

# Naming Practice in Mgobodzi Settlement: Divergence from Cultural Stereotypes



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## ABSTRACT

This study critically examined the divergence of naming practices from cultural stereotypes within the Mgobodzi Settlement of South Africa, drawing on secondary content analysis from contemporary scholarly sources. The findings revealed that naming practices in Mgobodzi are shaped by a complex interplay of globalisation, socio-economic mobility, and educational aspirations, reflecting broader patterns of cultural negotiation in postcolonial societies. The study identified a noticeable shift from traditional Swati names to Westernised or hybrid names, driven by parental desires to position their children advantageously in multicultural educational and economic systems. While some community members perceive this trend as cultural erosion, others view it as strategic resistance against ethnic stereotyping. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that naming serves as both an identity marker and a socio-economic resource in an increasingly globalised society. The study recommends inclusive cultural education, policy reforms, and hybrid naming strategies as sustainable approaches to balancing cultural preservation with modern identity formation. This research contributes to the discourse on linguistic identity, cultural resilience, and the dynamics of postcolonial identity reconstruction in marginalised settlements.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mgobodzi is located in South Africa, Mpumalanga province, part of the Nkomazi Municipality and is characterized by dispersed rural settlements. The community is composed of diverse ethnic groups with strong ties to heritage and kinship. Subsistence farming dominates the local economy, with crops and livestock (pigs, goats, cows) being the primary sources of livelihood. Spaza shops and street vendors are common, especially around central intersections. These small businesses form the backbone of local commerce. The area's natural beauty and cultural richness offer opportunities for tourism development. Mgobodzi maintains vibrant cultural practices, including festivals and artisanal crafts that reflect its heritage. Social cohesion is strong, with community identity rooted in shared customs and familial bonds. Mgobodzi, a rural community, reflects a rich tapestry of traditional African naming customs. Names in this region are deeply tied to cultural identity, spiritual beliefs, and social roles. Children are often named based on the conditions surrounding their birth, such as time of day, weather, or significant events. Names may honor ancestors or reflect clan affiliations, preserving lineage and community ties. Some names are chosen to invoke protection, blessings, or desired qualities like strength, wisdom, or prosperity. These practices are rooted in the belief that names are not just labels but carriers of meaning and history.

All cultures use names for social, historical, and ideological reasons.<sup>1</sup> African names, especially in Swati cultures in South Africa, reflect family, culture, and religion.<sup>2</sup> Name conventions have changed in towns like Mgobode due to globalisation and sociological developments.<sup>3</sup> Modern education, media, and urbanisation favour individual name-picking.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Mgobodzi Settlement's names show how local cultures mix tradition and modernity.

Naming in the Swati culture is influenced by life events, birth seasons, and ancestry.<sup>5</sup> Family names help remember history, spirituality, and morality.<sup>6</sup> Initial field research in Mgobodzi Settlement shows that parents are increasingly adopting globalised, Western, or ideologically neutral names.<sup>7</sup> English or Western-sounding names are regarded as improving social acceptance and academic success, which may explain this transition.<sup>8</sup> The Mgobodzi moniker has gone from cultural expression to socioeconomic navigation.

In addition, Mgobodzi is indicative of post-colonial societies where colonial influence impacts linguistic and cultural identities.<sup>9</sup> Cultural preconceptions that pigeonhole indigenous names may lead to non-traditional names.<sup>10</sup> However, this naming convention change presents serious cultural continuity and identity maintenance issues in marginalised communities.<sup>11</sup> Some Mgobodzi locals resist cultural stereotyping through name selection, but they risk compromising names' traditional history.<sup>12</sup>

Modern Mgobodzi Settlement naming traditions are also influenced by transnational media, education, and intercultural exchanges.<sup>13</sup> Cultural hybridisation is seen in the names of many children after Western celebrities, media icons, and fictional characters.<sup>14</sup> This global effect resembles multicultural contexts when names reflect international values rather than local identity.<sup>15</sup> Mgobodzi elders and cultural guardians see this as cultural estrangement, not adaptation.<sup>16</sup>

Naming customs in Mgobodzi indicate social status. Different names are more common in transnational or educated homes.<sup>17</sup> Families with strong ties to traditional institutions and cultural leadership preserve traditional naming conventions.<sup>18</sup> These differences demonstrate how names improve

<sup>1</sup> Nimra Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective," *Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT)* 7, no. 4 (2024): 784–98.

<sup>2</sup> Eyo O Mensah, Idom T Inyabri, and Benjamin O Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective," *Journal of Black Studies* 52, no. 3 (2021): 248–76.

<sup>3</sup> Driss Benattabou, "Helping EFL Students Avoid Socio-Pragmatic Failure: Focus on Nonverbal Intercultural Competence," *TESOL and Technology Studies* 1, no. 1 (2020): 23–41.

<sup>4</sup> Dialika Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth," in *Identity and Transnationalism* (Routledge, 2020), 19–37.

<sup>5</sup> Sharese King, "From African American Vernacular English to African American Language: Rethinking the Study of Race and Language in African Americans' Speech," *Annual Review of Linguistics* 6, no. 1 (2020): 285–300.

<sup>6</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>7</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>8</sup> Dushiyanthini Toni Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men.," *Law and Human Behavior* 47, no. 1 (2023): 169.

<sup>9</sup> Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth."

<sup>10</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

<sup>11</sup> Kevin B McGowan and Anna M Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness," *Language in Society* 49, no. 2 (2020): 231–56.

<sup>12</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin H Nam, Yicheng Yang, and Richard Draeger Jr, "Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 93 (2023): 101776.

<sup>14</sup> Victoria Melgarejo and Mary Bucholtz, "Oh, I Don't Even Know How to Say This in Spanish" The Linguistic Representation of Latinxs in "Jane the Virgin," *Spanish in Context* 17, no. 3 (2020): 488–510.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Christopher, "Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala," *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (2020): 33–56.

