Longitudinal Trajectories of Identity Formation and Resilience Development in Adolescents Living in Disadvantaged Communities

by

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Abstract

Transitioning to adulthood is a core task which requires of adolescents to work on defining their sense of self. Indeed, they have to overcome an identity crisis in order to establish a coherent sense of self. Consequently, resilience becomes of uttermost importance for their wellbeing. In essence, identity and resilience are crucial processes of focus in their development. The urgency of the issue applies likewise to South African adolescents who are faced with unique challenges. Therefore, this study examined longitudinal trajectories of identity formation based on the five-dimensional model of identity development and explored resilience as it pertains to adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa.

An equal weight, concurrent mixed methods research approach with a longitudinal design was used in this study. A non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed to collect quantitative data, and a purposive sampling technique was used to collect qualitative data. The final sample for the quantitative approach consisted of 564 participants aged between 12 and 24 years. For the qualitative data, a total of 18 groups with 162 participants aged between 14 and 21 contributed to focus group interviews. Data were collected over three points in time (in intervals of six months).

The data for this study were collected using the *Dimensions of Identity Development Scale* (*DIDS*), and the *Resilience Questionnaire for Middle-Adolescents in Township Schools* (*R-MATS*). A semi structured interview schedule was used to guide the focus group interviews. Given the longitudinal nature of the study, repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) allowed the examination of associations between the dimensions of identity and resilience across different points in time. Qualitative data were analysed using a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive reflexive thematic analyses.

The study results indicated no significant time effect on the identity dimensions; the dimensions of identity showed a stable trajectory. There was a significant difference in some aspects of resilience across the points in time. Considering the interaction between identity and resilience, results indicated significant findings for *Exploration in Depth*, with the high resilience group showing a significant decrease in *Exploration in Depth* over time and the low resilience group a gradual increase. Although previous studies have shown the connection between resilience and identity, in this study the novelty is only directed to *Exploration in Depth* and resilience.

Participants' experiences of identity and resilience over time were thematically analysed, and four main themes were generated. The first related to participants' experiences of who they are in trying to find a balance between individual attributes and resilience. The second pertained

to risks and opportunities detailing the complexity in exploring resilience, while a third was participants' experiences of agency when faced with adversity. Finally, the fourth theme highlighted the role of significant others and religious beliefs in navigating through landmines of life.

Results demonstrated the important role of agency in pursuit of future directions. It was apparent that the participants in this study, played a significant role in shaping their lived experiences in relation to their identity formation and resilience. Furthermore, the participants' interactions with others were prominent in facilitating their understanding of who they are and their ability to deal with hardships, since those interactions gave them a sense of acceptance, belonging, and assurance and they did not feel judged. Participants' ability to recognise available structures and to actually make use of them in the process of their identity development and resilience was evident in this study.

Keywords: adolescents, identity, resilience, disadvantaged background, longitudinal, mixed methods research

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Chapter 1 - Context of the Study

The path ahead of adolescents determines the individual developmental trajectories each one must take (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). Moreover, the existence of a variety of life choices towards developing an optimal functioning and experiencing a sense of well-being not only promotes individual differentiation but also places adolescents in limbo (Markovitch et al., 2017; & Adamczyk & Luyckx, 2015). In fact, central to the adolescent stage is a set of intricate developmental issues; consequently, the topics on resilience and identity are critical areas of focus for adolescents over their life span as they have a bearing on their well-being. Beyond this, adolescent well-being is regarded as an urgent issue globally (Patton et al., 2016; Theron, 2019).

Moreover, in the sub-Saharan Africa, adolescents are exposed to multiple risks which can negatively impact on their identity and well-being. According to prior research, adolescents living in the sub-Saharan African are exposed to poverty, violence, poor education and are vulnerable to contracting communicable diseases (Omigbodun et al., 2017; Ssewanyana et al., 2018). In essence, the ramification of living in such conditions puts the future of the global community and the African community in question (O'Malley et al., 2014; Theron, 2019).

The urgency of the matter also applies to South African adolescents. Numerous risks jeopardise healthy outcomes of growing adolescents, particularly in the unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic. This reality poses unique challenges to South African adolescents from underprivileged backgrounds (Gittings et al., 2021; Lebone, 2012; Mampane, 2012). Nevertheless, despite the importance of this topic, there is a paucity of literature addressing the issue at hand. As a result, there is need to explore the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities.

The current study set out to investigate longitudinal trajectories of identity formation based on the dimensions of identity, according to Luyckx et al. (2008), and to explore the resilience process in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa. To achieve this, the context of the study is unpacked, and the rationale reviewed in this chapter. The theoretical underpinning of the study will be succinctly introduced, followed by a brief discussion of the research methodology. In conclusion, a delineation of the chapters and a chapter outline will be provided.

1.1. Background, Theoretical Rationale and Aim of the Study

Adolescence is a critical period of human development, where individuals are tasked to establish a coherent sense of identity. However, the struggle of transitioning from the childhood world to adolescence comes with multiple challenges. This involves intense weighing of their roles, beliefs, goals, and values as a way of negotiating their place in society. It is important therefore, to explore how social forces and individual attributes contribute to the development of the adolescents and in particular those living in disadvantaged communities (Erikson, 1968; Mampane, 2014; Theron, 2019).

Such disadvantaged settings in a South African context have high rates of violence and crime, with low educational opportunities and income potential. Most adolescents living in such communities are faced with adverse situations such as exposure to poverty, abuse, trauma, multiple forms of violence, and limited access to support structures and social resources (Mampane, 2014; Ndimande, 2009; Romero et al., 2018).

Furthermore, these conditions of hardship have been exacerbated by the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic were especially visible amongst adolescents living in contexts of necessity in South Africa, where they experienced heightened stress over the uncertainty about education, food insecurities and widespread hunger, due to the strict COVID-19 lockdown (Divala et al., 2020; Gittings et al., 2021; Govender et al., 2020). In essence, adolescents had to suffer the burden of the indirect effects of the pandemic. Most importantly to note, are the possible lifelong ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescents' well-being (Divala et al., 2020; Gittings et al., 2021; Govender et al., 2020). Consequently, to achieve healthy psychosocial outcomes, the formation of a healthy identity and resilience is both challenging and important for adolescents living in disadvantaged settings (Gittings et al., 2021; Lebone, 2012; Mampane, 2012; Theron, 2019).

The psychosocial development of adolescents in contemporary society is an intricate process, influenced by a variety of individual, social, and cultural factors (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). This study was embedded in Bronfenbrenner's socioecological systems theory as well as the life span developmental frameworks and specifically focusing on the adolescent stage of development. The socio-ecological theory of developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1992) presents four systemic levels. Individuals generally navigate between the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and the macrosystem and as a result are influenced by processes in the different levels (Konowałek & Wolanczyk, 2018; Pechmann et al., 2020). It is within this broad

framework that experiences of resilience and identity were considered. According to the socio-ecological systems approach, the environment in which adolescents live not only models and shapes them, but it also influences their identity formation process (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; van Rensburg et al., 2015; Brittian, 2012). Focusing on the socio-ecological systems approach of Bronfenbrenner also enables an understanding of the complexity of the person-context transactional processes and the interaction of factors contributing towards resilience in adolescents (Amrhein, 2017; Du & Kim, 2020; Gaias et al., 2018; Liebschutz et al., 2015; van Rensburg et al., 2015). More specifically, the socio-ecological systems approach can shed light in the reciprocal interaction between the contextual challenges experienced by adolescents in disadvantaged communities and the development of agency through identity and resilience trajectories (Masten & Tellegen, 2012; Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018; Zinn et al., 2020).

Additionally, adolescents from disadvantaged communities in South Africa are faced with multiple risks which shape their resilience and well-being. These include conditions of poor education, poverty, crime, and availability of substances. Moreover, adolescents facing hardships are constantly exposed to social, economic and political adversities. In fact, poverty is rife in disadvantaged communities, and adolescents are constantly faced with risk factors that might negatively impact their development (Mampane, 2014; Romero et al., 2018). However, many adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts are endowed with intrinsic qualities and systemic protective factors, thus enabling resilience. For instance, they show agency which is an important personal strength, and seek/receive, support from family, peers and school. Hence, exploring resilience in this population of adolescents illuminates the complex, temporal, culturally relevant factors explaining how and why they cope with risks (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; van Rensburg et al., 2015).

In recent cross-sectional studies, resilience is conceptualised as a dynamic process involving risk and protection and is generally shaped by individual, contextual, and cultural factors. Moreover, resilience in adolescents is regarded as a dynamic process which changes over time (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Masten, 2014). Therefore, in order to account for resilience trajectories in adolescents living in challenging contexts, there is a need for longitudinal studies. These should investigate risk and protective factors, scrutinise the interactions in the process of resilience and explore the trajectories taken towards resilience by adolescents declared at risk in the South African context (Mampane, 2012; van Rensburg et al., 2015).

Mampane (2012) operationalised the resilience construct using the *Resilience Questionnaire for Middle-Adolescents in Township Schools* (*R-MATS*). The *R-MATS* puts in perspective both individual and systemic risk and protective factors. In addition, the author highlights resilience as a dynamic process of interaction between the individual and the environment which mitigates a person's adaptation to adversity and determines one's mental health outcomes (Govender et al., 2017; Mampane, 2012). Hence, in alignment with Mampane (2012), and the socio-ecological systems approach adopted by Bronfenbrenner in 2005, this study conceptualises resilience by considering both individual agency and systemic / structural aspects.

