

ARTICLE

## Devastating Effects of Stigmatising Names in Swati Culture: Breaking the Curse of Bad Reputation

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### ABSTRACT

In African culture, naming a child is an act of anointing or bestowing of value, a whispered hope that the child will live up to the name. This study examined the Siswati adage “libito lelibi liyamona umntfwana,” meaning “a poor name brings calamity to the child.” It highlights the adverse effects of giving a child a negative name, which can impact their future. While names are significant in Swati culture, individuals with stigmatized names often face prejudice, leading to social stigma and emotional challenges. This study employed discourse analysis and onomastics to understand the subject matter comprehensively. The researchers conducted a comprehensive study by sampling a total of sixteen (16) participants who were residents of South Africa, specifically from the Mpumalanga province located in Bushbuckridge. This study focused on derogatory names assigned to illegitimate children and those who are unwanted. It explored the reasoning behind these names and their effects on the bearers. Based on the findings of this study, many people believe names can influence destiny, making careful selection crucial. However, some names associated with negative traits or historical events create burdens for individuals, resulting in low self-esteem and withdrawal from social interactions, which hinders personal and professional growth. Furthermore, it reveals that the vital practice of naming carries with it a profound potential. It suggests that this act should not merely be a matter of identification; rather, it should serve to foster a brighter perspective on life. Consequently, it powerfully bolsters the ongoing development of self-assuredness and confidence in people.

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# 1. Introduction

Naming is not merely a matter of identification; it serves as a significant channel through which individuals communicate social and cultural messages. A person's name should sound melodic to them, and being addressed by name indicates to others how important they are to society as distinct and valuable individuals. One way to register one's existence in society is through a name. Therefore, it follows that the name must be significant, well-chosen, and recognized by both the community and the bearer. A name is defined as "the word by which a person, animal, or thing is known or spoken of" by Hough<sup>[1]</sup>. Similarly, Ndimande-Hlongwa<sup>[2]</sup> asserts that a person's name can affect their destiny, social identity, and character. The significance of a name will have a significant impact on the baby's present and future. A person's name may always be used to deduce information about their sociocultural background, including their gender, ethnicity, day of birth, family occupation, social and political class, religion, gods they worship, and their parents' aspirations and wishes. Additionally, it might convey the morals, ethics, and worldview of the society in which they were raised. Through his remarks, Neethling<sup>[3]</sup> declares that: A name creates an expectation and an attitude in those who hear it, even before they meet the name holder. This is partly why, when introduced to people of different ethnic groups, many West Africans will not say their name but explain the meaning so that it is clearly understood regardless of the language barrier.

This indicates that a name is a term used to refer to something or someone, and it has been shown that naming a human being is the most significant life event. It is said that a person's name shapes or forms them till they pass away. Naming is more than merely the process by which language users classify things in the real or imagined world linguistically. A name is not randomly picked; several sociocultural elements determine it. This is because language and culture are inextricably linked, as speakers express their sociolinguistic and cultural norms through language<sup>[4]</sup>. The

effects these names have on their holder and the behavior ensuing from such names will be discussed. This article ultimately tests the saying "libito lelibi liyamona umntfwana," meaning "a poor name brings calamity to the child." The article reveals how the newborn baby naming practice discourse establishes control, play, and dominance between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law and between mothers and daughters. Ngobeni<sup>[4]</sup> argues that names were channels through which people could make detailed statements that are messages from the sender and the name giver. Moreover, the study aimed to add to the identification of Swati literature in the field of onomastics. The personal name is fundamental in the identity of the person across cultures.

## 1.1. Objectives of the Study

Stigmatised names have a negative impact on individual development and communities, leading to a negative effect on the language itself. Stigmatised names in Siswati refer to the names that have been associated with negative meanings, stereotypes, or bias. However, the primary objective is to discuss the various names given to the so-called unlawful child, abandoned, discarded and unwelcome children, as they are the ones regularly given these bad names. The article further investigates the reasons why these names were given to the child and who named the child.

## 1.2. Research Questions

What are the various names given to unlawful, abandoned, and unwelcome children?

What are the reasons why these names were given to the child, and who named them?