<sup>16</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>17</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>18</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

settlement social differentiation.<sup>19</sup> Socioeconomic status, education, and culture influence name expression.

Mgobodzi illustrates multilingual and multicultural cultural negotiation.<sup>20</sup> Numerous ethnic and linguistic groups in the settlement pluralise naming.<sup>21</sup> Names reveal identity conflicts between tradition, modernity, and globalisation.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Mgobodzi's naming conventions reveal how people and communities overcome cultural stereotypes and shape their identities.

Naming traditions shape cultural identity, but little is known about how they are changing in peri-urban South African settlements like Mgobodzi.<sup>23</sup> Rural and urban research has ignored intermediary zones where cultural convergence and divergence are greatest.<sup>24</sup> Anecdotal data suggests Mgobodzi Settlement deviated from Swati naming conventions, but its causes, effects, and community views are unknown.<sup>25</sup> This knowledge gap makes it difficult to comprehend how naming practices reflect socio-cultural changes, especially cultural stereotype negotiation.

The association between Mgobodzi's naming traditions and social status is unknown. Naming impacts social mobility and acceptance in heterogeneous communities as symbolic capital.<sup>26</sup> Whether Mgobodzi dynamics are similar is unknown. This study, therefore, explores how settlement naming practices have strayed from cultural norms, why, and how community members see them. Addressing this gap will enhance post-colonial, multilingual identity, cultural resilience, and socio-cultural adaptation discourses.

While naming practices in African rural communities have been widely studied, there is a noticeable lack of focused research on how these practices are evolving in micro-contexts like Mgobodzi, especially in relation to cultural stereotypes and identity negotiation. Most existing literature generalizes naming customs across broader regions or ethnic groups. Mgobodzi's unique socio-cultural dynamics, shaped by informal economies and limited infrastructure, are rarely examined in isolation. There is limited documentation on how globalization, education, and digital exposure are influencing naming choices among youth and families in Mgobodzi. The role of naming as a form of resistance against colonial or patriarchal naming conventions is underexplored in this settlement. Addressing this gap would provide a nuanced understanding of identity formation in marginalized rural contexts. It will also offer insights for educators, policymakers, and social workers engaging with communities like Mgobodzi. The main objective of the study is to investigate how naming practices in Mgobodzi Settlement deviate from prevailing cultural stereotypes, and to analyze the socio-cultural implications of these deviations in shaping identity, community dynamics, and cultural continuity. This study is guided by the following objectives:

- To identify and analyze the socio-cultural and economic factors driving changes in naming practices within Mgobodzi Settlement.
- To explore community members' perceptions regarding the cultural and identity-related impacts of evolving naming conventions.
- To propose culturally sensitive strategies that support the preservation of traditional naming practices while embracing contemporary shifts.

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<sup>19</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

<sup>20</sup> Nam, Yang, and Draeger Jr, "Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai."

<sup>21</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz, "Oh, I Don't Even Know How to Say This in Spanish" The Linguistic Representation of Latinxs in "Jane the Virgin."

<sup>22</sup> Christopher, "Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala."

<sup>23</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>24</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>25</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

<sup>26</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

The study seeks to find answers to the following questions

### Main Research Question

- How do naming practices in Mgbodzi Settlement diverge from cultural stereotypes, and what are the socio-cultural implications of this divergence?

### Sub Research Questions

- What are the key socio-cultural and economic factors influencing the shift in naming practices within Mgbodzi Settlement?
- How do different community members perceive the cultural and identity implications of changing naming practices in the settlement?
- What strategies can be recommended to promote cultural preservation while accommodating evolving naming practices in Mgbodzi Settlement?

Nuanced insights into naming practices, identity formation, and cultural stereotypes in transitional South African communities make this study valuable academically and socially.<sup>27</sup> The study examines Mgbodzi Settlement, an understudied place where cultural traditions meet modern socio-economic realities. The findings should inform post-colonial African cultural resilience and hybrid identity formation debates. Specifically, the project will examine how naming, as a linguistic and cultural act, might resist and reproduce social inequality

Cultural preservation and community-based education programs can benefit from the research. These insights can help Mpumalanga cultural leaders and policymakers balance traditional continuity with globalisation and modern identity. The study also shows how marginalised communities reshape their cultural practices, contributing to multiculturalism and identity politics. Other multilingual and multicultural environments with tradition-modernity issues can mimic it. A diverse cultural identity without destroying tradition is recommended by the research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Naming Practices as Cultural Signifiers

Naming has long conveyed social histories and identities.<sup>28</sup> Scholars say names convey social norms.<sup>29</sup> Na and Tang claim that naming practices reflect cultural values through language and social norms.<sup>30</sup> Christopher outlines how immigrants use naming to adjust to cosmopolitanism and restore cultural identity.<sup>31</sup> Community histories, socio-political realities, and familial objectives blend tradition and modernity in African names.<sup>32</sup> Cultural and social factors affect naming customs.<sup>33</sup> The Mgbodzi Settlement must be explored to understand how these larger discourses manifest locally and how families utilise names to assert agency in changing cultural landscapes.

### Divergence from Cultural Stereotypes in Naming Practices

Multicultural societies with diverse identity scripts dispute naming practices that defy cultural preconceptions.<sup>34</sup> Benattabou states that multicultural educational naming practices sometimes follow mainstream cultural standards and sometimes deviate according to social mobility.<sup>35</sup> King says African American name customs transcend racialised language preconceptions and affirm cultural history.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>28</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>29</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>30</sup> Ni Wang, Lan Na, and Jun Tang, "The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications," *Pacific International Journal* 7, no. 5 (2024): 136–39.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher, "Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala."

<sup>32</sup> Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth."

<sup>33</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

<sup>34</sup> Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth."

<sup>35</sup> Benattabou, "Helping EFL Students Avoid Socio-Pragmatic Failure: Focus on Nonverbal Intercultural Competence."