Identity formation is regarded as a developmental pathway involving life-long, long-term processes (Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et al., 2005; Topolewska-Siedzik & Cieciuch, 2019). However, adolescence is the developmental phase where the formation of identity is the salient developmental task (Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et al., 2005). As a result, identity is viewed as a developmental pathway involving life-long, long-term processes fundamental to human development. Researchers acknowledge the existence of continuous changes in identity (Luyckx et al., 2005; Luyckx et al., 2016; Weiten, 2014). Moreover, the process of forming one's identity peaks in adolescence, but also continues for the rest of one's life (Erikson, 1968; Markovitch et al., 2017; Tsang et al., 2012). Hence the process of forming one's identity is a lifetime task which individuals are challenged to resolve in order to achieve a sense of coherence and stability. At every developmental stage, individuals need to constantly weigh their choices and make commitments which give them the direction they need (Crocetti, 2018).

During adolescence, individuals engage in a dynamic process of defining and evaluating their roles, values, and beliefs. This leads to the integration of the sense of self across situations and over time (Erikson, 1968; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2008; Marcia, 1966). Hence, a life span developmental approach with particular focus on the adolescent stage facilitates an understanding of the developmental trajectories of identity formation (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). This approach is particularly valuable as it allows for the exploration of factors contributing/compromising stable adaptive functioning relevant to adolescents in under-resourced areas of South Africa. It assists understanding of the varied behavioural outcomes stemming from the identity formation process (Arrington & Wilson, 2000; Brittian, 2012).

To examine such identity development trajectories, Luyckx et al. (2008) suggested a five-dimensional model. In this model, identity trajectories during adolescence involve *Exploration*

in Breadth, *Commitment Making*, *Ruminative Exploration*, *Exploration in Depth* and *Identification with Commitments* (Luyckx et al., 2008). Extensive research has been done to advance the understanding of identity formation, however, there is need for a comprehensive exploration of the developmental aspects of identity using the five-dimensional approach in adolescents living in disadvantaged areas of South Africa and how it relates to resilience (Brittian, 2012; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Waterman, 2020).

The influence of identity formation in attenuating the impact of adversity in adolescents and promoting the resilience process has been established (Brittian, 2012; Waterman, 2020). Erikson (1968) highlighted the role of a stable identity in providing a clear sense of self-perception, as well as facilitating well-being in adolescents. Moreover, a well-developed identity enables individuals to successfully resolve the identity crisis. This process guarantees the development of a congruent and consistent picture of individuals' values; thus, enhancing the development of resilience (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016). It has been noted that individuals with an achieved identity tend to adjust better when faced with challenges which in turn promotes healthy commitments (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016; Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et al., 2008).

The body of research on identity development has mainly focused on western populations. However, changes in identity formation during adolescence in non-western contexts remain underexplored (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Schwartz et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2012; Skhirtladze et al., 2016; Zimmermann et al., 2013). Hatano and Sugimura (2017) highlight the scarcity of longitudinal design studies on the five-dimensional model in non-western populations. Moreover, studies examining the longitudinal trajectories taken by South African adolescents towards resilience development remain unexplored (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; van Rensburg et al., 2015). In addition, very few studies have utilised a longitudinal design to explore the interaction between identity formation and resilience trajectories.

Thus, the aim of the current study was to examine longitudinal trajectories of identity formation based on Luyckx et al.'s (2008) five-dimensional model, and to explore resilience processes as they pertain to adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa. This included an investigation of the risks and the protective mechanisms important in shaping resilience in this particular population of adolescents.

The following research questions guided this study:

1.1. What are the identity and resilience trajectories of adolescents living in disadvantaged communities?

a) Are there significant differences/changes over time in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) and resilience? (i. e. What is the effect of time on identity and resilience?)
b) Are there significant changes over time in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) for High and Low Resilience groups? (i. e. Does resilience have a significant impact on identity over time?)

2.1. How do adolescents living in disadvantaged communities perceive identity and resilience development processes over time?
   a) What unique individual and systemic risk and protective factors are involved in the formation of identity and resilience?
   b) How do individual and systemic risk and protective factors hinder or contribute to identity and resilience development?

1.2. Overview of the Research Methodology

This study employed an equal weight concurrent mixed methods research approach, with a longitudinal design. Data obtained through the mixed methods research approach was analysed, the findings were integrated, and inferences were drawn using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Stangor, 2015). The integration of both approaches provided a better understanding of the research problem. Moreover, evaluation of the influence of each construct, and exploring participants experiences of identity and resilience over time was made possible through the longitudinal design (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Wang et al., 2017). A longitudinal design was deemed suitable in this particular study, since the aim of this study was to examine longitudinal trajectories of identity formation based on the five-dimensional model of identity development, and to explore resilience as it pertains to adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa. Furthermore, the researcher was able to investigate how the variables influenced each other over the study period (Kearney, 2017; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010).

Given the mixed methods nature of the study, both the quantitative and the qualitative data collection procedures were conducted simultaneously. In this regard, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed to collect the quantitative data (Maree, 2011). In order to guarantee triangulation of methods, and reliability of the data collected, purposive

sampling was used to collect qualitative data from adolescents from high schools located in the Greater Taung Municipality area in the North West Province of South Africa (Babbie, 2010; Bernard, 2013). A nested approach was used in this study in that participants in the quantitative study and who showed interest to take part in the focus group interviews were given the opportunity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The sample for both the quantitative and qualitative procedures was composed of male and female school-going adolescents. Only fully completed surveys were included, and only participants who took part in all the three points of data collection were included in the study.

Data collection for the quantitative procedure used self-report questionnaires, while focus group interviews provided more information about the quantitative tendencies (Baker et al., 2016). Participants', biographic information was obtained using biographic questionnaires (see Appendix A) for both the quantitative and the qualitative procedures. The *Dimensions of Identity Development Scale* (*DIDS*) of Luyckx et al. (2008), was used to operationalise the identity construct. Resilience was measured using the *Resilience Questionnaire for Middle-Adolescents in Township Schools* (*R-MATS*) (Mampane, 2012). To provide depth and breadth in this study, qualitative procedures were included; therefore, a semi structured interview schedule was used to guide the focus group interviews. Participants' experiences of identity and resilience were audio recorded and transcribed in verbatim (see Appendix G).

For the quantitative approach, internal reliability of the *R-MATS* and the *DIDS* was determined by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Central tendencies of obtained quantitative data were illustrated by calculating descriptive statistics, and standard deviations and the means, which are used to describe continuous variables, were calculated. Given the longitudinal nature of the study, repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) allowed the interpretation of associations between the dimensions of identity and resilience across different points in time (Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3) (Juengst et al., 2017; Luyckx et al., 2013). To test whether there were significant differences (changes over time) in the five dimensions of identity and two resilience subscales, repeated measures one-way and two-way ANOVAs were conducted (Allen et al., 2019). Furthermore, to give a complete and corroborated outcome of the research process of data analyses, interpretation and reporting, a reflexive thematic analysis was utilised in the qualitative procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Thus, a hybrid approach of inductive and deductive reflexive thematic analyses were used in generating shared meaning units from the transcribed data over time (see Appendix G) (Braun

& Clarke, 2019, 2022). A recursive and iterative analytical approach involving constant back and forth movement through the data was used to gather shared meaning units from the participants experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022). Emphasis was placed on generating themes based on participants experiences and ensuring that the themes were relevant to the research questions.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of the Free State (see Appendix C), and authorisation to conduct the study in schools was obtained from the Department of Education (see Appendix D) and school principals (see Appendix F). Consent from parents (see Appendix B) and assent from participants (see Appendix B) was provided in writing to maintain the voluntary nature of their participation in the study. All potential risks were examined, and appropriate measures were put in place. Debriefing sessions were made available for all participants (see Appendix E). In addition, confidentiality was adhered to at all times, and all information obtained from participants was securely stored.

1.3. Delineation of Chapters

Chapter 1: The chapter consists of an elaboration of the study, background, rationale and its aim. In addition, the theoretical underpinning of the study is elaborated. This includes looking at Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological systems model and the life span developmental approach as they apply to the South African context. This is followed by a succinct description of the research design, methodology and data analysis. Finally, a short elaboration of ethical principles is provided, followed by the summary of all the chapters in the study.

Chapter 2: The impact on adolescents' development trajectories of living in a deprived environment is examined in this chapter. The theoretical framework for understanding resilience and identity trajectories is described, based on Bronfenbrenner's social ecological systems theory. This is followed by subsections with detailed discussion about *identity* and *resilience* which constructs are defined and conceptualized. The factors influencing adolescents' resilience and identity development are then discussed. Next, the relationship between resilience and identity is described. Finally, a chapter summary that captures the contents of the chapter is given.

Chapter 3: In the third chapter, an overview of the research methodology is discussed in detail stating the research aim and questions. The mixed methods research design is discussed comprehensively, while outlining its advantages and disadvantages. Following that, data

collection and sampling procedures used in this study are presented. Thereafter, a discussion of important ethical issues is given followed by a detailed explanation of the issues of rigor and legitimacy in mixed methods research. The chapter's contents are summarized in a final paragraph.