# 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Theoretical Framework

Discourse analysis and sociolinguistics-onomastic theoretical bottom were used in this paper. Since onomastic

theory permits the application of different theories, it is appropriate to employ interdisciplinary theory. To comprehend the Swati name's philosophy, culture, and history, onomastic principles and approaches were used in the current examination of Swati naming. According to Ndlovu<sup>[5]</sup>, it postulates that: Onomastic is the discipline that seeks to answer the semasiological question that "Why is X called X?" This is an important question may be understood in two ways: as a linguistic and historical one, "Why and how did X come to be called?", and as essentially a historical or cultural one, "What does it mean for X to be called X?".

Coates further indicates that "onomastics is a specialised branch of etymology, with which it shares its method, but the second look it into wider concerns about human history and conventions." He explains the answers to these questions typically intertwine since knowledge of the proper name's origin may be part of its present cultural meaning<sup>[6]</sup>.

Statham<sup>[7]</sup> indicates that naming displays historical, cultural, and social discipline, and as a result, names can be analysed using a mixture of theories. Neethling asserts that names fall within the category of linguistic signs. This means that names could be investigated from a linguistic perspective as well. In addition, the article intends to find the sociocultural meaning of the names. This is because names have a connection with the society which uses them.

In this study, language or discourse will be utilised to express child naming practices that are deeply rooted in the Swati people's social, cultural, environmental, and political influences. According to Blommaert and Ostman and Ainiala<sup>[8]</sup>, critical discourse analysis emerged in the late (1980s as a practical development in European discourse studies spearheaded by popular scholars such as Fairclough<sup>[9]</sup>, who argue that Critical discourse analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are performed, reproduced, and rested by text and talk in the social and political context.

Similarly, Ostman and Ainiala<sup>[8]</sup> point out that critical discourse analysis looks at how the powerful social group uses language to oppress the powerless, which, in the end, empowers the oppressed or powerless social group. These theories will assist the researcher in examining stigmatised names given to children in the Swati community. Fairclough<sup>[9]</sup> contends that: Dominant families everywhere

formulate the use of language as the elderly name their grandchildren. Critical discourse analysis is revealed to be predetermined concerning the underdogs as they are the ones who dominate, manipulate, abuse, and suffer disparities.

In addition, theories could aid academics in examining the stigmatization of children by their parents. The study of names has been the focal point of different studies and research works. However, prior accounts of the factors that influence offspring's name choices are not plentifully available. This remains a current gap in the existing research on such an intriguing topic. Thus, studies that explore the nexus between the naming practice and the factors impacting it need to be brought into prominence.

To commence with, the Encyclopedia and Britannica<sup>[10]</sup> portray names as a word or set of words by which a person or thing is known, addressed, or referred to. Moreover, Saeed states that "names, after all, are levels for people, places, etc. and often seem to have little other meaning." In the same vein. Guma<sup>[11]</sup> maintains that "the word names itself is always used to study language as a designation for any noun... The essence of semantics is naming<sup>[12]</sup> as names are given to objectives or ideas to refer to or to signify the concept around us." Britannica is a word or group of words that suggest a certain entity, whether it is real or fictitious.

Other attempts to define names have yielded other statements by other researchers. For instance, Guma<sup>[11]</sup> intimates that "names are more than a word or words by which a person, an animal, place or thing is known and does not fundamentally connote designation, reputation, identification, separation of other individual forms the other per se." He goes on to claim that names "embody individual or group social experiences, social norms and value, status roles, and authority, as well as personality and individual attributes." Moreover, personal names are a sub-component of the umbrella term "proper nouns," sometimes referred to as proper names. These terms are inherently designators of individuality<sup>[13]</sup>.

Furthermore, scholars took cognisance of the importance of probing into personal names owing to their ability to distinguish one individual from another. Everyone has had a distinctive name since man first began walking on the earth<sup>[14]</sup>. Names also serve to indicate gender, marital status, origin, nationality, ethnicity, religion, and position within a family or even within society. Above all, names are part

and parcel of human life in the sense that “wherever there are people, their names, since names are and have always been part of human life<sup>[15]</sup>.” Therefore, “choosing a name for someone else is a very important task<sup>[16]</sup>.”