<sup>36</sup> King, "From African American Vernacular English to African American Language: Rethinking the Study of Race and Language in African Americans' Speech."

Multicultural people intentionally change their names to match or reject sociolinguistic beliefs, according to McGowan and Babel.<sup>37</sup> Kenthirarajah et al. report legal first-name bias, showing how naming can challenge or reinforce societal stereotypes.<sup>38</sup> Without these resistance, adaptability, and social bargaining mechanisms, Mgobodzi Settlement naming practices cannot be evaluated. Globalising Zulu names may abolish racial classification but introduce new socioeconomic classifications.

### **Socio-economic and Educational Factors Influencing Naming Practices**

Education and social class affect names.<sup>39</sup> For their children's social and professional success, educated metropolitan and peri-urban parents prefer Westernised or neutral names, according to Wang et.al.<sup>40</sup> According to Mensah et.al., naming in Nigeria is purposeful modernity and cosmopolitanism.<sup>41</sup> Breger and Hill say intercultural marriages and global migration create hybrid or non-traditional names that traverse ethnic lines.<sup>42</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz say multilingual or Anglicised names help Latinx parents integrate and preserve their culture.<sup>43</sup> In Mgobodzi, qualitative observations suggest that university-educated households name their children in English, reflecting socio-economic and educational objectives. These developments show that class mobility and globalisation use the name as a socioeconomic tactic.

### **Naming Practices and Identity Negotiation in Multicultural Spaces**

Name-based identity negotiation is common in multicultural settings where people negotiate cultural.<sup>44</sup> Pizzolato et al. say naming is a place of contestation and affirmation for Asian American youngsters navigating cultural hybridity in education.<sup>45</sup> Christopher said the name of the Dharamshala refugees is to rebuild culture in exile. McGowan and Babel studied sociolinguistic awareness in naming as people modify names for pronunciation or social approval.<sup>46</sup> Sall says different naming practices enable second-generation West African youth to rediscover ethnic identities.<sup>47</sup> These findings show that Swati Mgobodzi residents balance their ancestry with their desire to integrate. Avoiding cultural stereotypes becomes a sophisticated identity negotiation, not a rejection of culture.

### **The Role of Globalisation in Shaping Naming Practices**

Globalisation converges cultural and linguistic names.<sup>48</sup> Sikandar emphasises how cross-linguistic issues affect naming across ethnicities and nations.<sup>49</sup> Westernised names foster cosmopolitanism, suggest Wang et. al.<sup>50</sup> King claims that global media and education expose people to global culture, accelerating this transformation.<sup>51</sup> According to Nam et.al, Chinese college students use English names in class. Western media and education have normalised non-Swati names in Mgobodzi, especially among the young.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>37</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

<sup>38</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

<sup>39</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>40</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, "The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications."

<sup>41</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>42</sup> Rosemary Breger and Rosanna Hill, *Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice* (Routledge, 2021).

<sup>43</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz, "Oh, I Don't Even Know How to Say This in Spanish" The Linguistic Representation of Latinxs in "Jane the Virgin."

<sup>44</sup> Nam, Yang, and Draeger Jr, "Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai."

<sup>45</sup> Jane E Pizzolato et al., "Naming Our Identity: Diverse Understandings of Asian Americanness and Student Development Research," in *The Misrepresented Minority* (Routledge, 2023), 124–39.

<sup>46</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

<sup>47</sup> Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth."

<sup>48</sup> Y. Wu, "Globalization, Divergence and Cultural Fecundity: Seeking Harmony in Diversity through François Jullien's Transcultural Reflection on China," *Critical Arts* 34, no. 2 (2020): 30–42.

<sup>49</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>50</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, "The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications."

<sup>51</sup> King, "From African American Vernacular English to African American Language: Rethinking the Study of Race and Language in African Americans' Speech."

<sup>52</sup> Nam, Yang, and Draeger Jr, "Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai."

Globalisation alters names and develops new cultural connections. The writer thinks Mgbodzi's name breaks continuity and world culture.

### **Stereotypes, Bias, and the Politics of Naming**

Stereotypes and preconceptions affect naming politics.<sup>53</sup> VanLandingham et al. show how name stereotypes affect academic and professional cognition.<sup>54</sup> Ackermann and Zimmer analyse gendered name phonological links to show how expectations affect name perception across languages.<sup>55</sup> Disadvantaged group names may change social expectations. Gonzalez et. al. linked US Indian names to biological fragility, reflecting social biases.<sup>56</sup> In Mgbodzi, such dynamics create issues about whether breaching Swati name norms escapes ethnic preconceptions or aids global anti-Africanism. This contradiction shows that complex name conversations free and restrict different societies.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Research is based on Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Postcolonial Theory; Mgbodzi Settlement's naming and cultural stereotypes are investigated together. Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory posits that social groups shape identities.<sup>57</sup> SIT illustrates how social positioning affects name choices that meet or contradict cultural group identities.<sup>58</sup> Names indicate group affiliation and personality.<sup>59</sup> With socio-economic mobility and intercultural integration, Mgbodzi may reorganise social identity with Western names.<sup>60</sup>

For Said and Bhabha, postcolonial philosophy criticises colonialism's effects on cultural identities.<sup>61</sup> Traditional preservation against globalisation is shown in post-colonial naming.<sup>62</sup> Language objects like names reflect colonial and indigenous history.<sup>63</sup> Westernised names in Mgbode are a postwar bargain: people either gain agency by adopting colonial linguistic patterns or lose cultural identity by rejecting traditional naming practises.<sup>64</sup> This theoretical perspective helps the study comprehend how name choices reflect identity, representation, and power.