Chapter 4: In this chapter the quantitative and the qualitative findings of the study are presented. Firstly, the quantitative results are outlined including the descriptive and inferential analyses. Next, the One-way repeated measures ANOVA results and the Two -way repeated measures ANOVA results are presented. The second section entails the qualitative results. Under this, the themes and subthemes generated during focus group interviews are organised in a table format. Thereafter, each of the themes and subthemes are explained in detail, backed up with verbatim quotes from the participants' narratives.

Chapter 5: In the fifth chapter, the results are integrated and discussed. This is done by following the theoretical framework in this study. Firstly, the descriptive statistics are presented and corroborated with qualitative findings. Next, the inferential results are discussed and integrated with qualitative findings. Moreover, the findings are discussed based on the research questions and in relation to the literature review and prior research. Lastly, a discussion of other themes relating only to qualitative results is highlighted.

Chapter 6: Chapter six constitutes the noteworthy findings, limitations and recommendations for future studies. In addition, the conclusion of the study is presented at the end of this chapter.

1.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has orientated the reader with the study aims of investigating and exploring resilience and identity trajectories of adolescents living in disadvantaged communities. Firstly, the study context, theoretical rational and the aim of the study have been provided. Thereafter, the methodology adopted in study has been presented and finally a delineation of all the chapters has been provided. In the next chapter, an in-depth description and discussion of the overarching theoretical model used in this study will be given. In addition, concepts utilised in this study and the theoretical models of identity and resilience will be presented.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The literature review outlines Bronfenbrenner's social ecological systems theory used in understanding resilience and identity trajectories. Subsequently, in each of the subsections an elaboration of identity and resilience is presented. Firstly, the constructs are defined and conceptualised. Then, factors influencing the development of resilience and identity in adolescents are described. Thereafter, the relationship between resilience and identity is highlighted. Finally, a chapter summary capturing the contents of the chapter is provided.

2.1. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Towards Understanding Resilience and Identity Trajectories

This section discusses the theoretical underpinning of the study and focuses on introducing the different systems and highlighting their links with resilience and identity in adolescents living in disadvantaged circumstances. The theoretical framework considered best suited for this study is the social ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) which emphasises the importance of the interrelationship between the individual and their environment. Systems are thus represented by both the individual and the environment, and the nature of interactions taking place between them determines the extent of the impact they have on the developing individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Visser & Moleko, 2012). The construct system in this study refers to the context of development of the adolescent individual which includes home, school, and the community at large. The influence played by the disadvantaging environment on the resilience and identity trajectories is thus considered as multidirectional (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Crocetti et al., 2017; Ungar, 2018). Bronfenbrenner (1979) conceptualised the environment as a set of nested structures starting with the individual and moving towards the socio-cultural and ideological factors from the individuals' context (Salifu Yendork, 2020). The environment consists of different entities in constant and reciprocal interactions, and key to the ecological systems theory is constant interactions within and between the different layers of the structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Visser & Moleko, 2012).

In this section a discussion of the ecological systems theory and how it applies to identity formation and resilience is explored. These systems are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Visser & Moleko, 2012).

2.1.1 The Nested Structures of Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Systems Theory

The microsystem is the immediate environment of the individual, which involves, roles, patterns of activities, and relationships with people of a particular personality, temperament,

and belief systems. This level offers individuals structures with which they can keep direct contacts, and ideally, the individual has an ability to interact with their microenvironment. The relations between the different entities at this level maintain a bidirectional influence (Gaias et al., 2018; Visser & Moleko, 2012). Although similar interactions are expected at all levels, the bidirectional interactions are considered more influential at the microsystems level. This is explained by the fact that the nature of relationships maintained by the developing individuals are firstly dyadic before they can handle simultaneous relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Therefore, the microsystem includes immediate relationships with significant others such as parents, siblings, and extended families. It is also made up of the individuals' surroundings such as, school, religious setting peer groups, and neighbourhoods in which the individual is an active participant (Salifu Yendork, 2020). Researchers have shown the importance of microsystems in enhancing a healthy identity and resilience development in adolescents therefore, it is vital to identify systemic and individual factors which enhance or inhibit the development of adolescents (Koni et al., 2019; Liu & Ngai, 2019; Tsang et al., 2012). For instance, adolescents have shown positive development when they engage in extracurricular activities such as faith-based youth boot camps, academic clubs, sports, and service projects (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017).

The mesosystem is formed by connections between two or more microsystems settings in which the developing individual takes an active role (Leonard, 2011). Interactions between the mesosystems are bidirectional which involves interactions between schools and families, peers and families, and neighbourhoods and families. This produces linkages between individuals' microsystems. For instance, connections between individuals' teachers and parents or individuals' neighbourhoods and the church. In essence, the mesosystem is comprised of interactions between different microsystems. According to Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994), the mesosystem also includes interactions between other structures. For instance, adolescents who are struggling with substance abuse will have their interactions affected at every level. This behaviour can impact the individual, family, peers, school, and the community at large (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011). Thus, an evaluation and integration of mesosystems and the developing individual level factors will further allow an appraisal of their impact on adolescents' identity and resilience development (Liu & Ngai, 2020).

The exosystem is comprised of the interactions and processes happening between two or more settings, and which can influence processes in the individuals' direct setting. At this level,

the individual is not actively involved, but events external to the individual can affect the developing person. The exosystem is unidirectional and involves social systems which influence the individual indirectly (Leonard, 2011). This level consists of social systems such as health care, mass media and individuals' larger community. In addition, family social networks, parent's work, neighbourhood, and community contexts also form part of the exosystem. These systems play an important role in the psychological development of adolescents (Koni et al., 2019; Liu & Ngai, 2020). This is effected through the connection of different external processes taking place in the exosystem, including those occurring the individuals' microsystem and changes taking place in the developing adolescents themselves (Salifu Yendork, 2020).

The macrosystem is the largest of all and exerts a remote influence on the developing individual. This structure is composed of ideologies, belief systems, cultural values, customs, the economy, resources and laws of the nation, which determine how socialisation takes place in each community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Ingalls & Stedman, 2017). It encompasses the micro, meso, and the exosystem, and exerts a unidirectional effect on these systems starting with the individual (Hoffman & Kruczek, 2011; Torres & Santiago, 2018). Thus, the question of identity is fundamental to all humans and adolescents. In this regard, individuals constantly try to define themselves in relation to their society and the broader environment (Ingalls & Stedman, 2017).

Later the chronosystem was included (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Yendork, 2020). Proximal processes which operate over time produce changes in adolescents through the interactions between the individuals and their environment (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner's basic assumption is that the understanding of individuals cannot be done in isolation, but their contexts must be considered. Besides this, occurring events should also be considered in understanding individuals, as they exert influence, even when one is not physically present (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Furthermore, the chronosystem pertains to the changing nature of the environment of the individual and marks important turning points in development. It captures changes and constancies triggered by experiences or life events which affect the operation of all ecosystemic structures (Leonard, 2011). An example of a chronological event is the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic did not only have a plethora of ramifications in the lives of adolescents but also caused some form of imbalance in the different systems (Govender et al.,

2020). Evidence shows that unfavourable experiences or prolonged exposure to adversity impacts negatively on the well-being of individuals (Masten, 2018). Studies done during the hard lockdown in South Africa, report heightened stress, hunger due to food insecurity, and uncertainty regarding education as experienced by adolescents, and which impacted on their well-being. In essence, challenges faced by adolescents living in contexts of hardship was exacerbated by the pandemic. Furthermore, the pandemic restrictions caused distress due to poor access to social services. In addition to being economically disadvantaged, adolescents were rendered helpless and more vulnerable, as their ability to exercise agency during the hard lockdown was limited (Cohen-Scali & Erby, 2021; Gittings et al., 2021; Republic of South Africa, 2021).

In essence, chronosystems denote a time-based aspect influencing the processes of all ecosystemic levels, and which originates either from the environment or within the developing individual (Salifu Yendork, 2020). They also affect the lifespan development of individuals and the major changes taking place over time which influence the identity and resilience trajectories of adolescents (Ingalls & Stedman, 2017; Mampane, 2010).

2.1.2. Individual Agency in Relation to Social Context

Development is regarded as the product of person, context, process, and time. In this regard it is essential to define the role of the individual in their own developmental processes (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). Agentic individuals have the ability to assert themselves, and they feel in control of what is happening in their lives. Many adolescents are driven to overcome incapacitating effects of risk in their environment and to construct a coherent identity. Thus, considering oneself as agentic helps adolescents to manage adolescent stage related challenges. Adolescents who view themselves as agentic are able to take control of events in their life (van Doeselaar et al., 2020).

Adolescents also have the capacity to influence their environment both positively or negatively in that they can show a sense of agency and mastery and self-efficacy (Mampane, 2014; Ungar, 2018). This implies that adolescents are not only influenced by what is happening in their environment but they also influence their environment. Therefore, adolescents have the ability to identify resources from their environment and utilise them for their own well-being (van Breda, 2019). Agency is linked to well-being because regarding oneself as agentic enacts a sense of autonomy, and thus individuals feel competent to strive to match their behaviour with their sense of self (Adler, 2012; Adler et al., 2016; van Doeselaar et al., 2020).

One of the main tasks during adolescence is to explore and commit to certain values, beliefs and goals (Luyckx et al., 2008). In this regard, agency is also associated with the ability to commit to one's roles, values and beliefs. Therefore, adolescents express individual agency in problem-solving as they try to fit into the larger society. Moreover, such, individuals are very goal oriented, motivated to achieve their future aspirations, persistent and make use of their problem-solving skills to deal with hardships. Thus, because they hold expectations about their future, adolescents are steered towards searching for ways to adjust to their environment when faced with adversities (Ungar, 2015; van Rensburg et al., 2018).