## 2.2. Literature Review

### 2.2.1. Naming among Swati People

According to Lubisi<sup>[17]</sup>, the name in Swati is a linguistic and cultural phenomenon. The significance that Swati people place on names is fundamental to their understanding of personhood since they hold the belief that a person’s name not only defines who they are but also shapes who they will become. He adds that there is a saying that speaks to the impact of names on character and that names are seen to have an impact on the character of the bearer: *Libito lelibi liyamona umntfwana* (literary means a bad name brings misfortune in a child). The names given to individuals refer to historical events, experiences, emotions, status relations, clan, kinship relations, and authority.

Dlamini<sup>[15]</sup> asserts that Swati’s name is extremely significant. Swati proverbs like “*libito lelibi liyamona umntfwana*” (a bad name brings misfortune) are derived from the belief that a person or thing’s name can affect a circumstance or that anything, whether it be an animal, plant, or person, takes after its name. According to Coates<sup>[6]</sup>, naming is a significant procedure that Swati families follow. The family elders perform this task and are expected to name both newlywed ladies and newborn children. The decision over the name to be given to the child and married woman in both situations rest solely with the family’s elders, male and female.

According to Nhingo and Masuku<sup>[18]</sup>, Lubisi<sup>[17]</sup> investigated Siswati’s personal names with the goal of illuminating their meaning. Lubisi<sup>[17]</sup> discovered that the circumstances, expressions, and events surrounding the birth of the name’s holder are reflected in Siswati personal name. Additionally, he noted that “a name is not just given for the sake of naming in Swati society<sup>[17]</sup>.” Furthermore, Bughesu and Felecan<sup>[19]</sup> examined Siswati personal names. Although the names express significant sociocultural information, she noted that they can be broken down into syntactic elements like sentence and phrase forms.

Swati people had to choose a name for their child based on the situation, for a specific reason, or to honour a deceased person. They were not allowed to name a child simply because they liked it. The proverb “*libito lelibi liyamona umntfwana*” (a bad name brings disaster) represents the concept that a kid may act true to their name when he grows up. This indicates that naming customs have always been significant and that a name is only assigned after careful deliberation.

### 2.2.2. Name Givers

In Siswati culture, name-giving holds deep significance and is often tied to ancestral beliefs, family traditions, and personal attributes. Traditionally, the responsibility of giving names to newborns lies with elders in the family, particularly grandparents. This is rooted in the belief that elders have accumulated wisdom and are intricately connected to their ancestors. Their choice of name is seen as a means of invoking blessings, guidance, and protection from the ancestral spirits. Names in Siswati often carry meanings that reflect circumstances surrounding the birth, aspirations for the child’s future, or qualities that the family wishes to impart. For instance, a child born during grim times might be named “*Sibusiso*” (blessing) to symbolise hope and good fortune. Some names also honour ancestors or important family members, ensuring continuity and remembrance of the lineage. While modern influences have introduced more varied naming practices, traditional customs still hold strong. Some parents may consult elders or spiritual healers to ensure that the chosen name aligns with the child’s destiny or spiritual path. Thus, name-giving in Siswati culture is not just an act of identification but a reflection of identity, spirituality, and familial heritage.

The heads typically assign names based on a specific, customary standard. A kid may be named after someone, in honour of a moment in history, or simply after an appropriate name. Hussein<sup>[20]</sup> states that: Elders in the family have the power of bestowing names on children as they are regarded as having a wealth of knowledge of heritage and customs.

Ainiala, saarelma, and Sjonblom<sup>[21]</sup> point out that “in many communities, naming children has always been the prerogative of the elders.” Fairclough<sup>[9]</sup> believes that: This is because they are seen to have the knowledge and skills to create or record history. As they appointed the custodians

of culture and heritage, they reminded people of events that took place in the past and the present and projected into the future.

For this reason, names typically have some connection to the local environment, history, politics, economy, and events<sup>[22]</sup>. Traditionally, only certain individuals give names to children, such as grandfathers, traditional healers or women, and elders. They should possess the social authority and ability to control younger people's conduct and ideas to subjugate them to the elders. These traditions are validated by proverbs that have their roots in the elders' authoritative vocabulary rather than being forcibly or overtly enforced. They are unique in that they have exclusive access to important resources like naming expertise.

