lived with their own two parents. At most a few (31%, 4) participants lived with their own mother. Most (69%, 9) young mothers lived with extended family, specifically aunties, uncle, kinship grandparents, and paternal or maternal grandparents. This finding in conjunction with existing research suggests that family vulnerabilities diminish school engagement opportunities for young mothers. This finding is consistent with research in Namibia indicating vulnerabilities of children due to being fostered away from both parents (Ministry of Health and Social Services and ICF International, 2014), living long distances to school (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013), and lacking access to stable family networks (Ruiz-Casares, 2010). Research in the U.S. (Mollborn, 2017) and Namibia (Eloundou-Enyegue & Magazi, 2011; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015; Somefun & Odimegwu, 2018) also found that enduring family and community poverty erode the educational gains of young mothers and their children. This is because they must navigate poverty in childhood and without the promise of family or government interventions responding to their needs.

Facilitators to Attaining Developmental Goals. This study in conjunction with existing research found that in the Oshikoto region, female relatives as well as the baby's father are important sources of support that can mitigate challenges. Most young mothers (62%, 7) experienced the okutekula [kinship] care system without government support. They lived with maternal relations such as aunties, grandmothers, uncles, and grandmothers. In the worldview of the Aawambo, child welfare responsibilities follow maternal descent consistent with customary law (Brown, 2011; Brown et al., 2020). Similar findings were reported among the Akan in Ghana where child welfare responsibilities revert back to the maternal family when women become widows (Korang-Okrah et al., 2019). However, research in Namibia suggests that financial stressors on the okutekula care system overextend grandmothers and intensify mental health conditions (Kalomo et al., 2018). Without interventions addressing the extended family, school engagement outcomes of young mothers may remain compromised.

In addition, support from the father of the baby also mitigates the effects of socio-economic disparities and reduces barriers for school engagement. Most young mothers (62%) received practical problem-solving support (e.g., material, financial, emotional, and psychological support) including one father who is parenting the baby. Similar findings was reported in South Afrika where the baby's father married the young mother (Bhana et al., 2010), and in Botswana where young mothers received financial support from the father of the baby (Makwinja-Morara, 2009). Studies in the U.S. also identified relatives as sources of support, especially female relatives, as well as the baby's father (Mollborn, 2017; SmithBattle et al., 2020; Watson & Vogel, 2017).

These findings are inconsistent with perceptions in Namibia (Hubbard, 2009) and other Afrikan countries (Bhana & McAmbi, 2013) that the baby's father is uninvolved. In fact, punitive policies such as paying damages to the family (Shivute, 2008) and those that preclude fathers in Namibia such as the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy policy (Ministry of Education, 2010) to drive the denial of a child among young fathers. Local research found that young fathers fail to acknowledge a child as an attempt to protect their educational aspirations (Haufiku, 2014; Kapapelo, 2019). In this study, one young mother indicated that the failure to acknowledge the baby was due to the baby's father attending college. This study in conjunction with existing research found that the inclusion of the baby's father may strengthen the educational engagement of young mothers and subsequent high school completion.

School Contexts Challenges and Facilitators of School Engagement

The school contexts remain critical in availing resources that respond to the needs of young mothers. Educators and peers were referenced as both a source of harm and protection for young mother's school engagement. Existing research shows that schools may overlook their role in enabling such harms (Gherardi et al., 2020).

Challenges with Othering. In this study, peers used stereotypes and private family information to bully and show power over young mothers. This finding is consistent with research indicating that Namibian public schools are the most common context for peer violence, such as bullying and stereotyping, to occur (Gentz et al., 2021; Haufiku, 2014; Nekongo-Nielsen et al., 2015). Likewise, previous studies indicate that educators used educational policies to exclude Namibian young mothers attempting to reenter school, and whey they reentered, parenting girls were ostracized to the extent that

they dropped out altogether (Haufiku, 2014; Shaningwa, 2007). In the U.S. studies reported that professionals contributed to the stigmatization of young mothers including that they had violated familial and moral norms (Goffman, 1963; Smithbattle, 2013) to the extent that it disrupted young mothers' schooling (Hoffmann et al., 2021; Mollborn, 2017). This study in conjunction with existing research suggests that othering in school is culturally widespread.

Facilitators to school engagement. Positive peer relationships, educator relationships and school-based interventions can facilitate young mother's school engagement. Findings from this dissertation, in conjunction with existing research (Finn & Zimmer, 2012), suggest that young mothers in the Oshikoto region were supported by peers who created a sense of belonging, especially during study groups. Sources of support also included educators who shared personal lived-experiences (Leerlooijer et al., 2013), provided guidance through the-truth-telling-talk, provided practical problem-solving strategies (Haight et al., 2009) and demonstrated empathy (Harris & Franklin, 2003). Findings and literature suggests that these social support promoted inclusive (Wang et al., 2019) and safe spaces in school (Blodgett & Dorado, 2016) (e.g., denouncing othering, coaching on successful navigating school engagement (Sadler et al., 2007; Van Pelt, 2012), and enhance a sense of belonging (Christenson et al., 2012).

Another source of support was the DREAMS school-based program addressing ACEs (Burton et al., 2011; Chimere-Dan, 1997; Ministry of Health and Social Services, 2013; Mwandingi & Pazvakawambwa, 2019). DREAMS screened adolescent and emerging adult youth for child maltreatment (Matthews et al., 2018), socio-economic vulnerabilities (Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016), and barriers to in-school learning (Saul

et al., 2018). Findings suggests that the program aim promoted the school attendance and learning of young mothers (e.g., remain HIV-free, prevent second pregnancies, be in romantic relationships, psychological support, academic resources, hygiene and nutrition support) (Saul et al., 2018; UNFPA, 2020; USAID, 2017).

Omayeletumbulo as a Culturally Distinct Facilitator to School Engagement

Intersecting across social contexts, omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings], emerged as a culturally distinct approach that can provide insights on pathways to school engagement. Wisdom sayings or wise reasoning (Peetz & Grossmann, 2021; Staudinger & Leipold, 2019) in the U.S. are used in positive psychology (Peetz & Grossmann, 2021), in culturally responsive psychotherapy (e.g., Latino) (Zuniga, 1992), and to assess strengths of underrepresented groups (e.g., African Americans) (Gibson & McRoy, 2004). This study found that Aawambo young mothers experienced wisdom sayings as idioms, sayings or indirect expressions and guided talk conveyed primarily by elders to express something pertaining to their behavior, to guide or counsel them, and to make them think deeply or become aware of something they have done.

The particular wisdom sayings identified, and the contexts of their usage were also culturally specific. Young mothers identified 18 omayeletumbulo. They indicated that the omayele increased their resilience to persevere and achieve educational success, adapt to the school environment, navigate interpersonal relations, overcome negative emotions, and resist othering by asserting their identity and strength. The identification of omayeletumbulo as a culturally distinct, naturally-occurring intervention that promote the resilience of young mothers following school reentry, can mitigate mental health

conditions and increase the ability of young mothers to navigate othering, vulnerabilities, and remain school engaged.

Limitations of Study

This study has several limitations. *First,* conducting a study during the COVID-19 pandemic required flexibility and adherence to health restrictions. Procedures for conducting the individual interviews one week after the talking circle interview was not possible in the second school. Thus, participants in the second school had limited opportunity to reflect on discussions shared during the Talking Circle. *Second*, this study only sampled girls who are already engaged in school. Girls who had not been able to reengage in school were not included. Had they been included other challenges to young mothers' school engagement may have been revealed. *Third,* most of the young mothers were emerging adults who may face different issues than adolescents. They were likely somewhat more mature, and perhaps better able to handle the challenges of young motherhood, than younger adolescents.