Bronfenbrenner (1979), Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) believed that socialisation and the development of individuals is influenced by the active interaction between individuals and their environment. In this respect, using the process-person approach, Bronfenbrenner (1979) showed the importance of individual characteristics and the environment in determining individual developmental outcomes. For instance, psychological traits of the individual such as brain function, general health, emotional and physical characteristics can shape future developmental outcomes, which presupposes that all individuals are active players thus influencing their environment (Yendork, 2020). Bronfenbrenner (2005) was also of the opinion that individuals' past experiences, upbringing, negative and positive occurrences, and one's belief systems influence how they integrate personal experiences and consequently form a sense of self (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

In essence, adolescents interact with social ecologies to steer positive adjustment (Ungar, 2018). These mutual interactions between the individual and the environment help adolescents to access contextually and culturally meaningful resources and opportunities specific to the adolescent stage (Rutter, 2012). Thus, it is important to define adolescence, which is the primary focus of this study and to highlight individual characteristics central to the adolescent stage which interact with one's environment to impact development.

Adolescence is thus a critical developmental period between puberty up to the establishment of social independence, and where individuals are confronted with unique and dynamic developmental tasks (Erikson, 1968; Havighurst, 1972; Luyckx et al., 2008; Steinberg, 2015). Adolescence is a difficult concept to define since it includes so many different facets and has so many different definitions. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that everyone has different experiences during this period, depending on their emotional, cognitive and physical development (Hardman, 2013; Markovitch et al., 2017). Moreover, adolescents living in

diversified and disadvantaged social-ecological environments are challenged by a wide array of needs linked to the developmental task to be achieved (Havighurst, 1972; Sigelman & Rider, 2015).

According to Santrock (2009), adolescence is a distinct developmental period beginning around the age of 11 to 13 and ending between the ages of 17 and 21. Consistent with the (WHO) (2015,2016), adolescence is regarded as the developmental period after childhood but before adulthood, somewhere between 10 and 19 years of age. However, Newman and Newman (2011) see adolescence as a period of human development between 12 and 24 years, with early adolescence between 12 and 18 years and late adolescence between 18 and 24 years. Overall, scholars have noted variations in the age limits of adolescence (Arnett, 2013; Curtis, 2015; Steinberg, 2014; Louw & Louw, 2020).

Therefore, instead of depending solely on chronological age to account for such discrepancies, it would be more fitting to consider social cultural norms and psychological factors. Given that adolescents take a long time to establish their identity and are emotionally and financially dependent on their parents, adolescence can thus be described as the period between 11 and 21 years of age (Curtis, 2015; Steinberg, 2014; Louw & Louw, 2020). In the context of this study, the adolescent period is defined between 10-24 (Allison, 2017; Theron, 2019).

Other than chronological age, adolescence can also be defined using social and biological markers. Thus, it is thus defined as a period starting with puberty when adolescents start experiencing biological maturity (Louw et al., 2007, Steinberg, 2014). From a lifespan developmental perspective, adolescence is one of the phases of the human life cycle, and all adolescents, irrespective of their culture and circumstances, undergo these fundamental changes (Sigelman & Rider, 2015; Steinberg, 2015).

The health and well-being of adolescents is also a global concern according to Patton et al. (2016), and this acutely felt in sub-Saharan Africa and in South Africa in particular. Adolescents form the majority of the population in sub-Saharan Africa (Alison, 2017; Ross et al., 2021). Moreover, a plethora of risks threaten the health and well-being of adolescents. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa and in South Africa in particular, adolescents live in conditions of dire poverty, poor education and exposure to numerous forms of violence, substances, parental separation, and street life (Bonita, 2019; UNICEF, 2011, 2015). Adolescents living under such conditions are generally from a disadvantaged environment which makes the risk

factors complex and threatening to their normal development and well-being (Koni et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2011, 2015).

Besides this, there are several directions that lead to the development of resilience, and which adolescents can choose to follow. This implies that, given the individual differences, they are expected to take different pathways, however, their choices are generally based on the perceptions they have about the importance of one pathway over another. What seems meaningful differs from person to person. Therefore, given the diversity of resilience pathways, the focus should rather be on the functionality of the at-risk adolescents' behaviour and not trying to channel all individuals in paths that presumably will lead to positive adjustment (van Rensburg et al., 2018).

2.1.3. South African Adolescents in Disadvantaged Communities

Adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts are exposed to a number of challenges stemming from political, social and economic difficulties (Mampane, 2014; Ndimande, 2009). Disadvantaged communities are generally considered as high-risk contexts which leaves adolescents vulnerable to poor housing, poverty, high levels of crime, violence, school dropout, teenage pregnancy and domestic violence. Such adolescents struggle to access social services either because they are distant, dysfunctional or non-existent. Inhabitants from disadvantaged areas also suffer from unemployment, and economic inactivity (Byliefeldt, 2019; Felner, 2013).

Demographically, South African adolescents living in disadvantaged communities are faced with political, social, and economic adversities. Poverty is thus a risk factor that can lead to their poor development (Mampane, 2014, Ndimande, 2009; Romero et al., 2018). Moreover, there is a high probability of adolescents who live in rural areas failing to attend school, dropping out of school or having to repeat grades (Fleisch et al., 2012; Romero et al., 2018). Moreover, adolescents living in disadvantaged circumstances, are more likely to miss some years of their study, or be over-aged in relation to class norms, and show a low rate in achievement in their matric (Lam et al., 2011; Theron et al., 2022).

The South African landscape is marked with great inequalities. Most of the country's resources are unequally distributed, and about 80% of wealth is controlled by whites who form 10% of the population. Consequently, the majority of black South Africans live in poverty, unemployment and homelessness (Gradin, 2018). Adolescents growing up in this environment are exposed to a myriad of risks due to social inequality and deprivation. Moreover, socioeconomic stress has a detrimental effect on children and adolescents as it hampers their

development, and growing up in a socio-economically disadvantaged environment damages the sense of safety trust and security. Poverty hits children at their very core because they struggle to access basic needs such as shelter, food and housing; and it has deleterious effects in other areas of life also (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Gradin, 2018; Romero et al., 2018). Poverty is therefore associated with psychosocial vulnerability, and adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts suffer from lower levels of resilience (Cluver et al., 2013; van Breda, 2019).

Furthermore, living in a climate of strained resources is one of the factors contributing to high rates of criminal activity in the country. According to statistics, South Africa has a very high rate of crime by international standards. For instance, between April to June 2021 a total of 145,120 contact crimes and 12,702 sexual offenses were committed, amongst other categories of crimes (Crime Statistics SA, 2021). In the North West province of South Africa, a total of 8, 263 contact crimes were recorded between April to June 2021, and during the same period of time 857 cases of sexual offences were reported (Crime Statistics SA, 2021).

As an example, the Greater Taung Municipality in the North West Province is largely rural; it is inhabited by black South African (98,2%), and about 50% of the population is unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2012). A total of 4,7 % of school attending adolescents are age 20 and above, while 15,7% of matriculants are above the age of 20, and 48,2% of households are female headed. The working age is between 15-64 years which constitutes 56,3% of the North West population (Statistics South Africa, 2012). High levels of poverty, ineffective schools, unemployment, crime and teenage pregnancy are prevalent and all of these impact negatively on the development of adolescents living in disadvantaged communities (Romero et al., 2018).

As a result, adolescents growing up in such a socially and educationally underprivileged environment, are vulnerable to alcohol, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and school dropout. Nevertheless, some adolescents manage to overcome the hardships of their deprived environment and flourish in different areas of life (van Rensburg et al., 2018). In the South African context, and in particular for black South Africans, academic achievement which is an ordinary developmental task in other countries, is of great importance. Beating the odds for adolescents exposed to so many risk factors implies striving to break the cycle of poverty and indicating a resilient trajectory (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Phasha, 2010; van Rensburg et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, while some adolescents succumb to hardships, others manage to overcome them. A minority show growth when going through challenges and manage to rise above those

challenges. Such individuals are regarded as resilient (Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2018). Moreover, adolescents living in disadvantaged conditions develop resilience; they become competent persons and thrive when exposed to adversities and obstacles, provided that they receive adequate support and protection. In this respect, they strengthen their resilience within their environment (Mampane, 2014).

2.2. Resilience

In this section the focus is on defining and conceptualising the construct resilience. Furthermore, important individual and systemic risk factors are highlighted.

2.2.1. Defining and Conceptualising Resilience from a Social Ecological Systems Perspective

According to several authors, resilience processes are complex and multifaceted (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2018; Panter-Brick, 2015). Therefore, to fully understand resilience pathways, the construct must be conceptualised as the transaction or relationship between individuals and their environment (Chuang et al., 2018, Masten, 2018, Mampane, 2014; van Rensburg et al., 2018). Besides this, according to the social ecological systems model of resilience, researchers can fully understand resilience processes if they pay attention to the quality and the type of social ecological supports afforded to at-risk adolescents. In this context, resilience is conceptualised as a collaborative process between the environment and adolescents (Mampane, 2012; Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2016; Masten, 2018; Ungar, 2011; Ungar, 2018). This implies that, social ecologies should contribute positively to the development of resilience by offering adolescents resources and opportunities which consider the contextual and cultural aspects of individuals at risk. In addition, adolescents' ability to seek support to overcome hardships is also important in the understanding of resilience as a collaboration between individuals and their social ecologies (Mampane, 2012; Rutter, 2012; Ungar, 2015; Ungar, 2018).