### 2.2.3. Naming after Someone

Naming a child after someone is common across cultures and holds significant meaning. It is often done to honour a relative, ancestor, or even a close friend who has profoundly impacted the family. In some traditions, the name is believed to pass on the qualities, values, or legacy of the individual being honoured. For instance, naming a child after a grandparent can symbolise continuity and respect for family heritage. This practice preserves memories, upholds family traditions, and strengthens connections between generations.

Naming a child after kinsmen serves as a religious, political, and social function, according to Mayer and Wodak<sup>[23]</sup>. Tullock<sup>[24]</sup> argues that the Swati practice of naming children after maternal or paternal ancestors serves to preserve ancestor names and foster a sense of community between grandparents and grandchildren. Grandparents and grandchildren are connected through alternate generations. A kid is named after an ancestor to commemorate ancestral forces and their effect on the living, as well as the religious belief that the infant would inherit the virtues of the grandparents<sup>[20]</sup>. Furthermore, Dlamini<sup>[15]</sup> in Lubisi<sup>[17]</sup> observes that: Children can also be named after a prominent or famous person, a neighbor, or a midwife if the child is a girl.

This study further looks at the Swati practice of naming children and how it affects the so-called illegitimate, abandoned, rejected, and unwanted offspring. The adage "libito lelibi liyamona untfwana" is also questioned in its applicability. This is achieved by examining the kinds of names given, the meanings conveyed by the names, and the people who

provide the names. It makes the case that Swati people use their authority position to name, shame, and mock others to express their displeasure. Additionally, the names given to these kids put the worried kids in awkward situations.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Method

The researchers implemented a qualitative approach, which allows for a deeper understanding of the subject matter by capturing rich, detailed insights. Rosenhouse<sup>[25]</sup> describes the qualitative approach as follows an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of the informant, and conducted in a natural setting.

### 3.2. Participants

The researchers conducted a comprehensive study by sampling a total of sixteen (16) participants who were residents of South Africa, specifically from the Mpumalanga province located in Bushbuckridge. These participants were all fluent speakers of the Siswati language and both male and female. Subsequently, the ratio of the participants was nine (9) male and seven (7) female who took part in this study.

The researchers selected this approach because it permits them to use interviews and surveillance methods for data gathering. Tullock<sup>[24]</sup> explains the utilisation of many techniques when she states that the best study is one that uses more than one research method, taking advantage of their different strengths.

### 3.3. Data Collection

The interview technique is crucial since it is always the primary source of data during a qualitative research approach<sup>[24]</sup>. Data was gathered via unplanned interviews so that the researchers would obtain additional knowledge from the contributors. The researchers got permission from the contributors to audio record some interviews. Telephonic interviews were also conducted for those contributors who were not available. Remarks formed, including various people, influence these stigmatisation names.

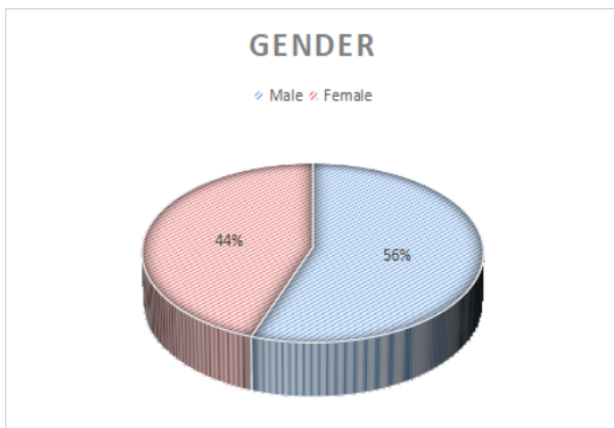
### 3.4. Data Analysis

The thematic analysis was used for linguistic elements and key meanings of the names given to the individuals, which made them feel uncomfortable and caused low self-esteem. The use of this technique enabled the researchers to identify the Stigmatising names and their effects on their social lives.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

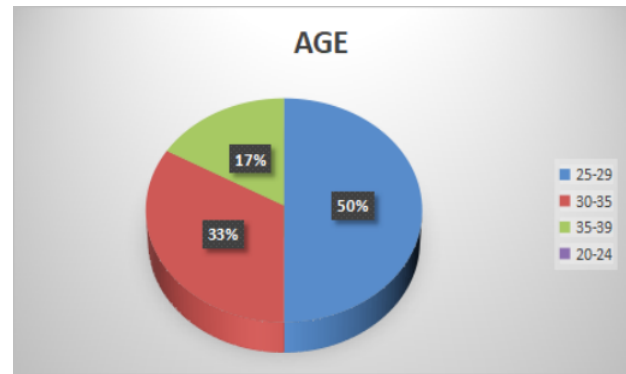
### 4.1. Demographic Data of the Participants