Strengths of Study

This study also had some strengths. Although COVID 19 pandemic presented challenges, it also prolonged my engagement in the community. I remained in the community when schools locked down and reopened which enhanced my ability to provide a thick description. In addition, technology facilitated my ability to conduct member checking during the pandemic. I asked participants to verify the accuracy of their transcripts through their phones using WhatsApp. In addition, in each school, participants identified one young mother as a contact person. I peer debriefed with these young mothers to critique my interpretations during the data analysis process. An elder, retired

teacher, critiqued the interpretation of cultural practices. In addition, I kept a reflexive journal to record sociocultural observations and illustrate methodological decision-making processes.

Implications for Culturally Relevant Social Work Research, Education, and Child Welfare Practice

Social Work Research

This study has implications for culturally relevant social work research. Future studies should investigate the experiences and involvement of fathers of the babies. Despite negative stereotypes about fathers of babies, these findings indicate that some of these men were involved in providing practical problem-solving as well as social-emotional support. Similarly, research should examine how social work can enhance caregivers' ability to be involved in the okutekula [kinship] care system to support young mothers' school engagement. Findings suggest that grandparents and auntie caregivers supported by the extended family played a critical role in averting enduring socio-economic disparities. Yet, grandparents in particular are overextended as they take on parenting roles for young mothers navigating complex developmental challenges with limited emotional, psychological, and financial resources, consistent with studies on grandparent caregiving for youth affected by HIV (Kalomo et al., 2017, 2018). Examining support needed by fathers of the baby and caregivers to assist school engaged young mothers and their babies may enhance successful high school completion.

In addition, transferability of these findings to other contexts within Namibia should be explored. For example, we know that studies in the Kavango region of northeastern Namibia, suggested that brief school reentry timelines were associated with

increased school reentry rates in young mothers after childbirth (Nekongo-Nielsen & Mbukusa, 2013). Findings of this study reported similar results, suggesting that short-term school reentry timelines were associated with successful high school engagement after childbirth. Future research should explore this association to understand factors linking school engagement and school reentry timelines, to promote high school completion among adolescent and emerging adult young mothers. Future research must consider probing the school engagement experiences of out-of-school young mothers in rural Namibia, to expand the scope and explore the full range of local realities and cultural contexts that exist within the Aawambo community.

Social Work Education

Findings suggest that omayeletumbulo is an essential tool in culturally relevant psychosocial therapy. This implies that social work education can build on this cultural resource by developing curricula that integrate wisdom sayings in psychoeducational therapy and positive psychology. Doing so, will be consistent with Aawambo oral traditions (Kovach, 2009; Mbenzi & Ashikuti, 2018; Ndume, 2020) and literature in the U.S. that incorporate culturally grounded methods in therapy and (S. Becker, 2007; Peetz & Grossmann, 2021; Staudinger & Leipold, 2019; Zuniga, 1992) social work education (Haight et al, 2019). Including indigenous practices in Namibian social work education, will respond to the goal of the school, that is, to be culturally responsive (University of Namibia, 2016).

Child Welfare Practice

This study also has implications for child welfare practice. Child protection services should build upon existing cultural practices supportive of diverse population

groups. The identification of wisdom sayings as a psychotherapeutic intervention to increase resilience among young mothers who are adolescents and emerging adults signal a need to a shift from western to indigenous models. Such clinical approaches are more likely to "make sense" to young mothers, be acceptable to them, and be maintained. Culturally relevant child welfare practices are crucial in responding to local realities, norms, and practices. Child protection workers including social service professionals in Namibia (Ananias & Lightfoot, 2012; Grobler, 2007; Mushaandja et al., 2013) serve young mothers from diverse cultures and socio-economic positions (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2012). When professionals understand how cultural beliefs and practices shape young mothers' school engagement as discussed in this study, they can reduce the impact of othering (e.g., stereotypes) and vulnerabilities (e.g., adverse childhood experiences) on young mothers' educational engagement specifically through culturally sensitive practices (Bialostocka, 2017) and trauma-informed services (Bartlett & Steber, 2019; Blodgett & Dorado, 2016; Gherardi et al., 2020; Saul et al., 2018).

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the experiences of young mothers who reentered school following childbirth in rural Namibia to inform culturally responsive interventions. Findings suggest that young mothers' experiences are culturally widespread, yet distinct as they are shaped by the Namibian context of socioeconomic disparities, and developmental roles of adolescent and emerging adult mothers (Arnett, 2015, 2017; Hailonga, 2005; Kautondokwa, 2014; Mayaka & Truell, 2021; Nsamenang, 2002; Odimegwu & Mkwananzi, 2016). Findings revealed sources of resilience young mothers utilized while learning to attain a school-life-parent balance. Peers, educators,

including DREAMS school-based program professionals, and extended families facilitated young mothers' sense of belonging in school, created inclusive and safe spaces in school, provided trauma-informed services, shared personal lived experiences, and communicated omayeletumbulo as a pathway to school engagement. Exploring young mothers' school engagement guided by uuntu womuntu [humaneness of a person] derived from the ubuntu perspective enabled this study to examine strengths based practices grounded in local realities, ways of knowing, and values (Chilisa, 2020). Further research is required to examine how young mothers in diverse cultures and urban Namibia, experience school engagement relative to Aawambo young mothers in rural Namibia.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Description of Omayeletumbulo [wisdom sayings]

Theme	Omayeletumbulo		Meaning
	Oshiwambo	**English**	
Theme 1. Self-efficacy aound School Engagement			
Achieve educational goals	Oto longele aawa yaali.	You are serving two rulers at once.	Focus on one goal.
	Oonkandanga mbali ihadhi dhipagwa mesiku limwe.	Two skunks are not killed in one day.	Do one action at a time.
	Uudhila uyali ihawu dhipagwa nemanya limwe.[1]	You cannot kill two birds with one stone.	Do one action at a time.
Self-reliance	Magadhi ihaga lilwa peke lyamukweni.	Honey/butter cannot be eaten from someone else's hand.	You must work for yourself.
	Uuwanawa ihau zi pokapala ka yela.	Good things don't come from a clean face.	You must work hard to have a good life.
	Waa kambadhala ku sindi.	If you don't try, you cannot win.	Persist or take risks to achieve your purpose.
Agency development	Kakangwa wu tonde oko nozigitha.	The piece of clay pot you hate can be your utensil.	Don't discount someone. They may help you when you are in need.
	Kape na kakombo okaposi.	There is no blind goat.	Everyone has something to offer.
	Uuyuni owuna ngula.	The world has a tomorrow.	Life can be better in future.
Theme 2. Assertion of Identity			
Overcoming hardship in life	Kapena shikukutu shaa hulu, kape na shidhigu shaa shuna mpadhi monima.	There is no drought without end; there is no hardship without going backwards.	Hardship is temporary. It will end.
	Shidhigu iha nenge mwene, shila ongele we shi humbatekwa.	Hardship in life cannot overpower you unless it is for someone else.	You can overcome hardship.

	Shiwanawa ihaku tiwa landa.	Because it is good it does not mean buy it.	There is always something to learn.
	Sha lya yina yamukweni, inashi kuta.	What has eaten one is not satisfied.	Errors or mistakes are part of being human.
Attaining voice and hope	(Kokanenge) hamiti dha kala ko.	Kokanenge (a proper name) there are not only trees.	Show that you have wisdom / something to offer.
	Pohaulwoye oponguyo nge pwa pomboka, ongoye mwene to hondjo po.	For your benefit, stich the torn clothing.	Persist so that you help yourself.
Theme 3. Successful Parenting			
Parenting	Kashipile oho ti kasha li nankuni.	It cannot burn if there was no wood.	You did not learn anything from your parents. *or* You were not raised well.
Guidance for everyday living	She kutsile oho ende po wa zala olukaku. *or* She ku yugil' egala, oho ende po to sisila.	Once poked next time, you will walk over it with shoes. *or* Once your hat is snatched off, next time you will walk by bent.	Learn from the past, to inform the present.
Theme 4. Spirituality			
God cares	Kalunga iheku etha nganyoko.	God will not abandon you when your mother [parent] can.	God cares about you.