Furthermore, resilience is also regarded as a dynamic concept, therefore its processes are expected to change over time and differ across context, groups, and persons (van Breda, 2019). In nature, resilience is flexible and is affected by several factors, and in this respect, the resilience process in adolescents can be impacted by exposure to different or new contacts. Likewise, meaningful resources and changing relationships all have the potential to influence resilience processes, because individuals tend to transact differently with different social ecologies (Mampane, 2012; van Rensburg et al., 2018).

The construct resilience has been defined differently by several authors. Firstly, it is people's capacity to overcome hardships based on their personality traits, genetic predispositions, and skills (Lerner et al., 2013; Masten, 2011). This view leads researchers to focus on the differences between non-resilient and resilient people. However, other authors define it as a dynamic process between individuals and their environment in their quest to have access and to use resources which promote resilience (Masten, 2018). Moreover, it is also viewed as the capacity to proactively engage oneself in overcoming challenges and hardships through a supportive socioecological environment (Mampane, 2012; Mampane, 2014).

Resilience is also the process whereby individuals manage to adapt well and respond appropriately when faced with adversity, tragedy, and other significant sources of stress (American Psychological Association (APA), 2014). It is further regarded as the capacity to bounce back despite challenges and hardships which involves a complex and dynamic interactional process between the individual and their social ecological environment (van Rensburg et al., 2018). In essence, resilience has both a personal and a contextual component (Mampane, 2012; Mampane, 2014). This is elaborated on in the next section.

2.2.2. Individual and Systemic Risks and Protective Factors

There are several factors contributing to the development of resilience. These include individual and environmental factors (Mampane, 2012). Besides, stress factors do not on their own determine whether individuals are resilient or not. More importantly, severity of the stress, and availability of social resources may account for resilience in adolescents (Goel et al., 2014). It thus important to note that both nature and nurture must be considered as they interact contributing to resiliency development. It has been established that resiliency is acquired through a process of development and not inherited trait. Therefore, the process depends on availability of support, the individual's qualities, and their interactions (Caram, 2012; Loyola, 2014).

2.2.2.1 Individual Characteristics and Resilience. Adolescents have inbuilt abilities to overcome adversity. In fact, these abilities and individual strengths work together to contribute to the resiliency of the adolescent and the resilience process draws on individual resources such as personal agency (Theron, 2019). This implies that adolescents have the capacity to exercise personal agency when faced with challenges. However, drawing too much on personal resources can lead to harm, such as impaired physical and emotional health (Brody et al., 2013; Theron, 2019). Therefore, to facilitate optimal adolescent development and successful

adaptation, greater attention should be placed on other systems in order to preserve their well-being. This applies mostly to adolescents living in situations of chronic stressors such as poverty (Mampane, 2012; Masten, 2016; Theron, 2019; Ungar, 2018).

At risk adolescents use adaptive distancing to separate themselves psychologically or physically from the risk factors they are exposed to. This involves drifting away from dysfunctional parenting and toxic friendships. Those who are exposed to dysfunctional environments would seek healthy role models and keep busy with constructive activities and hobbies. In that way these adolescents achieve a sense of self-worth, competence and identity and feelings of belonging (Loyola, 2014).

Moreover, cognitive abilities such as awareness and acceptance, problem-solving, and a sense of direction have been found vital to the development of resilience in adolescents. Thus, adolescents who can comprehend and acknowledge situations as they are, gain a sense of awareness which in turn leads to better judgement, openness to learning and flexibility. Equipped with such qualities, such adolescents are enabled to overcome the hardships they encounter (Turliuc et al., 2015).

In addition, problem-solving skilled adolescents can find alternative solutions to problems. Those endowed with such capacity, although faced with challenges, can manage to handle both their internal and environmental demands. As a result, resilient adolescents are characterised by their ability to think of ways to deal with adversity (Loyola, 2014). Equally important is the sense of direction because adolescents who are goal directed remain focused. Pondering on one's expectations about the future, reflecting on one's dreams keeps them oriented to constructive decisions and in turn enables them to survive well in the face of adversities. Consequently, a sense of agency, a sense of future, social intelligence, community connection, morality and connection to spirituality are attributes in facilitating resilience in individuals (Turliuc et al., 2015).

Locus of control implies that individuals have a sense of control and feel in charge of their lives and their future. However, one must distinguish between an internal and external sense of control (Mampane, 2014). Individuals with an internal sense of control are believed to have charge over the outcome of their life events. On the other hand, those with an external locus of control believe that their lives are controlled by external forces. However, having an internal sense of control also contribute to resiliency since people can control their destiny (Mampane, 2014). Thus, adolescents who take charge of their lives are unlikely to succumb to learned

helplessness. This, according to Peterson and Seligman (1983), is defined as the maladaptive passivity and emotional numbing which follows victimisation. It is mostly induced by repeated failed attempts to overcome adversity and challenges. Therefore, individuals with this mental state believe that the outcome of their future is out of control (Loyola, 2014).

Ego control and self-control involves evaluating and monitoring oneself on a regular basis and reflecting upon one's response to the situations in which one finds oneself. Ego control is seen as a predictor of resilience, since adolescents adopt a rational and controlled way of interacting with their environment in ways that are adaptive (Nieuwenhuis et al., 2015).

Resilience is a process to which both the adolescent and their socioecology are intricately linked, which implies that adolescents draw upon ecological resources to facilitate the resilience process. To optimise resilience in adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds, less emphasis has to be placed on individual determinants of resilience (Masten, 2016; Theron, 2019; Ungar, 2018). Therefore, when individuals are exposed to risk factors, their ability to overcome those challenges is determined by the interplay of protective factors, including individual traits, family environment and the social contexts (Bonita, 2019; Mampane, 2012). More attention should be focused on capacitating adolescents by putting up initiatives and advocating for proper care and support for those at risk (Ungar,2012, 2017). This will alleviate the need to put expectations on adolescents and focus on what their social ecologies can offer to enable positive adaptation when faced with hardships. Consequently, although adolescents' capacity to overcome threatening situations is important, the role played by social ecologies is considered central to the resilience process (van Rensburg, 2018).

Furthermore, the impact of protective factors on adolescence varies and depends on the unique characteristics of individuals and the stressors they are facing (Ungar, 2017, 2018). For instance, higher risk levels might be more likely to involve social resources rather than psychological resources. In this regard, tailor made interventions addressing adolescents' resilience issues should consider differentially impactful resilience enablers (Theron, 2019).

Nevertheless, resilience can be hampered when adolescents are faced with challenging social ecologies such as ineffective school and violent community, negative life events which include death of a parent/loved one/caregiver. Also influential are sociodemographic risks, for example growing up in a single parent, impoverished family in a violent community and biological vulnerabilities such as genetic predisposition (Nakanishi et al., 2019).

The environment in which adolescents grow in can impact on their resiliency (Mampane, 2012). In this regard, it has been proved that social support structures enhance the quality of life. Moreover, peers, parents, relatives, siblings, teachers, social workers, friends, and other significant adults are considered as support structures which adolescents need to develop their resiliency. Therefore, a wide network of social support is deemed as a buffer against adversity (Loyola, 2014).

2.2.2.2. The Peer Environment and Resilience. Peers are regarded as one of the main influencers of the adolescent's behaviour (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). Adolescents build relationships with their peers through common activities, shared experiences in the real world, and virtual places as well as at school or in their neighbourhoods. Deep attachment to peers provides emotional support and a sense of belongingness which is an important source of resilience for them (Nagi et al., 2021). Peer attachment can be a protective factor positively influencing mental health outcomes of individuals (Oldfield et al., 2015). During adolescence, individuals enjoy a sense of autonomy and are less dependent on their parents. Therefore, they tend to approach peers in times of challenges because they consider them as secure bases for emotional support (Zeifman & Hazan, 2008; Oldfield et al., 2018). Moreover, poor attachment to peers is linked to high levels of conduct problems for instance, bullying. Adolescents with poor peer attachment show emotional difficulties as they struggle with low self-esteem and moodiness (Burton et al., 2012; Gorrese & Andrisano-Ruggieri, 2013).

On the contrary, adolescents with positive peer relationships show better psychological adjustment (Oliva et al., 2014; Haddow et al., 2021). Researchers have underlined the fact that positive peer relations can contribute to resilience. Adolescents in distress tend to show resilience when they are provided with role models to identify with and positive peer relations (Turliuc et al., 2015). Additionally, research carried out on marginalised adolescents from South Africa illustrated the importance of prosocial peers in protecting adolescents from sexual risk-taking behaviours (Hodder et al., 2018). Social connections with caring peers provide a support system to adolescents which gives them experiences of mattering and belonging. Quite often, peers take the role of social parents, because in many cases, African adolescents' connections tend to transcend formal ties (Motsamai, 2018, Theron, 2016; Van den Berg & Makusha, 2018). In fact, adolescents living in conditions of poverty testify that their connection to peers who are supportive, and offer safe conversational spaces, comfort, advice, and love enable resilience (Theron, 2019).