The results illustrated in **Figure 1** provide a detailed breakdown of the gender distribution among the sixteen (16) participants in the study. Specifically, 9 participants, representing 56% of the total, identified as male, while 7 participants, comprising 44% of the total, identified as female. This demographic information highlights a predominance of male participants in the sample group. The results revealed that males generally had a more comprehensive understanding of the meanings of distinctive names than females, a trend that was also observed in this research.



**Figure 1.** Gender of the participants.

The findings illustrated in **Figure 2** indicate that 5 participants (17%) were aged between 35 and 39 years, 10 participants (33%) were aged 30 to 35, and 15 participants (50%) were between 25 and 29 years old. This study highlights the significant role of age in comprehending the origin and meaning associated with the names. Notably, the results of this study revealed that older participants were able to recall how they were given these names compared to their younger counterparts.



**Figure 2.** Age of the participants.

### 4.2. Morphological Analysis

The findings of this study provided are systematically categorised into various areas for thorough review and analysis. Subsequently, this study reports that Swati people employ names for a wide range of purposes, each carrying significant cultural implications. Notably, a mother-in-law might convey her disapproval of her daughter-in-law through the process of naming a child. This practice may involve selecting names that reflect her negative sentiments or judgments, thereby sending a clear message regarding her beliefs about family dynamics.

In cases where a husband harbours' suspicions about the paternity of the child, he is likely to confide in his mother about these doubts. In response, the mother may seek clarification from the wife on the child's father's identity, often drawing conclusions based on the chosen name. This dynamic illustrates names' critical role in familial relationships and the underlying tensions that may exist.

Additionally, the tradition of naming babies within the Swati culture can additionally serve as an expression of a sister-in-law's disapproval or accusations, highlighting the complexities of gender relations and familial expectations. This section also examines names that are deemed derogatory and slanderous, shedding light on their impact within the socio-cultural context of the Swati community., which was frequently prevalent among children who are not authorised.

The morphological formation of the personal names is as follows:

#### (1) Unlawful child

- a. S'khondzabani? (Whom do we worship?).

As displayed in **Table 1** below, the boy's grandmother gave him this name. Giving birth to a child

is considered a blessing for the entire family among the Swati people. It is believed that the birth of a son will increase the size of the family because the son will marry, and his wife will have more sons, which will increase the size of the family even further. In this instance, the boy's family members exalt his father at the time of his birth. Moreover, the family members insist on knowing the true father's identity in the question S'khondzabani? (whom do we praise?), as they feel that the current father is not the father and does not merit acknowledgment. This moniker is also intended to make the mother feel ashamed.

b. M'fanawabani? (Whose son?)

This name is given to the male child in the role of the grandmother. In this name, the heads of the household and occasionally the spouse ask questions about the mother. Since they think the child is not descended from them, they ask whose son the youngster is. Knowing one's father is particularly important in Swati culture, especially for men, since it enables family members to conduct the appropriate rituals for the afflicted child. The name M'fanawabani? (whose son?) indicates that no one knows the child's father; therefore, the mother is asked to inform the father so that the infant might undergo ceremonies that reflect his identity. The youngster is troubled as they grow up wondering who their mother and father are because of their name.

c. Gezepi (Where were you swimming?)

The child's grandmother came up with the name and the Swati people are divided into different villages according to a specific surname. Living in the same village as someone with the same surname is not unusual. This might be the competent father of the new member of the family. Thus, the mother, Gezepi, is asked a question whether the family does not think he is a member of their family and the village. (Where did you go swimming?) This family feels that the child's father does not belong to them, and the mother is supposed to tell the child's father's actual village about him. In response, the youngster will ask the mother why he was given this name and demand an explanation.

d. S'butebani? (Who do we ask?)