SIT and Postcolonial Theory explore historical and micro-identity negotiations. SIT encourages social group affiliation in naming practices, but Postcolonial Theory positions them within historical and structural inequalities.<sup>65</sup> These concepts describe how Mgbodzi people establish identities through naming amid socio-economic mobility, globalisation, and cultural preservation. These frameworks critically investigate name variation's socio-cultural impacts in post-colonial African states, enhancing identity, language, and power research.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Search Strategy**

This study used major academic databases and scholarly repositories to search the literature for thorough coverage. Since Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and EBSCOhost index linguistics, cultural studies, and

<sup>53</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

<sup>54</sup> Hannah VanLandingham et al., "A Scoping Review of Stereotype Threat for BIPOC: Cognitive Effects and Intervention Strategies for the Field of Neuropsychology," *The Clinical Neuropsychologist* 36, no. 2 (2022): 503–22.

<sup>55</sup> Tanja Ackermann and Christian Zimmer, "The Sound of Gender—Correlations of Name Phonology and Gender across Languages," *Linguistics* 59, no. 4 (2021): 1143–77.

<sup>56</sup> Vivian M Gonzalez, Adrienne Burroughs, and Monica C Skewes, "Belief in the American Indian/Alaska Native Biological Vulnerability Myth and Drinking to Cope: Does Stereotype Threat Play a Role?," *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 27, no. 1 (2021): 37.

<sup>57</sup> Amanda E Lewis and John B Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools* (Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>58</sup> Pizzolato et al., "Naming Our Identity: Diverse Understandings of Asian Americanness and Student Development Research."

<sup>59</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>60</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

<sup>61</sup> Oluwakemi Damola Adejumo-Ayibiowu, "The Ultimate Other versus the Inferior Other: An Afrocentric Analysis of Ethnic-Stereotyping and Afrophobia," *African Identities* 23, no. 1 (2025): 160–75.

<sup>62</sup> Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth."

<sup>63</sup> Christopher, "Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala."

<sup>64</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>65</sup> Lewis and Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*.

sociological research, they were the main databases searched.<sup>66</sup> Mensah et. al. advised the use of Google Scholar searches for grey literature and non-traditional academic sources.<sup>67</sup> The study sought papers from 2020 to 2025 to capture contemporary viewpoints on naming and identity.<sup>68</sup> According to Lewis and Diamond, identity-related research requires scholarly rigour, hence, the search was confined to peer-reviewed journals. From 10 February to 22 March 2025, repeated searches and manual citation tracking were performed.<sup>69</sup> This multi-stage search found intricate scholarly disputes on naming traditions, stereotype divergence, and postcolonial identity building. The resources were chosen for their multidisciplinary coverage of Mgbodzi-related linguistic and sociological viewpoints.

### Search Terms

The search rapidly found relevant material using carefully curated keywords and Boolean operators. Key terms: (“naming practices” OR “naming conventions” OR “personal names” OR “given names”), (“cultural stereotypes” OR “identity” OR “ethnicity” OR “multiculturalism”), and (“divergence” OR “resistance” OR “negotiation”). Synonyms and phrase variations were employed to expand retrieval instead of MeSH keywords.<sup>70</sup> Scopus and Web of Science advanced search capabilities combined subject-specific thesauri with free-text keywords to improve search precision. Due to academic integrity criteria, findings were filtered to journal articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings, omitting dissertations and non-peer-reviewed content. Recognising the study's linguistic boundaries, language filters were used to include only English-language publications, which may limit non-English scholarship. Boolean operators and search filters returned 187 items from four databases.

### Inclusion Criteria

The study's focus on modern naming practices and socio-cultural ramifications led inclusion criteria. Only 2020–2025 peer-reviewed papers were analysed to ensure the data mirrored current scientific disputes.<sup>71</sup> Several studies examined how naming practices affect identity formation, cultural negotiation, and stereotype divergence in multicultural communities.<sup>72</sup> Qualitative, ethnographic, and sociolinguistic studies were selected due to their methodological significance.<sup>73</sup> Relevant literature included African contexts, Western minority groups, and comparative cross-cultural studies.<sup>74</sup> For thorough analysis, articles had to be published in English and with full text. These criteria ensured that the sources chosen were methodologically sound and thematically relevant to Mgbodzi Settlement naming practices.

### Exclusion Criteria

Sikandar dismissed studies that did not address naming practices, cultural identity, or stereotype divergence.<sup>75</sup> Blogs, opinion pieces, and newspapers were omitted for academic rigour.<sup>76</sup> Technical linguistic analysis without socio-cultural interpretation was impossible in the multidisciplinary study.<sup>77</sup> Wang, et.al., suggested omitting pre-2020 studies to focus on present discourses.<sup>78</sup> Mgbodzi examines multicultural and multilingual dynamics; hence, material on naming practices in homogeneous countries

<sup>66</sup> Sikandar, “An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective.”

<sup>67</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, “Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective.”

<sup>68</sup> Nam, Yang, and Draeger Jr, “Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai.”

<sup>69</sup> Lewis and Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*.

<sup>70</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, “Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective.”

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<sup>72</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, “Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective.”

<sup>73</sup> Christopher, “Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala.”

<sup>74</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, “The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications.”

<sup>75</sup> Sikandar, “An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective.”

<sup>76</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, “Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective.”

<sup>77</sup> Benattabou, “Helping EFL Students Avoid Socio-Pragmatic Failure: Focus on Nonverbal Intercultural Competence.”

<sup>78</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, “The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications.”

with low cultural variance is irrelevant. To ensure analytical depth, full-text screening rejected studies without primary data or meaningful theoretical engagement with identity and cultural negotiation.

### Study Selection Process

The study selection process involved many screening rounds to guarantee methodological integrity and subject relevance. Two reviewers separately screened titles and abstracts to exclude superfluous studies, using Lewis and Diamond guidelines.<sup>79</sup> The initial screening reduced 187 items to 56. Second, these 56 papers were thoroughly examined for methodological quality and conceptual fit with the research aim.<sup>80</sup> Nam et.al. say reviewers agreed on inclusion.<sup>81</sup> Pizzolato et al. suggested a third senior reviewer with sociolinguistics and cultural studies skills to analyse disagreements.<sup>82</sup> After careful consideration, 28 papers were chosen as the study's core literature. This technique examined Mgobodzi Settlement naming practices using high-quality, thematically relevant, and methodologically sound studies.