1. Omayele was identified in English and translated to Oshiwambo.

Appendix B: Screening for Symptoms of COVID-19

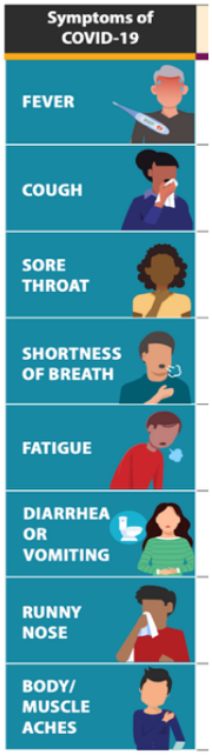
Research Project: Teen Mothers' Perspectives on Educational Engagement in Namibia

Appendix P: Screening for Symptoms of COVID-19

Participant Information.

First and Last name: **D.O.B.**

1. Did you test positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	☐ No ☐ Yes *(stop interview and reschedule)*
2. Have you been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	☐ No ☐ Yes *(stop interview and reschedule)*



3. Do you have any of the following symptoms *(If they have a fever, stop interview and reschedule)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Researcher Name: _____

Date : _____

Signature : _____

Adapted from CDC (March 17, 2021). Students Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html#symptoms

Appendix C: COVID-19 and Research Participation

COVID-19 and Research Participation

The University of Minnesota and the research team are committed to your care and safety. This document provides you with important information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019), ways your choice to participate in research might change, and information to help you decide whether research participation is right for you at this time.

It is important to know that research participation may include increased travel outside of your home and exposure to others that may increase your exposure to COVID-19. **You do not have to participate in research now or at any time if you do not feel comfortable doing so. Research participation is always voluntary; you may stop participation at any time.**

What are researchers doing to minimize your risks?

Researchers will screen participants for symptoms and for contact with people that have or recently had had COVID-19. They will also minimize the number of in-person research visits and appropriately disinfect research visit spaces before and after use.

Researchers have been asked to follow all University of Minnesota COVID-19 safety guidelines, which include:

- Properly wash their hands
- Maintain physical distance
- Wear a face covering (mask)
- Check their temperature each morning and evening
- Tell their supervisor or HR representative if they have a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms
- Stay home if they feel sick

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness in people caused by a new virus that can be spread:

- From person to person, such as when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- By touching a surface or object (such as a doorknob or counter surface) that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes
- When people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), especially indoors
- By some people without symptoms

Can COVID-19 be prevented?

Vaccines are becoming available to the public but are not 100% effective, especially across age/risk groups. Regardless of vaccination status everyone should:

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wear a mask when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Monitor your own health for COVID-19 symptoms

If you decide to attend in-person research visits, you will be asked to do these things. You will also be asked questions to screen for symptoms before you arrive and to limit additional people who will attend the research appointment with you.

RESEARCH ETHICS

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Seek medical care right away if you have symptoms and feel worse or you have difficulty breathing. Even if you have mild symptoms, call the study team before coming to a study visit.

Who is most at risk of harm from COVID-19?

Older adults are at a higher risk for more severe illness and death, especially those over the age of 65.

People of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk for more severe illness and death, including those people with:

- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease

People who are immunocompromised from cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications are also at elevated risk. Again, vaccinations may not provide 100% protection against COVID in certain age/risk groups.

Where can I learn more information?

Visit:

- z.umn.edu/COVID19info
- www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Who can I call if I have concerns?

To privately ask questions, share concerns, or offer complaints about your research experience, contact the University of Minnesota Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 (Toll Free: 1-888-224-8636) or go to z.umn.edu/participants

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Appendix D: Consent (English)

Investigator Team Contact Information:
For questions about research appointments, the research study, research results, or other concerns, call the study team at:

Student Investigator Name: Johanna Christa Ndilimeke Nashandi *Phone Number*: 081-432-0003 *Email Address*: nashandi@umn.edu	*Advisor Name:* Dr. Wendy Haight *Investigator Departmental Affiliation:* School of Social Work *Phone Number:* 612-624-4721 *Email Address:* whaight@umn.edu

Supported By: This research is supported by the School of Social work at the University of Minnesota and Oshikoto Regional Council Education Office.

What is research?
The purpose of this study is to:

- Understand what are Aawambo teen mothers' experiences pertaining to school engagement?
- Describe what barriers and facilitators to school engagement do these teen mothers identify?
- Seek advice from teen mothers on how adults can support their school engagement?

Why am I being invited to take part in this research study?
We are asking you to take part in this research study because you have had experiences with attending school following childbirth or provide direct services to girls who experienced childbirth.
What should I know about a research study?

- Someone will explain this research study to you.
- Whether or not you take part is up to you.
- You can choose not to take part.
- You can agree to take part and later change your mind.
- Your decision will not be held against you.
- You can ask all the questions you want before you decide.

Why is this research being done?

Teen mothers. We want to understand your experience within the Aawambo culture surrounding your education in school; that is the events leading up to your remaining in school and your experiences with the school system. By "Aawambo culture" I mean your own day-to-day life experiences as a teen mother in your family, community, and school with teachers and peers. We are particularly interested in what helped you learn and participate in school; and what made it difficult for you to learn and participate in school. "Learning and participating" in school mean daily tasks needed for learning to occur, that promotes your school attendance, class participation, following teachers' directions, completing in-class and out-of-class assignments, holding positive

peer and teacher relationships; and being committed to your educational goals.

Educators. We want to understand your perspective providing direct services to school going teen mothers within the Aawambo culture surrounding their education. You will be asked to comment on teen mother's life experiences, learning and participation in school and difficulties they experience in school. "Learning and participation" includes daily tasks needed for learning to occur, that promotes your school attendance, class participation, following teachers' directions, completing in-class and out-of-class assignments, holding positive peer and teacher relationships; and being committed to your educational goals.

The current study will support our understanding of teen mother's education among Aawambo by including the views and experiences of adolescent girls that is those that transition from childhood to adulthood between the ages 13-24. You are a key person in this school system and access various resources. I think that understanding your experiences is critical to strengthening the existing school services and creating additional services essential to address teen mothers resources.

You may find it beneficial to have the opportunity to discuss and process situations that you have found to be problematic to your education. There are no other direct benefits to you from participation in this study. The results of this research will inform future efforts to improve education for other teen mothers.

How long will the research last?

Teen mothers. We expect that you will be in this research study for two sessions. Session 1 will last about 1-2 hours and session 2 about 30-60 minutes.

Educators. We expect that you will be in this research study for one session lasting about 30-60 minutes.

What will I need to do to participate?

Teen mothers. You will be invited to a group interview session with 4-6 teen mothers to complete a brief personal history questionnaire and interview with the researcher. The second interview is an individual session with the researcher.

Educators. You will be invited to an individual interview session to complete a brief personal history questionnaire and interview with the researcher.

Is there any way that being in this study could be bad for me?

There is a risk that you may experience distress recounting your own experiences with being in school or experience of the teen mothers with whom you work. The researcher who will be conducting the interviews is a master's level social worker. Support will be provided if you experience distress, and you can be referred to other resources if necessary. In addition, if you feel a need for further support, a list of resources is provided by the research team.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research?

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no known alternatives, other than deciding not to participate in this research study. Your decision to participate or not will

not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or Oshikoto Regional Council Education Office. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How many people will be studied?
We expect about 8-20 people will participate in our study.