Adolescents' longitudinal resilience and capacity to overcome hardships over time is related to social support especially from friends and peers. Moreover, adolescents living in high-risk environment feel protected by prosocial friendships from peers (Collishaw et al., 2016). Further research has unveiled the importance of having peers who are experiencing similar challenges as they contribute to the adolescent's resilience. In situations where adolescents find themselves as heads of families, in orphanages, on the street or caring for the frail elderly, the need for support of peers is more accentuated. In many of these cases, adolescents have little or no access to supportive adults therefore they count on reciprocal peer bonds (Block, 2016). Peers foster their resilience as they become their network of support. Adolescents belonging to peer support networks benefit from mentorship, have access to resources, and get help with schoolwork, house chores, and emotional comfort (Skovdal & Ogutu, 2012; Theron, 2019).

However, some inconsistencies in literature show that adolescents with strong peer connections and poor attachment to parents, more especially those living in high risk environments, tend to experience negative outcomes. The peer environment can thus positively or negatively influence adolescents (Oldfield et al., 2018). For instance, in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities in South Africa, peers are not always associated with prosocial behaviours. Such peer groups tend to be disrespectful towards fellow learners and teachers and disregard school engagement (Maarman & Lamont-Mbawuli, 2017; Theron et al., 2022).

Peer delinquency is associated with behavioural problems. Hence, adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts, are more likely to be involved in antisocial, criminal and gangster type of acts than their peers in less disadvantaged settings. Bad peer influence is also considered to significantly impact emotional adjustment (Du & Kim, 2020; Oliva et al., 2014). Adolescents exposed to a negative peer environment tend to emulate destructive behaviours, whereas those exposed to positive peer environments acquire skills relevant to their adolescent tasks and roles. Some adolescents associate themselves with peers who are delinquent, antisocial, criminal and gangsters, and are vulnerable to the possibility of becoming victims or perpetrators of violent behaviour (SACE, 2011). According to research, most South African adolescents experience or are exposed to violence perpetrated by peers which includes, physical bullying, cyber-bullying, and sexual violence (Burton & Leoschut, 2013). Peers are also regarded as sources of vulnerabilities in individuals; for instance, peers who verbally abuse each other could cause psychological distress for the victims (Salifu Yendork, 2020; Yendork & Somhlaba, 2015).

Adolescents tend to compensate poor relationships with their parents by seeking support from peers. Nevertheless, if adolescents lack self-confidence and skills to positively engage with peers, they tend to gravitate towards making friends with deviant peers. Hence, poor attachment to parents makes adolescents susceptible to the bad influences of peers. Thus, peers have more power over individuals who lack parental support. In this regard, peer relationships can be an obstacle to resilience because of their poor attachment with parents and poverty (Oldfield et al., 2018). Clearly, it is important to highlight how family factors shape the adolescent resilience process (Ratele et al., 2018).

2.2.2.3. The Family Environment and Resilience. Resilience processes are located at different levels of the system, for example, the family environment plays a significant role in protecting adolescents from involving themselves in risky behaviours. In addition, families are regarded as vital sources of resilience for adolescents (Walsh, 2007). According to attachment theory, parental support stemming from healthy parent child relationships strengthens adolescents' ability to overcome hardships (Masten et al., 2011). Therefore, the quality of connection adolescents form with their care givers is considered as paramount to their mental health outcomes. Moreover, for adolescents growing up in a high-risk environment, having a stable family mitigates risks and enables individuals to overcome these challenges (Oldfield et al., 2018; Werner, 2013).

Families not only function as sources of resilience for adolescents, but they are also regarded as resilient systems. Looking at South African families for instance, it is noteworthy that most families are nuclear and extended. A total of 28.6% of all nuclear families and 49.9% of all extended families are headed by women (Ratele & Nduna, 2018). The absence of fathers from many households is explained by migration because of employment, death, undisclosed, unknown, contested, conjugal obstacles, denied fatherhood and obstructed access (Amoateng et al., 2017; Block, 2016; Padi et al., 2014). Therefore, women, who can be grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, girlfriends, female teachers, and social workers have been recognised as the main promoters of resilience in adolescents. Adolescents bond with these family figures, knitting a close connection with them. They get support and they can have access to different resources. Thus, adolescents experience a sense of belonging and comfort provided by their family. As a result, adolescents getting emotional support, especially from their mothers gain the strength to adapt when faced with adverse situations (Theron, 2019; Nagi et al., 2021).

Family is regarded as a protective factor because it offers adolescents an environment which fosters a sense of security (Caram, 2012; Nagi et al., 2021). Resilience is also fostered by a good relationship with parents and siblings and members of an extended family. Such emotional bonding in families leads to resilient adolescents because they find inspiration and reasons for the challenges they go through. Families who provide support on all levels to their children, arm them with qualities that protect them when exposed to challenges. Subsequently, family strengths such as communication, cohesion, ritual, problem-solving, spirituality and values, boundaries, affective responsiveness, flexibility, hierarchies, social support, coherence and autonomy all contribute to resilience (Turliuc et al., 2015). Thus, siblings play a protective role by providing social support, and warm family interactions, and a sane home environment, and family resilience are factors that promote behavioural resilience (Bowes et al., 2010).

Parenting styles and practices have also been associated with resilience. For instance, supportive, child centred, and warm parenting styles are linked to resilience development (Howell et al., 2010). Generally, families provide a space where adolescents adapt and manage their day to day issues. Consequently, the importance of family support in terms of adaptation and emotional well-being cannot be overstated (Howell et al., 2010; Nagi et al., 2021).

Parental attachment can also be considered as a potential risk factor in the development of adolescents because difficult relationships with caregivers have profound consequences on well-being. Insecure attachments between caregivers and adolescents are linked to behavioural problems and severe emotional adjustments (Kochanska & Kim, 2013; Oldfield et al., 2018). Therefore, violent parenting, involving physical abuse and emotional abuse can put adolescents' well-being in jeopardy. Dysfunctional families serve as risk factors when they raise the vulnerability of their members. Some of these risks are single-parent households, illness of parents, family's poverty, parents' mental illness, domestic violence, marital conflicts, criminal family activities. Other risks are foster placement, imprisonment of parents, death of grandparents or parents, emotional, physical or sexual abuse or divorce (Das, 2010; Turliuc et al., 2015). Thus, poor support from parents results in deficient emotional adjustment. Adolescents experiencing poor support from parents, even if they have good peer support tend to have severe emotional problems. Also, adolescents tend to demonstrate higher externalising problems when they perceive low parental support (Oldfield et al., 2018).

Furthermore, adolescents from poor families are more likely to experience financial pressure, and food insecurity. Moreover, family poverty has ramifications on school

progression and school attendance in South Africa. Overaged and dropout adolescents are likely to be living in poor families, overcrowded households, or from low parental education attainment (Branson et al., 2014; Romero et al., 2018).

2.2.2.4. The School Environment and Resilience. School connectedness is regarded as a protective factor especially in adolescents from high risk environments. Feeling part of the school environment and enjoying good relationships with peers and teachers promotes a sense of belongingness in adolescents from disadvantaged contexts (Govender et al., 2013). Moreover, feelings of connectedness to one's school give adolescents a sense of direction and builds their self-esteem. School serves as a protective shield for adolescents going through adverse situations and provides a buffer against the influence of delinquent peers. Therefore, having a good relationship with peers, teachers, and commitment to academic achievement protects adolescents from deviant peers. Thus, adolescents experiencing strong bonds with their school show resilience in dealing with hardships. They feel protected against violence and involvement in substance use (Martinez et al., 2016; Oldfield et al., 2018).

Consequently, schools play a major role in resilience development and are regarded as vital in the life of young people (Masten, 2014). School-going adolescents spend much of their time in school and see it as a safe haven (Theron, 2016). This is because such adolescents find people who care about them and who can to some extent fill their emotional void by establishing a healthy emotional relationship with teachers and peers (Mampane, 2014; Themane & Osher, 2014).

Schools are known for their role to promote the holistic development of learners because they offer great opportunities for growth which facilitate development. Schools also serve as places where communities and learners find support and care (Garibaldi, 2014). They are regarded as a place of safety as they provide both emotional and physical protection. School attending adolescents are offered challenges which foster positive interactions with peers and adults. They develop a sense of agency, self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, social competence, sense of purpose, achievement motivation and attain leadership competencies. Moreover, they can grow their social network, and have access to mental health support (Mampane, 2014; van Breda, 2019).

Teachers have also been champions of resilience in many ways especially in rural and structurally disadvantaged contexts (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Mampane & Bower, 2011). For instance, teachers listen to and provide guidance to learners with the aim of promoting

emotional and social competency. They also work together with students, encouraging their self-esteem which helps them to be resilient when faced with challenges. In addition, teachers inspire hope for a bright future as they are role models for succeeding against all odds. Inevitably, such socio-emotional support fosters resilience in adolescents facing challenges (Turliuc et al., 2015). For teachers to achieve the mentioned strategies enabling resilience in adolescents, they are called to actively involve themselves and reach out for vulnerable and at-risk adolescents (Jefferis & Theron, 2017).

Moreover, to ensure a better future for adolescents facing adversities and who are structurally disadvantaged, teachers are called to advocate for a change in the landscape of education. Adolescents who have such access to a good quality of basic education can achieve their goals and overcome adversities. In this context, teachers should be used to communicate with adolescents, giving them constructive feedback, consistent and achievable expectations, thus, enabling the mastery of skills. Indeed, this has a direct impact on their self-worth and eventually their resilience (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Turliuc et al., 2015). In essence adolescents attending effective schools feel confident of attaining social skills and feel secure from emotional and physical toxicities (Themane & Osher, 2014). School factors also have the potential to protect and build resilience because they allow adolescents to get involved in activities that foster positive development. For instance, school-going adolescents experience positive social connections, boosted social skills, identity and academic achievement which protects them against risk (Martinez et al., 2016).