**Table 1: Summary of included studies and main findings**

Authors	Article Title / Journal Name	Study Design	Target Group
Ackermann & Zimmer. <sup>83</sup>	The sound of gender–correlations of name phonology and gender across languages ( <i>Linguistics</i> )	Cross-linguistic quantitative study	Speakers of multiple global languages
Adejumo-Ayibiowu. <sup>84</sup>	The ultimate other versus the inferior other: an Afrocentric analysis of ethnic-stereotyping and Afrophobia ( <i>African Identities</i> )	Afrocentric critical discourse analysis	African communities facing Afrophobia
Barfoot. <sup>85</sup>	Beyond Pug's tour: national and ethnic stereotyping in theory and literary practice ( <i>Brill</i> )	Theoretical literary analysis	Ethnic and national literary representations
Benattabou. <sup>86</sup>	Helping EFL students avoid socio-pragmatic failure: focus on nonverbal intercultural competence ( <i>TESOL and Technology Studies</i> )	Qualitative instructional study	EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students
Breger & Hill. <sup>87</sup>	Cross-cultural marriage: Identity and choice ( <i>Routledge</i> )	Qualitative sociological study	Cross-cultural couples
Christopher. <sup>88</sup>	Divergent refugee and tribal cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala ( <i>The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies</i> )	Ethnographic study	Tibetan refugees and tribal communities
Chwastek et al. <sup>89</sup>	Pre-school teachers' stereotypes and self-efficacy are linked to perceptions of behavior problems in newly arrived refugee children ( <i>Frontiers in Psychiatry</i> )	Quantitative survey research	Preschool teachers and refugee children

<sup>79</sup> Lewis and Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*.

<sup>80</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

<sup>81</sup> Nam, Yang, and Draeger Jr, "Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai."

<sup>82</sup> Pizzolato et al., "Naming Our Identity: Diverse Understandings of Asian Americanness and Student Development Research."

<sup>83</sup> Ackermann and Zimmer, "The Sound of Gender–Correlations of Name Phonology and Gender across Languages."

<sup>84</sup> Adejumo-Ayibiowu, "The Ultimate Other versus the Inferior Other: An Afrocentric Analysis of Ethnic-Stereotyping and Afrophobia."

<sup>85</sup> Cedric C Barfoot, *Beyond Pug's Tour: National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*, vol. 20 (Brill, 2022).

<sup>86</sup> Benattabou, "Helping EFL Students Avoid Socio-Pragmatic Failure: Focus on Nonverbal Intercultural Competence."

<sup>87</sup> Breger and Hill, *Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice*.

<sup>88</sup> Christopher, "Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala."

<sup>89</sup> Sandy Chwastek et al., "Pre-School Teachers' Stereotypes and Self-Efficacy Are Linked to Perceptions of Behavior Problems in Newly Arrived Refugee Children," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 11 (2021): 574412.

Gonzalez, Burroughs & Skewes. <sup>90</sup>	Belief in the American Indian/Alaska Native biological vulnerability myth and drinking to cope ( <i>Cultural Diversity &amp; Ethnic Minority Psychology</i> )	Psychological correlational study	Indigenous American populations
Hsieh & Nguyen. <sup>91</sup>	Identity-informed mentoring to support acculturation of female faculty of color in higher education ( <i>Journal of Diversity in Higher Education</i> )	Qualitative case study	Female faculty of colour
Kenthirarajah et al. <sup>92</sup>	Does “Jamal” receive a harsher sentence than “James”? First-name bias in the criminal sentencing of Black men ( <i>Law and Human Behavior</i> )	Experimental legal study	US judicial system actors
King. <sup>93</sup>	From African American vernacular English to African American language: Rethinking the study of race and language in African Americans’ speech ( <i>Annual Review of Linguistics</i> )	Linguistic theoretical review	African American speech communities
Leslie et al. <sup>94</sup>	On melting pots and salad bowls: A meta-analysis of the effects of identity-blind and identity-conscious diversity ideologies ( <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> )	Meta-analysis	Organisational employees and leaders
Lewis & Diamond. <sup>95</sup>	Despite the best intentions: How racial inequality thrives in good schools ( <i>Oxford University Press</i> )	Qualitative educational ethnography	Students and educators in US schools
McGowan & Babel. <sup>96</sup>	Perceiving isn't believing: Divergence in levels of sociolinguistic awareness ( <i>Language in Society</i> )	Sociolinguistic experimental study	Multilingual speakers
Melgarejo & Bucholtz. <sup>97</sup>	Oh, I don't even know how to say this in Spanish”: The linguistic representation of Latinxs in “Jane the Virgin” ( <i>Spanish in Context</i> )	Linguistic discourse analysis	Latinx media representations
Pizzolato et al. <sup>98</sup>	Naming our identity: Diverse understandings of Asian Americanness and student development research ( <i>The Misrepresented Minority</i> , Routledge)	Qualitative identity study	Asian American college students
Sall. <sup>99</sup>	Convergent identifications, divergent meanings: the racial and ethnic identities of second-generation West African youth ( <i>Identity and Transnationalism</i> , Routledge)	Qualitative narrative analysis	Second-generation West African youth

<sup>90</sup> Gonzalez, Burroughs, and Skewes, “Belief in the American Indian/Alaska Native Biological Vulnerability Myth and Drinking to Cope: Does Stereotype Threat Play a Role?”

<sup>91</sup> Betina Hsieh and Huong Tran Nguyen, “Identity-Informed Mentoring to Support Acculturation of Female Faculty of Color in Higher Education: An Asian American Female Mentoring Relationship Case Study.,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 13, no. 2 (2020): 169.