*What happens if I say "*Yes, I want to be in this research*"?*
Once you agree to participate in this study, a doctoral social work student will contact you and provide additional information about the study and interview sessions. The sessions will last approximately 30 minutes to 2 hours and take place at a time and location of your choice. The interview sessions will be conducted with one social work student in the research team. During the sessions, you will be asked to:

a. Fill out a brief questionnaire that describe your personal and relational history after you reentered school.
b. Teen mothers will participate in a semi-structured, audio-recorded talking circle group interview with the doctoral social work student and 4-6 other teen mothers in which you will describe Aawambo culture proverbs that relate to your school experiences
c. All participants will participate in an audio-recorded, individual, conversational-style interview with the doctoral social work student in which you will describe your own experiences with barriers and facilitators after you reentered school or comment on your experiences providing direct services to teen mothers. You may also expand on your responses in the talking circle interview.

After the interviews, you may be contacted by telephone or email to verify your transcript and our understanding of your experiences if needed. The study will be completed by June 2022. Please indicate whether you consent to the verification of your transcript and our understanding of narratives by placing your initials underneath the appropriate selection.

____Yes, I consent to the verification of my transcript and narratives.
____No, I do not consent to the verification of my transcript and narratives.

What happens if I say "Yes", but I change my mind later?
You can leave the research study at any time, and no one will be upset by your decision. If you decide to leave the research study, contact the principal investigator: Wendy Haight at 612-624-4721 or whaight@umn.edu so that the researcher can terminate your participation in this study. The researcher may ask you for the reasons for withdrawal. You do not have to answer the question if you do not want to. Information about the reasons you choose to end your participation in this study allows us to identify potential problems related to the conduct of this study.

Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to you or loss of benefit to which you are entitled. This means that your choice not to be in this study will not negatively affect your right to any present or future school services, your academic standing as a student, or your present or future employment.

What happens to the information collected for the research?
Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your personal information, including research study and school information, to people who have a need to review this information. We cannot promise complete confidentiality. Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the committee that provides ethical and regulatory oversight of research, and other representatives of this institution, including those that have responsibilities for monitoring or ensuring compliance. We may publish the results of this research. However, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential.

Additional sharing of your information for mandatory reporting. If we learn about current or ongoing child abuse or neglect, we may be required or permitted by law or policy to report this information to authorities.

Confidentiality
We will keep your discussion with us private. There are, however, some limits to this promise of confidentiality. If you disclose intentions to harm yourself or others, we would be obligated to report those plans.

Data collected
Audio recordings of interviews will be downloaded to a secure drive on the University of Minnesota server immediately following the interview. Transcribed interviews will be de-identified (all names will be removed) and participants will be assigned a number. Consent forms will be secured in a locked cabinet in Haight's locked office at the University of Minnesota. Only the research team can access the drive.

If identifiers are removed from your identifiable private information that are collected during this research, that information or those samples could be used for future research studies or distributed to another investigator for future research studies without your additional informed consent.

Will I receive research test results?
If you want to obtain a copy of the final report on this study, you can contact Ndilimeke Nashandi at 081-432-0003; or nashandi@umn.edu. Requesting the study results will not lead to any costs to you.

Whom do I contact if I have questions, concerns, or feedback about my experience?
This research has been reviewed and approved by an IRB within the Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). To share feedback privately with the HRPP about your research experience, call the Research Participants' Advocate Line at +1-612-625-1650

(Toll Free: 1-888-224-8636) or go to https://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns. You are encouraged to contact the HRPP if:

- Your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team.
- You cannot reach the research team.
- You want to talk to someone besides the research team.
- You have questions about your rights as a research participant.
- You want to get information or provide input about this research.

Will I have a chance to provide feedback after the study is over?
The HRPP may ask you to complete a survey that asks about your experience as a research participant. You do not have to complete the survey if you do not want to. If you do choose to complete the survey, your responses will be anonymous (meaning without any name).

If you are not asked to complete a survey, but you would like to share feedback, please contact the study team or the HRPP. See the "Investigator Contact Information" of this form for study team contact information and "Whom do I contact if I have questions, concerns, or feedback about my experience?" of this form for HRPP contact information.

Will I be compensated for my participation?

Teen mothers. If you agree to take part in this research study, in session 1 the researcher will share a meal with all group participants. For session 2, the researcher will pay the participant a $10 (NAD143) (gift card if available or cash) in appreciation of your time and effort during the interview. The participant will be asked to sign on a confirmation form of your receipt.

Educators. There is no compensation to participate in this research.

Your signature documents your permission to take part in this research. You will be provided a copy of this signed document.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

_____
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Appendix D: Consent (Oshiwambo)

Ofooloma yokugandja epitikilo
Uuyelele wopamakwatathano waakonakoni:
Omapulo agehe genasha nokuninga iilage, omapekapeko, iizemo yomapekapeko nenge omapulo kehe ngoka taga holoka po, kwatathana naakonakoni ngaashi ta ya landula:

Edhina lyomunasikola-konakoni: Johanna Christa Ndilimeke Nashandi *Onomola yongodhi*: 081-432-0003 *oEmail:* teenmother@umn.edu	*Edhina lyomugandjimayele:* Dr. Wendy Haight *Oshikondo Shaakonakoni:* Osikola yIilonga yOnkalonawa *Onomola yongodhi*: 612-624-4721 *oEmail:* whaight@umn.edu

Eyambidhidho: Omapekapeko ngaka oga mona eyambidhidho okuza kOsikola yIilonga yOnkalonawa yoUniversity yaMinnesota nosho woo ombelewa yelongo moshitopolwa shashikoto .

Omapekapeko oshike?
Omalalakano gomapekapeko ngaka ogo:

- Oku uva ko onkalo nomaendathano gomosikola pokati kaanonakadhona yaAwambo ye na oluvalo nayakwawo.
- Okundjandjukununa omaimbo osho woo okutotha mo aakwathi mboka taya ka tumbulwa kaakadhona aashona yena aanona.
- Okukonga omayele nkene aakuluntu taya vulu okukwathela aakadhona aashona mboka ye na aanona niilonga yosikola.

Omolwashike tandi hiywa ndi kuthe ombinga momapekapeko ngaka?
Ota tu ku pula wu kuthe ombinga momapekapeko ngaka oshoka ou na ontseyonkalo yokukala mosikola konima yokumona okanona.
Oshike ndi na okutseya kombinga yomapekapeko ngaka?

- Ota pukala ngoka ta ka fatulula omapekapeko ngaka kungoye.
- Ekuthombinga lyoye otali zi kehalo lyoye ngoye mwene.
- Oto vulu okukala inokutha ombinga.
- Ngele owii tayele okukutha ombinga petameko, oto vulu okukaninguluka konahiya.
- Ito ka kwatelwa onkone omolwa omatokolo goye.
- Pula omapulo agehe ngoka una po manga inotokola okukutha ombinga.

Omapekapeko ngaka otaga ningilwa shike?
Otwa hala okuuvako ekwatathano pokati komuthigululwakalo gwOshiwambo nokukala kwoye mosikola; ano iiningwanina mbyoka ya utha, naayihe mbyoka wa tsakaneke mokukala kwoye mosikola. Komuthigululwakalo gwAawambo, onda hala okutseya iitsakanekwa yoye yesiku nesiku megumbo, moshigwana nosho woo kosikola naalongi yoye naanasikola aakweni onga okanonakadhona okashona ke na okanona. Otu na ohokwe oku uva shoka sha kwathele eilongo nekuthombinga lyoye mosikola; osho woo

shoka she ku etele uudhigu meilongo nekuthombinga lyoye mosikola. “Eilongo nekuthombinga” mosikola otashi ti iinyangadhalwa yesiku kehe mbyoka ya pumbiwa opo wiilonge, naambyoka tayi humitha komeho okukala kwoye mosikola, okukutha ombinga mootundi, okulandula omalombwelo gaalongi, okugwanitha po iinyangadhalwa yomongulu noyopondje, okukalithapo okukalathana oku wanawa pokati kaanasikola aakweni osho woo aalongi; osho woo eitulemo lyoye momalalakano goye ge na sha nelongo.