Nevertheless, some schools do fail to offer opportunities for growth and personal development, and they contribute to the problem of adolescents externalising and internalising problems (Hendron & Kearney, 2016). Thus, some schools present as risk factors to learners exposing them to emotional and physical abuse, alienation, boredom, bullying, academic frustration, humiliation, gangs, harsh punishment, and failure (Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2014; Osher et al., 2014). Other issues that indirectly impact their well-being relate to lack of learning resources, poor management of schools and a poor culture of teaching. This consequently heightens the effects of risk on adolescents (Mampane, 2014).

South African state schools are classified in a quintile system which is determined by the socio-economic status of the community. Schools in poor communities are put under low quintiles whereas schools in rich communities have higher quintile ratings. Adolescents from poor communities are more likely to attend low quintile schools with scanty resources. Such

adolescents are at risk of poor academic achievement, slow progression, and school delay due to large numbers of learners, poor infrastructure, a low teacher-learner ratio and a rural location (Branson et al., 2014; Winnaar et al., 2015; Romero et al., 2018). Adolescents from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are at greater risk of dropping out of school in South Africa. Moreover, black adolescents tend to be more vulnerable to repeating grates, show low competitiveness, and also tend to show higher rates of absenteeism (Romero et al., 2018).

2.2.2.5. The Community Environment and Resilience. Across the world, children and adolescents are exposed to community violence and South Africa is no exemption. Between April and June 2021, the total number of contact crimes reported to the South African Police across the country was 145,120 and the total number of reported sexual offenses was 12,702. (Crime Statistics SA, 2021). This indicates that South African children and adolescents are frequently exposed to violence and crime. The ongoing exposure to violence in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities, has been associated with rising rates of misconduct, substance abuse and delinquency which impact on the well-being of individuals in the long run (Ward et al., 2007).

Moreover, most socioeconomically disadvantaged communities report high rates of unemployment, poverty, crime, ineffective schools, and teenage pregnancies. Thus, the well-being of adolescents living in this environment is threatened by multiple risks. Delinquent and substance abusing adolescents are at risk of being involved in or exposed to violence in such communities because of the high levels of contextual risks (Booysen, 2012; Mampane, 2014).

The reality is that people show different responses to hardships. This could mean that resilient enabling factors from the individuals' environment and social ecological stakeholders' involvement in the resilience development process contribute enormously to the development of resilience (Ungar, 2015). Therefore, understanding the contextual, developmental and sociocultural influences on the resilience process in adolescents contributes to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Panter-Brick, 2015; Ungar, 2011).

In many African contexts, cultural values, beliefs, language, and customs influence the process of resilience by shaping adolescents' perception of the importance of resources put at their disposal (Panter-Brick, 2015). This means that positive adjustments are facilitated by the underlying resilience processes which differs from culture to culture. For example, in some cultures, emphasis is placed on collective practices and beliefs, where individuals are considered as part of the bigger community. Individual self-actualisation is facilitated by the

larger community; hence, raising children is a collective affair. Also, an emphasis is put on religious values such as forgiveness and prayer. Therefore, in essence, adolescents' resilience processes are influenced by the culture in which they live (Theron et al., 2013). As a result, resilience processes are not linear, but they are complex, culturally informed, and consist of flexible interactions between the individual and the environment (Lerner et al., 2013; Masten, 2016; van Rensburg et al., 2018).

Moreover, according to the social ecological systems approach proposed by Ungar (2012), more weight should be placed on the individuals' physical and social ecologies rather than on the adolescents' inbuilt capacity to overcome adversities. Adolescents living in social ecologies with chronic stressors such as poverty tend to suffer from ill-health which jeopardises their well-being, since they must rely heavily on their personal resources rather than on their social ecologies to enable their optimal development (Theron, 2019).

However, adolescents of African descent, in general value cultural interdependence. In this regard, adolescents living in poverty-stricken areas are able to make connections with caring adults and peers who provide them with a sense of belonging. Support received such as advice, love, comfort, safe conversational space, and access to resources, enable resilience (Nieuwenhuis et al., 2015; Theron, 2016; Theron, 2019).

2.3. Identity

The focus of this section is on defining and conceptualising the construct identity. This will be followed by a succinct discussion of the main theories involved in identity formation. Finally, the socioecological perspective on identity formation will be explored.

2.3.1. Defining and Conceptualising Identity from a Lifespan Developmental Perspective

Identity formation is a critical task for adolescents to achieve clarity about their roles, values, and beliefs. During adolescence, individuals scrutinise their self-understanding, values, goals, beliefs, and purpose in life (Erikson, 1968; Havighurst, 1972; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Swartz et al., 2011). Thus, achieving a coherent, clear, and stable identity, implies committing to a specific direction in life, which in turn provides individuals with meaning and purpose thus attenuating behavioural problems (Chen & Yao, 2010; Klimstra & van Doeselaar, 2017; Schwartz & Petrova, 2018).

According to Erikson (1968), identity formation is conceptualised in a series of stages throughout human development, which culminate in the period of adolescence. Therefore, the main task in resolving the identity crisis is to find a balance between a chosen identity and

identity confusion. Successful resolution of the crisis leads to the formation of a coherent sense of identity which provides adolescents with a sense of direction (Crocetti, 2017; Erikson, 1968).

Marcia (1966) conceptualised identity formation, as a combination of exploration and commitment dimensions, created with the aim of representing adolescents' coping styles, in their quest to resolve identity crises (Crocetti, 2017). Marcia's identity formation process is represented by four identity statuses, which are based on how much the individual is exploring and committing to goals, values, and beliefs (Marcia, 1966). However, what Marcia failed to capture is the back-and-forth changing processes during identity formation as experienced by adolescents. In fact, Erikson insists on defining identity as a lifelong process (Crocetti, 2017).

As such, by focusing on process-oriented models, identity formation can be defined as an iterative process during which adolescents decide upon options and commit to given decisions after completing a process of exploration, whereby these commitments are subject to constant revision (Crocetti, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2008). This renders identity formation a dynamic process (Luyckx et al., 2008).

Identity formation is regarded as a developmental pathway involving life-long, long-term processes, core to the evolution of human development (Luyckx et al., 2013; Luyckx et al., 2016; Weiten, 2014). The process of constructing one's identity culminates during adolescence, but also continues throughout other developmental stages (Erikson, 1968; Markovitch et al., 2017; Tsang et al., 2012). During this phase, individuals experience major changes in their perception of self and self- image. Such changes occur throughout one's lifetime, however, more focus is placed upon adolescence, not only because it is a period where significant changes in physical, cognitive, and social domains all occur together, but also because adolescents tend to be extra self-conscious and experience the changes more acutely (Brittian, 2012; Marcia, 1980; Weiten, 2015).

Adolescents acquire the intellectual capacity to understand the significance of such changes. Moreover, changes in intellectual capacity bring about new ways of thinking about values, relationships and problem-solving. This in turn leads to the important restructuring and reorganisation of the adolescents' self-perception. Individuals develop new ways of perceiving themselves, thus identity formation is provoked by all the changes adolescents undergo which are triggered by puberty (Brittian, 2012). Moreover, the rapid external changes taking place during adolescence, lead to questioning about changes happening within individuals. For

example, physical changes may lead to shifts in self-image and constant evaluation of the self (Steinberg, 2015).

The development of hypothetical thinking during adolescence contributes to identity formation because adolescents are able to picture many diverse identities, which they could adopt. This has been linked to the intensified self-consciousness attributed to early adolescence (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). During adolescence, individuals acquire the ability to consider the long-term effects of decisions they have taken and are able to consider their future. This is the reason why people begin to question themselves about who they are, who they want to become, what they like and what their career aspirations are (Erikson, 1968). The result of these cognitive changes in the adolescent opens many alternatives (Harter, 2011).

Besides all this, the shifts in social roles taking place during adolescence open a myriad of decisions and choices which previously were of less concern (Steinberg, 2015). In the contemporary world, adolescence is considered a crucial time, where individuals make important decisions regarding relationships, careers, schoolwork, and the future. Such decisions cause adolescents to re-evaluate their place in society, by questioning who they are, what they really want in their lives and the kind of person they really want to become. Indeed, these enquiries about the adolescents' future raise questions about identity formation, and how they address them has a bearing on their identity (Crocetti, 2017; Tsang et al., 2012).

2.3.1. Theories of Identity Formation

Many theorists have emphasised the formation of a coherent sense of identity by trying to answer questions related to the sense of who individuals are, where they come from and where they are going (Erikson, 1968; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Marcia, 1966). Answering such questions, involves discussion about developing a sense of purpose as well as clarifying one's long-term goals, values, plans and the gradual knowledge of self as well as the direction of one's life (Luyckx et al., 2008; Marcia, 1966). The following seminal works on identity formation will be considered in this study:

2.3.1.1. Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory. According to Erikson (1968), the formation of identity follows a human developmental course. In this regard, identity formation entails replacing childhood practices with more refined processes which are subject to social evaluation. Moreover, Erikson (1968) underscores the indispensable role of identity achievement in the development of personality (Erikson, 1968; Kroger & Marcia, 2011). Therefore, according to Erikson, identity formation entails the development of a strong sense of self-perception coupled with clear goals for the future. As a result, identity is achieved through the processes of exploration, by questioning one's values, beliefs, goals, and finally committing to a particular lifestyle (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016; Crocetti et al., 2013b).