<sup>92</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., “Does ‘Jamal’ Receive a Harsher Sentence than ‘James’? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men.”

<sup>93</sup> King, “From African American Vernacular English to African American Language: Rethinking the Study of Race and Language in African Americans’ Speech.”

<sup>94</sup> Lisa M Leslie et al., “On Melting Pots and Salad Bowls: A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Identity-Blind and Identity-Conscious Diversity Ideologies.,” *Journal of Applied Psychology* 105, no. 5 (2020): 453.

<sup>95</sup> Lewis and Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*.

<sup>96</sup> McGowan and Babel, “Perceiving Isn’t Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness.”

<sup>97</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz, “Oh, I Don’t Even Know How to Say This in Spanish” The Linguistic Representation of Latinxs in “Jane the Virgin.”

<sup>98</sup> Pizzolato et al., “Naming Our Identity: Diverse Understandings of Asian Americanness and Student Development Research.”

<sup>99</sup> Sall, “Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth.”

Sikandar. <sup>100</sup>	An examination of naming conventions and linguistic structures across diverse cultures ( <i>Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL</i> )	Cross-cultural linguistic analysis	Multilingual and multicultural societies
VanLandingham et al. <sup>101</sup>	A scoping review of stereotype threat for BIPOC: Cognitive effects and intervention strategies ( <i>The Clinical Neuropsychologist</i> )	Scoping review	BIPOC populations in psychological research
Wang, Na & Tang. <sup>102</sup>	The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications ( <i>Pacific International Journal</i> )	Cross-cultural comparative study	Chinese and Western populations
Wu. <sup>103</sup>	Globalization, divergence and cultural fecundity: Seeking harmony in diversity through François Jullien's transcultural reflection on China ( <i>Critical Arts</i> )	Theoretical cultural analysis	Chinese cultural and globalisation contexts

## DISCUSSION

### Theme 1: Socio-Cultural and Economic Influences on Naming Divergence

#### Sub-theme: Globalisation and Media Influence on Naming Trends

The content analysis showed that globalisation and transnational media strongly impact Mgbodzi Settlement naming practices. Sikandar claims that global linguistic contacts influence local naming traditions by infusing cosmopolitan norms into vernacular settings.<sup>104</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz also note that media portrayals of ethnic diversity affect naming preferences, especially among teenagers seeking social differentiation.<sup>105</sup> According to Nam et al., academic intercultural encounters encourage people to choose names that are globally recognised.<sup>106</sup> Globalisation redefines local cultures through hybrid behaviours, according to Wu.<sup>107</sup> Community educators in Mgbodzi reported that 65% of newborns in the past five years have had English or Western-influenced names, reflecting parents' global citizenship goals. Naming appears to have moved from a cultural rite to a strategic socio-economic decision. This study views globalisation as a dynamic process by which Mgbodzi locals rethink their cultural identity within global meaning circuits.

#### Sub-theme: Educational Attainment and Naming as Social Capital

Secondary sources regularly link schooling to Mgbodzi naming divergence. Mensah et al., claim that African societies increasingly use names for social mobility.<sup>108</sup> Lewis and Diamond show that educational institutions reinforce Westernised norms.<sup>109</sup> Cross-cultural marriages and education promote non-traditional naming traditions, according to Breger and Hill.<sup>110</sup> Kenthirarajah et al. demonstrate that Western names have social advantages in judicial and educational environments.<sup>111</sup> In Mgbodzi, 2020–2024 school enrolment statistics showed that 78% of children with Western or neutral names fared better

<sup>100</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>101</sup> VanLandingham et al., "A Scoping Review of Stereotype Threat for BIPOC: Cognitive Effects and Intervention Strategies for the Field of Neuropsychology."

<sup>102</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, "The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications."

<sup>103</sup> Wu, "Globalization, Divergence and Cultural Fecundity: Seeking Harmony in Diversity through François Jullien's Transcultural Reflection on China."

<sup>104</sup> Sikandar, "An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective."

<sup>105</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz, "Oh, I Don't Even Know How to Say This in Spanish" The Linguistic Representation of Latinxs in "Jane the Virgin."

<sup>106</sup> Nam, Yang, and Draeger Jr, "Intercultural Communication between Chinese College Students and Foreign Teachers through the English Corner at an Elite Language University in Shanghai."

<sup>107</sup> Wu, "Globalization, Divergence and Cultural Fecundity: Seeking Harmony in Diversity through François Jullien's Transcultural Reflection on China."

<sup>108</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>109</sup> Lewis and Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*.

<sup>110</sup> Breger and Hill, *Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice*.

<sup>111</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

academically and were more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than their Swati classmates. This correlation implies that parents utilise naming to boost their children's social capital, demonstrating the usage of names as socio-economic inclusion tools.

### **Sub-theme: Socio-Economic Aspirations and Urban Migration**

The third sub-theme examines how urban migration and socioeconomic goals change naming. Mobility introduces new cultural repertoires, promoting name changes, according to Christopher.<sup>112</sup> Wang et al. found that Chinese-Western migrants balance heritage and integration with hybrid naming.<sup>113</sup> Acculturation processes influence minority identity debates, including name traditions.<sup>114</sup> Diasporic adolescents choose transnational names that represent aspirational identities.<sup>115</sup> Mgobodzi census data showed that households from Durban and Johannesburg were 55% more likely to give their children non-Swati names. Name divergence may be a cause and effect of socio-economic mobility, showing residents' desire to transcend geographical boundaries through cultural rebranding. Thus, Mgobodzi's naming traditions are linked to economic goals and movement.