Omapekapeko ngaka taga ningwa ngashingeyi otaga kwatha euveko lyetu lyi na sha nonkalo yelongo lyaakadhona aashona yAawambo mboka ye na aanona, shika otashi ningwa mokukwatela mo omaiuvo niitsakanekwa yaanonakadhona yopokati koomvula 13 – 18. Ngoye ou li omuntu a simana moshikumhungu shosikola nouna ompito yokumona oonzo dhi ili noku ili. Ondi wete sha simana okuuvako ayihe wa tsakaneka, euveko ndika otali kwathele okukoleka omakwatho ngoka ge li nale moosikola osho woo okweeta po omakwatho ga gwedhwa po ga simana taga vulu okugandjwa kaanonakadhona shona ye na aanona.

Otashi vulika shi ku kwathe ngele wa mono ompito yoku popya kombinga yiiningwanima mbyoka wa adha tai ku etele uudhigu meilongo lyoye. Kapuna we omauwanawa gasha tovulu okumona ngele wa kutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka. Iizemo yomapekapeko ngaka otai ka kwathela mehumitho komeho lyelongo lyaanonakadhona aashona yalwe mboka yena aanona.

Omapekapeko ngaka otaga kwata uule wethimbo lithike peni?
Otwa tegamena wu kale wa kutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka momalweetho gopaali. Olweetho lwotango otalu kala nuule woowili 1 - 2 omanga olweetho olutiyali talu kala nuule woominute 30-60.

Otandi pumbwa shike opo ndi kuthe ombinga?

Oto ka mona ehiyo opo wu kuthe ombinga momapulapulo gopakana ogendji moka to ka kala nomukonakoni osho woo aanonakadhona aashona aakweni ye na aanona ye li yane shuuka puyahamano (4-6), momapulapulo ngaka owa tegelelwa wu ka gandje ondjokonona yoye paufupi. Omapulapulo gopakana omatiyali oto ka kala mo ongoye awike nomukonakoni.

Ekuthombinga lyandje momapekapeko ngaka otali vulu mbela oku etela ndje uuwinayi?
Otashi vulika wu ka uve nai uuna to hokolola iiningwanima mbyoka wa tsakaneka mokukala kwoye mosikola onga omunonakadhona e na okanona. Omwiilongi ngoka te ke ku pula omapulo oku li omuhungimwenyo a pyokoka nokuli e na onzapo yuulongelwe woMasters miilonga mbika. Oto k apewa ekwatho uuna to ka mona omaiyuvo omawinayi noto vulu okukongelwa omakwatho niikwathitho ya gwedhwa po uuna sha pumbiwa. Oshikwawo, ngele owu uvite ompumbwe yekwatho lyagwedhwa pi, oto ka pewa omusholondondo gwiikwathitho mbyoka tovulu okulongitha kaakonakoni.

Oshike tashiningwa po uuna tandi ka tinda okukutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka?

Ekuthombinga momapekapeko ngaka inali thiminikwa nando. Kapu na we yilwe mbyoka yi shiwike, yaashi okutokola okuhakutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka. Etokolo lyoye mokukutha nenge mokuhakutha ombinga itali ka guma nande omakwatathano ngashingeyi nogokomongula pokati koye noUniversity yaMinnesota nenge pokati kangoye nombelewa yelongo moshitopolwa shashikoto. Ngele owa tokola okukutha ombinga, owa manguluka okuhayamukula kehe epulo, owa manguluka woo okuhulitha po ekuthombinga lyoye momapekapeko ngaaka no itapu ka kala oshilanduli shasha.

Aantu yangapi taya ka kutha ombinga?

Otwa tegamena okumona aakuthimbinga ye li pokati ka 8-12.

Oshike ta shiningwa po uuna ndii taala okukutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka?

Uuna wiitaala okukutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka, omwiilongi ngoka e li tiilongele onzapo yuundohotola miilonga yonkalo nawa ota ka kwatathana nangoye opo e ku pe omauyelele ga gwedhwa po kombinga yomapekapeko ngaka osho woo kombinga yomapulapulo gopakana. Omapulapulo ngaka gopakana otaga ka ningwa pethimbo nehala ndyoka lyeku opalela, noonkundathana otadhi ka kwata uule woominute 30 sigo owili. Olweetho kehe lwomapulapulo otalu ningwa montaneho yomulongwa gumwe ngoka e li tiilongele iilonga yonkalo nawa nokuli oshilyo shongundu ndjoka tai ningi omapekapeko ngaka. Oto ka pulwa wu ninge iinima tayi landula:

a. Oku udhitha okafooloma hoka taka pula opo wu hokolole paufupi ondjokonona yoye yopaumwene osho woo yi na sha nomaendathano nayalwe konima sho wa galukile mosikola.
b. Okukutha ombinga moonkundathana dhoyendji pokati koye, nomwiilongi tii longele onzapo yuundohotola miilonga yonkalo nawa osho woo aanonakadhona yalwe mboka ye na aanona ye li ya 4 – 6. Oonkundathana ndhika otadhi ka kwatwa nokakwatamawi, nowa tegelelwa wu ka popye paufupi kombinga yomayeletumbulo gomuthigululwakalo gwAawambo ngoka taga tsu kumwe naambyoka hotsakaneke mokukala kwoye mosikola.
c. Okukutha ombinga moonkundathana pokati koye nomwiilongi tiilonge le onzapo yuundohotola miilonga yonkalonawa. Oonkundathana ndhika otadhi ka kwatwa woo nokakwatamawi nowa tegelelwa wu ka popye kombinga yomaimbo naakwatheli mboka wa tsakaneke konima yoku galukila kwoye mosikola. Oto vulu woo okulongitha ompito ndjika okundjandjukununa nokuya muule womayamukulo ngoka wa gandja moonkundathana dhoyendji.

Konima yoonkundathana, otash ivulika tu kakale twa kwatathana nangoye pangodhi nenge paEmaila opo wu koleke ngele uuyelele mboka twa kwata ou li ngaa ngaashi we u gandja notwe wu uvako mondjila. Omapekapeko ngaka otaga thiki pehulilo muJuni 2022.

Oto indilwa wu ulike ngele owa gandja uuthemba/oto shipitike opo tu k akwatathane nangoye tu koleke ehokololo lyoye, shika oto shiningi mokutula oondanda dhomadhina goye dhopetameko kohi yehogololo lyoopalela.

____Osho, otandi gandja epitikilo kekoleko lyehokololo lyandje.
____Hasho, itandi gandja epitikilo kekoleko lyehokololo lyandje.

Oshike tashi ningwa po ngele ondati "Osho" ngashingeyi, etandi ka ninguluka konale?
Otovulu okuthiga po omapekapeko ngaka ethimbo kehe nokapuna ngoka ta ka kala a yematekwa ketokolo lyoye. Ngele owa tokola okuthiga po omapekapeko ngaka, kwatathana nOmukuluntu-konakoni: Wendy Haight kongodhi 612-624-4721 nenge ko emaila whaight@umn.edu opo omukonakoni a vule okuhulitha po ekuthombinga lyoye momapekapeko ngaka. Omukonakoni otashi vulika a ka pule omatompelo goye gokuthiga po omapekapeko ngaka. Ou na uuthemba wokuhayamukula epulo ndika ngele ino hala. Uuyelele kombinga yomatompelo goye gokuhulitha ekuthombinga lyoye momapekapeko ngaka ota getu pitike opo tu tothe mo omaupyakadhi ge nasha naankene omapekapeko ngaka taga ningwa.

Ita pu kala egeelo lyasha nenge ekanitho lyomauwanawa gontumba ngoka we ga nuninwa uuna wahogolola okukala inokutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka. Ano sha hala okutya, etokolo lyoye lyokukala ino kutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka itali nayipaleke uuthemba woye okumona omayakulo gosikola, omuthika gweilongo lyoye onga omunasikola osho woo oompito dhoye dhiilonga ngashingeyi nomonakuyiwa.