The girl's grandmother gave her name and this name is typically given to the child in situations where the mother becomes pregnant while the parents are separated due to issues at work or conflicts within the family. Since their son was absent during the sexual encounter, the older frequently assumes that the child does not belong to the family. However, this is not always the case because it is possible that the lady became pregnant shortly before the breakup. Therefore, the mother must be truthful with them about the child's origins.

(2) Names reflecting denial from the paternal

a. M'phikwa (The one who is rejected)

Here, the male child's grandmother gives the name and this name shows that the family rejected the child rather than accepted them. The child whose mother does not have a good relationship with their in-laws is typically given this name. to use the name as a means of conveying their sentiments to their daughter-in-law.

b. Buyel'emuva (Go back)

The youngster who is male, is named after his grandma. This name is similar to the one above, illustrating how the youngster feels unwelcome or rejected while being a member of the family.

c. Hambelakudze (Don't come closer)

The male child's grandmother is the one who gave him the name. This name indicates that the family did not accept the child but rather rejected it.

(3) Names reflecting the location where the child was born

a. Ndleleni (The one who's on the road)

The female child's grandma gives the name. A married woman gives birth to a girl with this name. By defaming her, their parents vent their resentment on the young girl. It demonstrates that the youngster intended to be outside on the street rather than at home.

b. S'gangeni (The one from the bush)

The male child's grandma is the one who gave him the name. The mother of the child he is sleeping with is being insulted by the family; she became pregnant in a bush. This further reveals the parents' annoyance and dissatisfaction since they give the child

this name in an attempt to humiliate and chastise the mother.

(4) Names indicating unwelcome

a. Ngcabano (Battles)

The male child's grandma is the one who gave him the name. This child's name implies that all they have contributed to the family has been arguments. Most of the time, until the baby is born, the mother and father do not fully comprehend one another because of their pregnancy. Nothing indicates that the child is loved and accepted in the family. This is a result of either the father's lack of affection for the mother or his inability to be a parent.

b. Nkhatsato (Problem)

The male child's grandma is the one who gave him the name. The child born to the combative parent also has this name. Since the child is born into an unhappy household and it is thought that this pregnancy would generate further issues, the infant is not accepted into the family.

c. Nyanyisile (Irritation)

Here, the female child's grandmother is the one who gives the name. The family does not welcome this child since they feel she would only make them more frustrated.

(5) Names indicating doubts

a. Fihliwe (The one who is hidden)

The female child's grandma is the one who gives the name. These names are typically given to expectant mothers who choose to conceal their condition until the day of delivery.

b. Mangaliso (The shocking one)

The child, whether male or female, receives this name from the grandmother. These names are typically given to expectant mothers who choose to conceal their condition until the day of delivery.

(6) Names reflecting deserted

a. Lahliwe (Deserted)

It is the child whose father abandoned them to live with their grandparents while the mother was still pregnant. Most couples involved in this incident ended their engagement.

**Table 1.** Semantic Interpretation.

Names	Gloss	Semantics
S'khondzabani?	S'khondza+bani	Who do we worship?
M'fanawabani?	M'fana+wabani	Whose son?
Gezephi?	Geza+kuphi	Where were you swimming?
Sbutebani?	Sibute+bani	Who do we ask?
Buyel'emuva	Buyela+emuva	Go back
Hambelakudze	Hambela+kudze	Do not come closer
Nyanyisile	Nyanyi+sile	Irritation
Mangaliso	Manga+liso	The shocking one

This study examines how the language employed in naming infants affects the power dynamics between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, as well as between mothers and their daughters. Naming is not merely a matter of identification; it serves as a significant channel through which individuals communicate social and cultural messages. This study is congruent with Lubisi<sup>[17]</sup> highlights this idea by stating, Names are channels through which people can express utterances that convey new messages from the sender, the name giver. This perspective underscores how names carry meaning beyond their basic function, encapsulating the relationships and intentions of those who bestow them.

Furthermore, this study resonates with Ndlovu<sup>[5]</sup> points out, although names are usually used to refer to children and provoke their responses, this interaction implies a broader dialogue between the younger generation and their elders. Through naming, children are placed within a complex web of cultural interpretations and expectations, surrounded by their family members and community's often anonymous voices and identities.