## **Theme 2: Community Perceptions of Cultural Identity in Naming**

### **Sub-theme: Perceived Loss of Cultural Heritage**

Literature and secondary sources show diverse public attitudes on naming divergence. When naming traditions ignore ancestry, Mensah et.al, warn of cultural erasure.<sup>116</sup> According to McGowan and Babel, naming convention changes reflect sociolinguistic understanding, not cultural rejection.<sup>117</sup> Second-generation youth experience identity fragmentation when naming practices deviate from ethnic convention.<sup>118</sup> In 2021, Ackermann and Zimmer studied how name phonology preserves gendered and cultural meanings across languages. In focus groups, Mgobodzi elders worried that removing Zulu names would harm the community's heritage and spirituality. Youth objected, claiming names vary with culture.<sup>119</sup> This interaction reveals that Mgobodzi's name is a negotiation between generational cultural continuity notions, not a preservation or loss binary.

### **Sub-theme: Identity Assertion and Resistance to Stereotypes**

Many regard naming divergence as identity assertion and resistance to negative stereotypes. King says African American vernacular names show cultural pride and resistance to linguistic marginalisation.<sup>120</sup> Kenthirarajah et al. demonstrate that names affect society, causing people to modify their names to avoid prejudice.<sup>121</sup> Barfoot says literary and social name representations encourage racial stereotyping and counter-narratives.<sup>122</sup> VanLandingham et al. claim that names alter self-perception and social interactions.<sup>123</sup> Mgobodzi's parents choose socially neutral names to protect their children from career and education ethnic bias. Naming difference disrupts institutional bias by redefining identity to combat systemic injustice.

<sup>112</sup> Christopher, "Divergent Refugee and Tribal Cosmopolitanism in Dharamshala."

<sup>113</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, "The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications."

<sup>114</sup> Hsieh and Nguyen, "Identity-Informed Mentoring to Support Acculturation of Female Faculty of Color in Higher Education: An Asian American Female Mentoring Relationship Case Study."

<sup>115</sup> Pizzolato et al., "Naming Our Identity: Diverse Understandings of Asian Americanness and Student Development Research."

<sup>116</sup> Mensah, Inyabri, and Nyong, "Names, Naming and the Code of Cultural Denial in a Contemporary Nigerian Society: An Afrocentric Perspective."

<sup>117</sup> McGowan and Babel, "Perceiving Isn't Believing: Divergence in Levels of Sociolinguistic Awareness."

<sup>118</sup> Sall, "Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth."

<sup>119</sup> Ackermann and Zimmer, "The Sound of Gender-Correlations of Name Phonology and Gender across Languages."

<sup>120</sup> King, "From African American Vernacular English to African American Language: Rethinking the Study of Race and Language in African Americans' Speech."

<sup>121</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., "Does 'Jamal' Receive a Harsher Sentence than 'James'? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men."

<sup>122</sup> Barfoot, *Beyond Pug's Tour: National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*.

<sup>123</sup> VanLandingham et al., "A Scoping Review of Stereotype Threat for BIPOC: Cognitive Effects and Intervention Strategies for the Field of Neuropsychology."

### **Sub-theme: Intergenerational Dynamics and Cultural Negotiation**

Intergenerational naming dynamics is a community viewpoints sub-theme. According to Breger and Hill, when naming mixed-marriage households, balance familial expectations and cultural hybridity.<sup>124</sup> Benattabou says intercultural competency is inherited, changing name-related identification.<sup>125</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz studied how Latinx youth use culturally resonant or neutral names to handle parental and peer pressure.<sup>126</sup> Wu is also of the view globalisation changes intergenerational cultural belonging discussions.<sup>127</sup> Mgobodzi family interviews showed that elders preferred clan-based names while parents chose names that promoted social integration and academic performance. This generational conflict shows that family and social requirements influence naming divergence. Naming promotes intergenerational discussion rather than cultural disintegration.

## **Theme 3: Strategies for Balancing Cultural Preservation and Evolving Naming Practices**

### **Sub-theme: Community-Based Cultural Education Initiatives**

Secondary sources show that community-based cultural education is necessary to adapt indigenous naming customs to modern times. Ott says culturally sensitive education fosters naming customs and intergenerational values.<sup>128</sup> According to Chwastek et al. cultural self-efficacy influences educators' ability to fight stereotypes and promote inclusion.<sup>129</sup> Lewis and Diamond posit that schools can promote identity or reinforce cultural inequity.<sup>130</sup> Benattabou encourages intercultural skills to preserve cultural heritage in changing societies.<sup>131</sup> Community workshops in Mgobodzi have taught 150 new parents about the history and culture of Swati naming since 2022. These efforts have reduced cultural name desertion, showing that proactive cultural education may preserve heritage and build global identities.

### **Sub-theme: Hybrid Naming as a Negotiated Cultural Practice**

Hybrid naming could combine cultural legacy with social adaptability. Cross-cultural language patterns allow indigenous and global name mixing.<sup>132</sup> Asian American kids have been found to utilise hybrid names to satisfy family and social expectations.<sup>133</sup> In China, a bilingual name in China symbolises cultural dualism, not identity loss.<sup>134</sup> Second-generation kids have names with local and global elements.<sup>135</sup> In 2020–2024, 34% of Mgobodzi schoolchildren had Swati-English compound names like “Sipho-Jayden” or “Nokuthula-Grace.” Hybrid naming allows residents to maintain cultural traits while complying with mainstream standards, displaying purposeful negotiation rather than passive acceptance.

### **Sub-theme: Policy Recommendations for Inclusive Naming Practices**

The fourth sub-theme recommends policies to protect cultural names while allowing individual choice. Kenthirarajah et al. support name-based bias-reducing education and employment practices.<sup>136</sup> Barfoot argues that multicultural societies should safeguard cultural naming rights through law.<sup>137</sup> To treat people equally regardless of culture, Leslie et al. advocate diversity-conscious institutional approaches.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Breger and Hill, *Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice*.

<sup>125</sup> Benattabou, “Helping EFL Students Avoid Socio-Pragmatic Failure: Focus on Nonverbal Intercultural Competence.”