Oshike tashi ningwa nuuyelele mboka tau gongelwa momapekapeko ngaka?

Ota ku ka ningwa oonkambadhala dhokungambeka elongitho nehololo/egandjo lyuuyelele woye wopaumwene, mwa kwatelwa omapekapeko nuuyelele wu nasha nosikola, kaantu mboka taya ka konakona uuyelele mbuka. Itatu vulu oku uvaneka egameno lyuuyelele mbuka lyothaathaa. Omahangano ngoka tashivulika ga ka konakone nokutapa ko uuyelele woye ongaashi nee, Institutional Review Board (IRB), okomitiye yokugandja uuthemba newiliko lyomapekapeko, osho woo aakalelipo yalwe yoshiputudhilo shika, mwa kwatelwa mboka ye na oshinakugwanithwa shokutonatela egwanithepo lyomilandu. Otashi vulika tuka nyanyangidhe iizemo yomapekapeko ngaka. Ashike itatu ka longitha nando edhina lyoye nenge uuyelele washa mboka tau holola uukwatya woye.

Egandjo lyuulelele woye gwa gwedhwa po shi nasha negandjo lyuuyelele wa pumbiwa paveta. Uuna twiitsu uuyelele wehepeko lyomunona nenge uuhasha, otatu ka pumbwa nenge otwa pitikwa koveta nenge komusindalandu opo tu gandje uuyelele mbuka koveta/komalelo.

IIHOLEKWA NIMA

Oonkundathana dhetu nangoye otadhi kala paumwene. Ashike euvaneko ndika lyokukaleka oonkundathana dhetu meholamo (monanguwi) oli na ongamba. Ngele owa holola ompangela yoku ilongela nenge yokulongela yakweni uuwinayi, otu na oshinakugwanithwa shokutseyitha oompangela ndhoka.

Uuyelele wa gongelwa

Oonkundathana dha kwatwa nokakwatamawi otadhi ka pungulwa komalungula gagamenwa goUniversity yaMinnesota, shika otashi ka ningwa mbala konima ngele oonkundathana dha thiki pehulilo. Oonkundathana dhi li mokakwatamawi otadhi ka tulwa pombapila, noponkatu ndjika omadhina agehe otaga ka kuthwa po naakuthimbinga momapekapeko ngaka otaya ka pewa onomola. Oofooloma dhokugandja epitikilo otadhi ka pungulwa mosikopa yapatwa mombelewa yaHaight ndjoka tayi adhika moUniversity ya Minnesota, ombelewa ndjika otayi kala woo ya patwa. Iilyo yongundu yomapekapeko ngaka oyo ashike tayi kala nompito yokumona uuyelele mboka wa toolwa po.

Uuna uuyelele woye wopaumwene mboka wa gongelwa momapekapeko ngaka ga kuthwa po, uuyelele mboka waana we edhina lyoye otau vulu okulongithwa momapekapeko gokomongula nenge okugandjwa komukonakoni gulwe, noponkatu ndjika itatu ka pumbwa we epitikilo lyoye okulongitha uuyelele mbuka.

Otandi ka pewa iizemo yomapekapeko ngaka?

Uuna to ka pumbwa olapota yahugunina yomapekapeko ngaka, oto vulu okukwatathana naNdilimeke Nashandi kongodhi 081-432-0003; nenge ko emaila teenmother@umn.edu . Itokapulwa nando iifuta yasha uuna to ka pula iizemo yomapekapeko ngaka.

Olye tandi vulu okukwatathana naye uuna ndina omapulo nenge kombinga yaasho nda tsakaneka?

Omapekapeko ngaka oga dhindwa noga uthwa kolutu lwoIRB ndoka luli oshilyo sho Human Research Protections Program (HRPP). Okugandja omayamukulo goye paumwene shinasha naambyoka wa tsakaneke momapekapeko ngaka, dhengela olutu lwoResearch Participants' Advocate Line kongodhi +1-612-625-1650 (Ongodhi yoshali: 1-888-224-8636) nenge wuye ko https://research.umn.edu/units/hrpp/research-participants/questions-concerns. Oto kumagidhwa wu kwatathane nolutu lwo HRPP ngele:

- Omapulo nenge omanyenyeto goye itaga yamukulwa kongundu ndjoka tayi ningi omapekapeko ngaka.
- Itovulu okukwatathana nongundu ndjoka tayi ningi omapekapeko.
- Wa hala okulombwela sha omuntu gulwe i ili keeshi oshilyo shongundu tayi ningi omapekapeko.
- Wu na omapulo kombinga yuuthemba woye onga omukuthimbinga momapekapeko.

- Wa hala okumona uuyelele nenge wa hala okugandja omayele gontumba kombinga yomapekapeko ngaka.

Otandi vulu okugandja uuyelele konima yomapekapeko ga thika pehulilo?
Otashi vulika olutu lwo HRPP lukapule opo wu ya kuthile ko kombinga yaasho wa tsakaneke sho wa li omukuthimbinga momapekapeko. Oto vulu okukala inotya sha kolutu nduka ngele owu uvite ino hala okutya sha. Uuna to ka hogolola wu tye sha, edhina lyoye nenge uukwatya woye itawu ka hololwa.

Uuna ino pulwa wu gandje uuyelele ashike ou na ehalo lyokushininga, alikana kwatathana nongundu ndjoka tayi ningi omapekapeko nenge nolutu lwo HRPP. Talela po oshitopolwa shofooloma ndjika shoka shi na Uuyelele Womakwatathano wAakonakoni osho woo oshitopolwa shoka shi li kohi yoshipalanyole “Olye tandi vulu okukwatathana naye uuna ndi na omapulo nenge kombinga yaasho nda tsakaneka?“ mpoka to adha uuyelele kene tovulu okwatathana nolutu lwo HRPP.

Otandi pewa ondjambi yasha ngele onda kutha ombinga?
Ngele owitaale okukutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka, molweetho lwotango otamu ka lya pamwe nomukonakoni osho woo okangundu akehe kaamboka yiitaala okukutha momapulapulo ngaka. Molweetho olutiyali omukonakoni ote ku pe ondjambi yooDola dhaAmerica omulongo ($10) omwaalu ngoka guthike lwopoondola N$143 (ondjambi oto imono onga okakalata komagano nenge oshimaliwa koomuma uuna shili po), nduka otalu kala olupandu lwethimbo nonkambadhala yoye moonkundathana. Aakuthimbinga momapekapeko otaya ka pulwa ya shaine ofooloma ndjoka tayi koleke kutya oya pewa olupandu lwawo.

Eshaino lyoye otalu gandja uumbangi kutya owa gandja uuthemba wokukutha ombinga momapekapeko ngaka. Oto ka pewa o*Copy* yondokumente ndjika yi na eshaino lyoye nolyomukonakoni.