The impact of naming extends beyond the child to encompass family dynamics, particularly regarding how negative identities or images associated with certain names resonate at deeper levels with parents and elders. When specific



names carry historical or relational burdens, parents may feel pressured to reclaim authority over how others perceive their children. In this context, they challenge the narratives imposed by elders, who might otherwise dictate the social standing or reputation associated with those names. Consequently, parents often opt to abbreviate or substitute names to provide their children with more favourable identities, thereby alleviating the weight of negative associations and redefining how their children are viewed within their cultural and familial frameworks. This act of renaming can be seen as a form of empowerment, allowing parents to assert their agency and promote a more positive image for their children amidst complex social dynamics.

## 5. Conclusions

This article delves into the profound Siswati adage “libito lelibi lichilo,” which encapsulates the deep-seated concerns of Swati elders about the potential for negative reputations to afflict the youth. These elders understood that a negative reputation could significantly hinder a young person’s opportunities and experiences throughout life. The insights presented in this article substantiate the saying’s validity; participants revealed that their names often seemed to function as shadows, following them and influencing their life’s trajectory. They contemplated how different their experiences might have been, had they been bestowed with more uplifting names.

To foster a society that embraces acceptance and understanding, it is essential to dismantle the entrenched stigma surrounding names that carry negative connotations in Swati culture. We must pledge to cherish the individuality and vibrant diversity inherent in names while actively working to cultivate an environment where all names are regarded with respect and honour, regardless of their historical baggage.

A name is not merely a label; it is a reflection of a person’s unique identity and rich heritage, free from the burden of a curse. It is time to break the cycle of stigmatisation and wholeheartedly celebrate the beauty inherent in every name. The findings reveal a striking reality: many parents chose names for their children that did not resonate with their own values or beliefs, primarily due to the cultural or societal implications of those names. Often, these parents felt they were unable to question each other’s choices. Furthermore,

some children carried the heavy weight of their lineage, grappling with the stigma attached to being born out of wedlock, leading to the painful reality of having to reveal their origins to others.

## 6. Recommendations

Individuals with stigmatised names frequently experience prejudice and judgment, which can have enduring effects on their interpersonal relationships and social acceptance. The inherent stigma associated with their names complicates their ability to transcend these biases, rendering them targets of discrimination solely based on their names. Consequently, they are often deprived of opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities and to access essential resources. Moreover, the implications of stigmatised names extend to subsequent generations within Swati society. Children bearing such names are often subjected to bullying and harassment in educational settings, which detrimentally impacts their self-esteem and academic performance. This perpetuates a cycle of stigma and its associated negative repercussions, making it increasingly difficult for individuals to extricate themselves from the cultural constraints imposed by stigmatised names.

Notwithstanding these challenges, numerous individuals and organisations are dedicated to fostering tolerance and acceptance of all names, contributing to a cultural shift in which more individuals embrace and take pride in their stigmatised identities. As society progresses, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the adverse effects of stigmatising names within Swati culture.

Efforts must be directed toward creating an environment where individuals are not assessed based on their names but instead evaluated on their intrinsic qualities. Achieving this objective necessitates promoting an inclusive and accepting culture, a commitment to open-mindedness, and implementing educational initiatives. Furthermore, it is advisable to discourage the use of derogatory names. Parents should retain autonomy to choose their children’s names without interference from elders, thereby preventing the imposition of negative reputations. Consequently, a name carries intention, legacy and sometimes, the weight of generations’ dreams. As such, it is fundamental to choose a name carefully and wisely because a name is a prophecy and a deep wish a family

places upon itself and the destiny of their children. Future studies should focus on how positive names can impact a life of child. Other studies should explore from the languages to find a comparative analysis on the negative effects of names on children. More attention should be paid to how the naming practices can be changed to incorporate and inculcate positive mindsets and paradigm shifts in different cultures.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, K.J. and I.Z.; methodology, S.S.; software, I.Z.; validation, I.XZ, K.J. and I.Z.; formal analysis, K.J.; investigation, K.J.; resources, K.J.; data curation, K.J.; writing—original draft preparation, I.Z.; writing—review and editing, I.Z.; visualization, K.J.; supervision, S.S.; project administration, K.J.; funding acquisition, I.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to participants signing the informed consent form for their voluntary participation, which was related to culture promotion and preservation.

## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. From the participant (s) to publish this paper.

## Data Availability Statement

The data analysed for this study is available upon request.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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