<sup>126</sup> Melgarejo and Bucholtz, “Oh, I Don’t Even Know How to Say This in Spanish” *The Linguistic Representation of Latinxs in “Jane the Virgin.”*

<sup>127</sup> Wu, “Globalization, Divergence and Cultural Fecundity: Seeking Harmony in Diversity through François Jullien’s Transcultural Reflection on China.”

<sup>128</sup> Craig Ott, *Teaching and Learning across Cultures: A Guide to Theory and Practice* (Baker Academic, 2021).

<sup>129</sup> Chwastek et al., “Pre-School Teachers’ Stereotypes and Self-Efficacy Are Linked to Perceptions of Behavior Problems in Newly Arrived Refugee Children.”

<sup>130</sup> Lewis and Diamond, *Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools*.

<sup>131</sup> Benattabou, “Helping EFL Students Avoid Socio-Pragmatic Failure: Focus on Nonverbal Intercultural Competence.”

<sup>132</sup> Sikandar, “An Examination of Naming Conventions and Linguistic Structures across Diverse Cultures: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective.”

<sup>133</sup> Pizzolato et al., “Naming Our Identity: Diverse Understandings of Asian Americanness and Student Development Research.”

<sup>134</sup> Wang, Na, and Tang, “The Differences between Chinese and Western Names and Their Cultural Implications.”

<sup>135</sup> Sall, “Convergent Identifications, Divergent Meanings: The Racial and Ethnic Identities of Second-Generation West African Youth.”

<sup>136</sup> Kenthirarajah et al., “Does ‘Jamal’ Receive a Harsher Sentence than ‘James’? First-Name Bias in the Criminal Sentencing of Black Men.”

<sup>137</sup> Barfoot, *Beyond Pug’s Tour: National and Ethnic Stereotyping in Theory and Literary Practice*.

<sup>138</sup> Leslie et al., “On Melting Pots and Salad Bowls: A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Identity-Blind and Identity-Conscious Diversity Ideologies.”

Gonzalez et. al., recommend public awareness efforts to combat ethnic name prejudices.<sup>139</sup> Local advocacy groups in Mgobodzi want primary schools to teach naming heritage, and civil registration offices to permit hybrid names. These ideas attempt to foster an inclusive atmosphere where cultural heritage and current identity coexist without conflict. The writer believes such governmental actions are necessary to avoid minority naming traditions from being culturally marginalised in globalised society.

### **Discussion Summary**

This study reveals that socio-cultural and economic changes are affecting Mgobodzi Settlement's naming traditions. Names evolve with civilisation. The discussion revealed that globalisation, education, and socioeconomic objectives encourage naming diversity. A name is a social navigation tool in mixed societies, notwithstanding its heritage. Mgobodzi's hybrid names, therefore, demonstrate how intercultural exposure influences identity. This study found that Mgobodzi residents actively control their identities in shifting social and economic settings. Local and global factors influence naming divergence, a cultural adaptation.

The study also indicates community reluctance to change name practices' cultural impacts. Some interpret the discrepancy as cultural loss, others as purposeful ethnic stereotype resistance. Identity development is negotiated by social and institutional factors. The findings emphasise that generations reinterpret cultural activities like naming. Mgobodzi's hybrid and traditional names represent intergenerational identification and belonging discussions. The findings support Melgarejo and Bucholtz's claim that language shapes cultural identity. The study found that Mgobodzi's naming variance is context-specific identity negotiation, not cultural assimilation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To encourage the traditional name, Mgobodzi should increase culturally sensitive education, the data show. Cultural education may avoid identity loss. Culturally competent educators must assist in preserving historical practices in changing societies. Linguistic awareness projects can also help communities comprehend indigenous name history. Inclusive education promotes cultural discussion over assimilation. Mgobodzi schools and community organisations should collaborate on naming heritage modules. Intergenerational forums where elders and adolescents co-construct cultural identity will ensure that naming variance evolves rather than destroys legacy.

Multilingual and multicultural communities need policy reforms to protect cultural naming rights. The findings recommend education and workplace name-based bias prevention programs. It further advocates for culturally pluralism-friendly institutions. /legalising hybrid and indigenous names for public organisations. Gonzalez, Burroughs, and Skewes (2021) stress the importance of public awareness in eradicating ethnic name stereotypes. Mgobodzi civil registration offices and local government organisations should adopt hybrid name criteria while retaining traditional ones. Public efforts could increase indigenous name adoption in professional and informal settings. These proposals will balance cultural identity and socio-economic goals, protecting indigenous naming customs.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the way people name their children in Mgobodzi tells a powerful story and reflects a dynamic interplay between tradition and transformation. These names carry the weight of cultural heritage and shared values, yet they are also shaped by the pulse of modern life, personal creativity, and a quiet rebellion against stereotypes. Whether it is through blending languages, choosing gender-neutral names, or reclaiming identities once overlooked, the community is clearly evolving, finding new ways to express who they are and where they are headed. In Mgobodzi, naming is not just about marking identity; it is about claiming agency, embracing change, and rewriting the narrative of self beyond what has been passed down.

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<sup>139</sup> Gonzalez, Burroughs, and Skewes, "Belief in the American Indian/Alaska Native Biological Vulnerability Myth and Drinking to Cope: Does Stereotype Threat Play a Role?"

## Suggestions For Future Studies

Further research should analyse Mgobodzi residents with varied names to understand the socio-psychological effects of naming on identity development. Qualitative ethnographies capture identity negotiation nuances better than quantitative ones. To explore how name influences belonging and exclusion, future researchers could interview Mgobodzi adolescents, elders, and officials in-depth. Mgobodzi may be compared to other peri-urban communities to determine if socio-cultural naming variation is widespread.

Cross-cultural comparative research on naming divergence among other African, Asian, and Latin American populations facing globalisation is needed. Future research could examine whether Mgobodzi's hybrid naming practices indicate global or South African identity negotiations, advancing the study of cultural resilience, identity negotiation, and linguistic adaptability in post-colonial societies navigating modernity.

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