_____ _____
Eshaino lyomukuthimbinga Esiku

_____
Edhina lyomukuthimbinga lyuudha

_____ _____
Eshaino lyaangoka tapewa epitikilo Esiku

_____
Edhina lyaangoka tapewa epitikilo lyuudha

Oto ka pewa oCopy yuuyelele mbuka opo yi kale momishangwa dhoye

Appendix E: Personal History Form (English)

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is the name of the place where you live every day?
   _____
3. What school grade are you in? _____
4. What is your marital status? *(Choose one)*
   Unmarried___, Married___, Cohabitation___, Divorced____, Widowed ____
5. What are your sources of income? *(Choose all that apply)*
   Parents ___, Grand parents___, OVC grant___, Father of the baby___,
   Other: _____
6. Are your parent(s)/caregiver(s) employed? Yes___ No___ (*choose one)*
   If yes, what is their job? _____
7. What is your tribal affiliation? *(Choose all that apply)*
   Ndonga__, Kwanyama__, Ngandjera__, Kwambi__, Mbalantu__, Kwaluudhi__,
   Kolonkadhi__, Mbadja__, Other: _____
8. What is your totem? *(Choose all that apply)*
   Ekwaanime (lion)__, Ekwatundu(zebra)__, Ekwaniilya(millet) __,
   Ekwaanyoka(snake)__, Ekwanangobe(cow)__, Ekwanambwa(dog)__, Other:
   _____
9. What is your religious affiliation?
   Indigenous (Kalunga ka nangombe) __, Christian__, Multi-religious (e.g., Christian, and indigenous) __, Other: _____
10. What is your denomination?
    Lutheran___, Catholic___, Pentecostal___, Angelican___, Other: _____
11. Is your child(ren) alive? Yes____ No___ *(choose one)*
    If yes, how many children did you birth? _____
12. Are you actively involved in raising your child(ren)?
    _____
13. Who provides childcare for your child(ren) when you attend school? *(Write your relationship with caregiver)*?
    _____
14. Did you return to the same school after birth? Yes____ No__ *(choose one)*
    If no, what was the reason for changing schools?
    _____
15. Who do you live with in your home?
    Both birth parents___, One birth parent___, Child headed family___, Grandparent (s) ___,
    Okutekulwa ___, Other: _____
    If okutekula, which extended family do you live with?
    Maternal relative___, Paternal relative___, Fictive kin (no blood relations) ___,
    Other: _____
16. How old was birth mom when your oldest sibling was born? _____, Don't know___

17. How old was birth dad when your oldest sibling was born? _____, Don't know___
18. Did any of your birth parents complete high school? Yes____ No___
    18.1 What is your mothers' education level?
    No school___, Primary school/some high school ___, High school/some university___, Bachelor's degree___, Graduate degree___, Don't know___
    18.2 What is your fathers' education level?
    No school___, Primary school/some high school ___, High school/some university___, Bachelor's degree___, Graduate degree___, Don't know___

Thank you!

Appendix F: Talking Circle Interview Guide (English)

Purpose: This talking circle aim to share Aawambo adolescent mothers' collective experiences by invoking sayings that are communicated by individuals to increase awareness of their strengths, and educational resources. **Participants:** Teen mothers ages 13-18 who are in-school.	
Questions	**Minutes**
1. Tell us your name and then tell us the meaning of your totem!	10
2. I want to introduce a common way among Aawambo to communicate messages that strengthen relationships among community members and provide resources when they experience difficulties in life. These sayings are regarded as truth and may result in negative or positive experiences at school, in our families or community. One practice with sayings is *uushiinda* (neighborliness). I will read some sayings, description, and an example of *uushinda* (see Appendix G).	10
3. Now think about your experiences and feelings after returning to school following the birth of your baby. Could you write one saying that is commonly communicated to school-going teen mothers by the Aawambo community, in school or at home to increase your strength and encourage you? a) Please use the piece of paper, write down one saying and place the paper in the basket of our circle.	10
4. OK! Let's go around the circle, one person will pick any paper, read out loud the saying, and can you give me a brief explanation about the meaning of the saying? I will list the saying and its meaning on the flip chart.	20
5. Now let's switch and talk about your engagement in school. By "engagement" I mean everyday tasks, attitudes and relationships needed for you to learn in school. Thinking about *uushiinda*, how did these sayings you shared support your learning in school? Probe: a) Could you identify a time when you used these sayings to support your learning in school?	20
6. Now, let's talk about challenges. What are some of the challenges these sayings you shared created for you as a teen mother when you returned to school?	20
7. From the story we read, *uushiinda* can make negative experiences and challenges lighter when people support each other. Could you identify a time when you received support to overcome the challenges you experienced in school? Probe: a) How did the support you received help you overcome some of the challenges you faced in school?	20
8. If you had one minute to give advice to adults working with school-going teen mothers, what would you say?	10

Appendix F: Talking Circle Interview Guide (Oshiwambo)

Appendix F: Omushangwalandu taguwilike ongonga yoonkundathana

Elalakano: Oonkundathana mongonga ota dhi lalakanene okugandja ompito kaanonakadhona mbaka ya hokolole omayeletumbulo gomuthigululwakalo gwAawambo ngoka haga popiwa mokuhumitha komeho ontseyo yawo yi na sha niietithinkondo osho woo oonzo dhelongo. **Aakuthimbinga:** Aakadhona aashona ye na aanona yoomvula 13-18 mboka haayi kosikola.	
Epulo	**Ominute**
1. Tu lombwela edhina lyoye, nokonima fatulula kutya ngoye omukwashike kezimo [udhitha..] notashiti ngiini?	10
2. Onda hala ndi ku tseyithile omukalo hagu longithwa olundji kAawambo mokutuma omatumwalaka ngoka aakwashigwana haya longitha mokukoleka oonkalathano pokati kawo osho woo ngoka haya longitha mokugandja omakwatho uuna pwaholoka omaudhigu monkalamwenyo. Omayeletumbulo oga talwa ko ge li ga shili, notashi vulika ga kale niizemo iiwinayi nenge iiwanawa molweendo lwetu lwesiku kehe mosikola, megumbo nenge moshigwana. Elongitho limwe lyomayeletumbulo olyo ndyoka "lyuushiinda". Otandi lesha omayeletumbulo gamwe ge na sha nuushinda eta ndi ga fatulula nokukupa oshiholelwa (*tala ko Appendix G*).	10
3. Ngashingeyi dhiladhila ayihe mbyoka twa tsakaneke nenge omaiyuvo goye ngoka wa kala u na sho wa galukile mosikola konima yokumona okanona. Oto vulu okunyola eyeletumbulo limwe ndyoka poompito odhindji hali lombwelwa aakadhona ye na aanona koshigwana shAawambo, kosikola nenge megumbo, onga omukalo gwokukunkondopaleka osho woo okukutsa omukumo? a) Alikana nyola pokambapila gawapewa etoka tula mokatungwa hoka ke li pokati kongonga yetweni?	10
4. OK! Mongonga yetu muka tu li, kehe omuntu ota ka kutha okambapila kehe mokatungwa hoka ke li pokati ketu. Ngoka ta kutha mo okambapila, kwatha ndje uleshe eyeletumbulo ndyoka lyashangwa ko muule nokufatulula eyeletumbulo ndyoka paufupi? Otandi ka ninga omusholondondo gwomayeletumbulo osho wo omaityo gago.	20
5. Ngashingeyi natu popyeni kombinga lyekwatathano lyopalongo! "kEkwatathano" onda hala okutya iinakugwanithwa yesiku kehe, omaihumbato osho woo omakwatathano ga pumbiwa opo wu ilonge mosikola. Mokudhiladhila *uushiinda*, eilongo lyoye lyomosikola olyayambidhidhwa ngiini kiipopiwamayele yi na sha *nuushiinda* mbyoka wa gandja metetekelo? *Ekonakono:*	20

a) Otovulu okutotha mo olwetho lumwe moka wa longitha iipopiwamayele wagandja metetekelo mokuyambidhidha eilongo lyoye?	
6. Natu popye kombinga yomashongo! Iipopiwamayele wa gandja metetekelo oyeku etele omashongo gashike konima yokugalukila kwoye mosikola onga omunonakadhona e na oluvalo?	20
7. Okuza mehokololo twa lesha, *uushiinda* otawu vulu okuhwepopaleka omashongo twa tsakaneka uuna aantu taya kwathelathana nokulongela kumwe. Otovulu okutotha mo olweetho lumwe moka wa mono omayambidhidho ngoka gekukwatha okukandula po omashongo ngoka watsakeneke mosikola? *Ekonakono:* a) Eyambidhidho wa mono olye kukwatha ngiini mokukandula po dhimwe dhomomikundu ndhoka wa tsakaneke mosikola?	20
8. Ngele owa pewa omunute, ekumagidho lyashike togandja kaakuluntu mboka haya longo naakadhona aashona yaanasikola mboka ye na oluvalo?	10

Appendix G: Conversational Interview Guide (English)

"I appreciate your willingness to share your story. Every story is unique, and I have [learned different things]. There is no right or wrong answer to any of these questions. What matters is your story" (Patton, 2015, p. 428). **I would like to learn more about your own day-today experiences with learning in school.**

1. Can you please share a story on how you returned to school after having a baby? Probe: Who helped you to go back to school? Probe for relations (birth parents, caregivers, extended family, father of the baby, friends).
2. You will recall from our talking circle that we discussed the meaning of "educational engagement". By "engagement" I mean everyday tasks, attitudes and relationships needed for you to learn in school. How would you describe your own experience with support that helped you learn in school? Probe: a) Can you share an example of how you are progressing with learning in school?
3. Can you tell me what people who supported you did that helped you learn in school? Probe: Who was involved in your learning experiences?
4. Can you share with me what helped you to participate in-class and outside-class in school activities? Probe: a) Can you share an example of what you did to participate? b) What did other people do to support your participation in-class and outside-class?
5. Earlier you spoke about people that supported you to return in school after having a baby. How would you describe your relationship with teachers and peers in school? Probe: a) Can you give an example of what a teacher did that helped you learn? b) Can you share an example of a time when a peer helped with your learning in school?
6. Tell me about how your family or community helped your learning in school? Probe: a) Please share an example of what they did to help you learn in school?
7. Now let's talk about challenges. What are some of the challenges that you have faced returning to school as a teen mother Probe: a) What happened? b) How did you feel about these experiences?
8. Some people, even adults, can make negative comments about teen mothers, that they hold some stereotypes, for example, that teen mothers are not good girls or good students. Have you experienced others' negative comments directed towards you? Probe: a) Please tell me what happened? b) Who was involved? c) How did that (things that happened) make you feel? d) Do you still have the same feelings? e) How did you overcome these feelings?
9. What was least helpful to you about your educational engagement experience? Probe: a) Could you please share an example on what happened?
10. What was most helpful to you about your educational engagement experience? Probe: a) Could you please share an example on what happened?
11. What changes did you experience to your schooling after Covid-19 started? Probe: Can you share an example on how Covid-19 changed your learning in school? Did Covid-19 change the support you receive as a school-going girl with a child? How?
12. What advice do you have for adults to improve the learning and participation of teen mothers who are in school?

Appendix G: Conversational Interview Guide (Oshiwambo)

Omushangwalandu taguwillike oonkundathana dhopaumwene

"Onda pandula unene sho wu na ohokwe yoku pandje ehokololo lyoye. Ehokololo kehe oli na uukwatya wiilile nondiilonga iinima yi ili noyi ili. Omapulo ngaka ka ge na omayamukulo gomondjila nenge ga puka. Sha simana ehokololo lyoye" (Patton, 2015, p. 428). Ondi na ehalo lyokutseya oshindji kombinga yaambyoka hotsakaneke esiku nesiku meilongo lyoye.

1. Kuthila ndje ko alikana kwaashoka sha ningwa po sho wa galukile mosikola. *Ekonakono:* Olye e ku kwatha wu galukile mosikola? Lyuupambele (aavali, aatekuli, aakwanezimo, he yokanona koye, ookuume)?
2. Oto dhimbulukwa okuza moonkundathana dhetu dhoyendji (ongonga yoonkundathana), kutya otwa kundathana nokufatulula shoka hashi ithanwa "ekwatathano lyopalongo". "kEkwatathano" onda hala okutya iinakugwanithwa yesiku kehe, omikalo osho woo omakwatathano ga pumbiwa opo wu ilonge mosikola. Ongiini to ndjandjukununa omakwatho wa mono ngoka ga kwatha eilongo lyoye? *Ekonakono:* Oto vulu okugandja oshiholelwa shaankene tohumu komeho meilongo lyoye mosikola?
3. Oto vulu okulombwela ndje shoka sha ningwa po kwaamboka ye ku yambidhidha meilongo lyoye mosikola? *Ekonakono:* Olya adhana onkandangala molweendo lweilongo lyoye?
4. Oto vulu okuhokololela ndje shoka she ku kwatha opo wu kuthe ombinga miinyangadhalwa yosikola yomeni noyopondje yongulusikola? *Ekonakono:* a) Oto vulu okupa ndje oshiholololwa shaashoka wa ning opo wu kuthe ombinga? b) Aantu yalwe oya ningi po shike shoka sha yambidhidha ekuthombinga lyoye meni nopondje yongulusikola?
5. Metetekelo owa popi kobinga yaantu mboka ye ku yambidhidha wu shune mosikola konima yokumona okanona. Oto ndjandjukununa ngiini onkalathano pokati koye naalongi yoye osho woo pokati koye naanasikola aakweni? *Ekonakono:* a) Oto vulu okugandja oshiholelwa shaashoka shaningwa po komulongi/kaalongi mokukwatha eilongo lyoye? b) Oto vulu okugandja oshiholelwa sholweetho lumwe moka omunasikola pamwe nangoye e ku kwathele neilongo lyoye mosikola?
6. Lombwela ndje nkene aakwanezimo yoye nenge aakwashigwana ya kwatha eilongo lyoye mosikola. *Ekonakono:* a) Gandja alikana oshiholelwa shaashoka ya ningi po opo ye ku kwathele wiilonge mosikola.
7. Ngashingeyi natu popye kombinga yomashongo. Konima sho wa galukile mosikola, omashongo geni wa tsakaneke onga omunonakadhona e na okanona? *Ekonakono:* a) Oshike naana sha ningwa po? b) Shoka sha ningwa po oshe ku uvitha ngiini?
8. Aantu yalwe, mwa kwatelwa naakuluntu, ohaya ningi omapopyo omawinayi kombinga yaanonakadhona ye na oluvalo, kokutya oye na omityanayi dhontumba, oshiholelwa, "aanonakadhona ye na oluvalo kayeshi aakadhona yokolela nenge kayeshi aalongwa aawanawa". Owa tsakaneka omityanayi/oohapu oombwinayi dhilwe ndhoka dha li dhuukithwa kungoye? *Ekonakono:* a) Lombwela ndje shoka sha ningwa po. b) Oolye ya kutha ombinga momipopyo ndhika? c) Omipopyo ngoka

omiwiinayi ogwe ku uvitha ngiini? d) Ou na natango omaiyuvo ngoka? e) Omaiyuvo ngoka owe ga sindi ngiini?

9. Oshike inashi ku kwatha unene kombinga yekwatathano lyoye lyopalongo? *Ekonakono:* Oto vulu okugandja oshiholelwa shaashoka sha ningwa po?
10. Oshike she ku kwatha unene kombinga yekwatathano lyoye lyopalongo? *Ekonakono:* Oto vulu okugandja oshiholelwa shaashoka sha ningwa po?
11. Owa tsakaneka omalundululo gashike kombinga eilongo lyoye sho Covid-19 yatameke? *Ekonakono*: Oto vulu okugandja oshiholelwa sho Covid-19 alundulula eilongo lyoye mosikola? Covid-19 okwa lundulula oma kwatho nga opewa onkee omukadhona wa valaa uli mosikola? Oga lunduluka ngiini?
12. Omayele gashike togandja kaakuluntu opo ya vule okuhumithakomeho eilongo nekuthombinga lyaanonakadhona ye na aanona mboka ye li mosikola?

Appendix H: Compensation form

DATE:_____

To Whom It May Concern:

_____

First and Last name

_____

Name of School

participated in an interview on the experiences of educational engagement with teen mothers' who are in-school in rural Namibia. She received a gift card or cash of U$10.00 (NAD_____) for her participation.

_____

Name of researcher **Signature of researcher**