Erikson's psychosocial stages of development cut across the course of the human life span, with special emphasis placed upon a series of crises, through which every individual must navigate. Successfully mastering each crisis during any given period creates a healthy basis for the next phase. Although identity formation takes place throughout the life span, it is intensely formed during the period of adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Sica et al., 2016). Therefore, as stated by Erikson (1968), identity vs. identity diffusion, is regarded as the main psychological crisis though which adolescents pass to achieve a coherent sense of identity. During this phase, individuals are forced to consider their roles in society, due to increased social forces and maturation processes. This includes the way they are viewed by others, and their options for the future (Crocetti, 2017; Erikson, 1968; Sica et al., 2016). Erikson claims that the successful resolution of the identity crisis, leads to the formation of a cohesive and congruent identity (Syed & Mclean, 2016).

In his theory, Erikson mentions that achieving a coherent and balanced sense of identity is both an emotionally and intellectually demanding process (Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et al., 2008). Thus, according to Erikson (1968), it is not until adolescence, that individuals acquire the emotional and mental capacity, to tackle this task. In addition, adolescents' interactions with significant others, are indispensable in resolving the identity vs. identity diffusion crisis. This gives adolescents the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour, by using other peoples' reactions as a mirror (Crocetti et al., 2013b; Crocetti, 2017). Moreover, adolescents achieve a coherent sense of identity when they learn from the experiences of individuals who matter in their lives. Therefore, according to Erikson's approach, the role of others in the formation of identity during adolescence carries a lot of weight. Adolescents' identity formation is thus a result of the interaction between the individual and society (Erikson, 1968).

The psychosocial theory of Erikson consists of eight stages which all individuals must go through during their lifetime (Erikson, 1968; Weiten, 2014). When individuals successfully complete a particular stage, they attain what Erikson (1968) terms as virtues. The eight stages of psychosocial development are presented in two conflicting polarities, and individuals are expected to learn how to balance both poles during each stage. This resolves their tension and enables them to achieve the optimal virtue for that phase of development. A coherent identity is thus, attained when individuals review the values and goals set by their culture or parents, integrating some and discarding others (Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et al., 2008). However, failure to achieve coherent identity throws adolescents into an identity crisis (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016).

The above analysis shows that Erikson understands identity in terms of identity crisis and identity synthesis. Identity crisis denotes an unstable, fragmented, confused sense of self, whereas identity synthesis denotes a clear and coherent sense of self across time and throughout differing situations (Erikson, 1968; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). Erikson's theory has however been criticised for lacking detail and precision. Therefore, Marcia operationalised Erikson's ideas on identity formation, to allow for empirical studies (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016; Luyckx et al., 2008). This is described below.

2.3.1.2. Marcia's Theory on Identity Statuses. Adolescents develop a synthesised sense of identity, by consciously seeking out relevant values, goals and beliefs and making firm decisions in this regard (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). Marcia (1966) proposed identity status as a way of operationalising identity formation (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016). The idea was to capture individuals' differences on how they approach and resolve identity related questions at any given point of their life span (Luyckx et al., 2008). Marcia (1966) stated that adolescence is a period when individuals experience life changing crisis as they need to make important choices.

Marcia's (1966) approach to identity formation, was based on two identity processes of exploration and commitment. Exploration entails a process of actively questioning and considering several identity options before making a commitment to the pursuit of specific beliefs, values, and aspirations. Commitment involves making firm decisions and choices about different identity domains and active involvement in the implementation of the significant choices and decisions made. Four identity statuses (commitment, foreclosure, moratorium, and diffusion) are formed by the crossing of the two identity processes of exploration and commitment. Diffusion is considered an immature state of identity formation, whereas achievement is attained after a rigorous process of exploration, leading to committing to one's

goals, values, and beliefs (Luyckx et al., 2008; Meeus, 2011). Foreclosure on the other hand, implies committing without questioning, searching, or considering other alternatives, whereas moratorium involves the continuous exploration of life's alternatives, without ever settling upon any specific decision (Pinquart & Pfeiffer, 2013; Sigelman & Rider, 2015).

Individuals who have developed a strong sense of self tend be healthier by committing themselves to motivation, intimacy with peers, moral reasoning, and career maturity. On the other hand, failure to achieve a coherent identity places adolescents in a state of confusion and reveals a disconnection from a sense of self (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016; Crocetti, 2017). Thus, adolescents who are in their moratorium status reveal high anxiety, conflicts over authority and can be easily manipulated. Foreclosed adolescents have been identified as needing social approval and show low levels of autonomy, tending to be closer to their caregivers. However, individuals in a diffused state of identity, show high levels of interpersonal and psychological uncertainty whereby they tend to withdraw themselves from intimacy with their peers (Meeus, 2011).

Marcia's model of identity development hypothesised that adolescents go through a linear process to achieve a coherent identity. In this regard, individuals would move from diffusion to foreclosure, to moratorium and then to achievement (Kroger et al., 2010; Marcia 1966). In addition, individuals in foreclosure and achievement identity statuses are more likely to experience positive psychological well-being, whereas individuals experiencing diffusion and moratorium may be prone to psychological problems (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Kroger et al., 2010). However, Marcia's (1966) approach to identity formation has been criticized as being static and narrow. Moreover, according to previous studies, there is an agreement that identity development does not follow a particular trajectory due to individual differences. In addition, due to challenges imposed by modern society, adolescents tend to constantly question and re-evaluate their choices, confirming that identity formation is not a once-off event but rather a circular process (Luyckx et al., 2008; Crocetti, 2017).

2.3.1.3. Berzonsky's Identity Processing Style Theory. According to Berzonsky et al. (2007), identity style is defined as the social-cognitive processes and strategies used by individuals to make identity related decisions and commitments (Markovitch et al., 2017). Based on Berzonsky's (1989) model of approaching life decisions, three other ways of dealing with identity formation crisis have been described, namely: informational, diffuse-avoidant, and normative (Berzonsky, 1989, 1990; Berzonsky et al., 2007; Markovitch et al., 2017).

To begin with, the informational style consists of active seeking an open mindedness in decisions related to one's identity formation. Therefore, information seeking adolescents are most likely to end up in identity achievement. Adolescents falling in this category are characterised by high levels of commitment, emotional and academic autonomy, and autonomous self- regulation (Soenens et al., 2007).

The second category is the normative style which is characterised by adherence to rules. Adolescents with normative style, are characterised by conformity to significant others and social expectations when required to make identity related choices and decisions. Normative adolescents tend to take the shortest period to make identity related decisions and they are more inclined to exhibit foreclosed status. According to research, adolescents with a normative style are most likely to be committed, conscientious and goal directed; they conform to rules, structures and are closed-minded. Their behaviour is internally regulated by expectations and imperatives on how they are supposed to be acting (Berzonsky, 2003).

Finally, the diffuse-avoidant styled adolescents have the tendency to procrastinate, avoiding any identity-oriented decisions. Their commitments are generally influenced by external consequences and demands (Berzonsky et al., 2007; Steinberg, 2015). Moreover, adolescents displaying a diffuse-avoidant identity style have been found to display poor self-awareness, lack of autonomy and self-efficacy, plus low self-regulation (Berzonsky & Kuk, 2005).

2.3.1.4. Luyckx Dual Process Five-Dimensional Model of Identity Formation. Luyckx and colleagues (2008) introduced the five-dimensional model of identity formation as an extension of the statuses model of Marcia based on the exploration and commitment processes of identity formation. The idea was to integrate the process model by Meeus et al. (2002) with that of Marcia (1966). Both theorists complement each other in the way they operationalise commitment and exploration. While Marcia's model focuses on exploration of the breadth of various alternatives, that of Meeus et al. (2010) is based on *Exploration in Depth* of commitments made. Meeus et al. (2010) elaborate on the process of evaluation of current commitment and not solely on *Commitment Making*. Therefore, both models can be summarised under the following dimensions: *Exploration in Breadth, Commitment Making, Exploration in Depth, Identification with Commitment* (Luyckx et al., 2005), and *Ruminative Exploration* of Luyckx et al. (2008). Just like Marcia's model of identity formation (1966), Luyckx et al. (2008) five-dimensional model focuses on the decision-making processes involved in the course of identity formation (Crocetti et al., 2013b; Markovitch et al., 2017).

According to the definition of Marcia (1966), exploration entails searching for varied ways and alternatives and aligning them with ones' convictions, values and goals before deciding on identity related choices. However, Luyckx et al., (2005), operationalised exploration and commitment as multi-dimensional and cyclic processes. Luyckx and colleagues argued that exploration and commitment cannot be taken as a single process. In fact, several authors have demonstrated the continuous and cyclical aspects of exploration by use of different models. For instance, the three-dimensional model proposed by Crocetti et al. (2008); Meeus et al. (2010), focus on *Commitment*, *Exploration in Depth* and *Reconsideration of Commitment*. The ego identity processes model of Balistreri et al. (1995) focuses on *Exploration in Breadth*. Whereas the three-dimensional model proposed by Crocetti et al. (2008) and Meeus et al. (2010), focuses on *Exploration in Depth*. During the *Exploration in Depth* process, adolescents tend to continuously engage commitments as a way of gathering more information about their existing commitments.

In a similar vein, commitment is regarded as a multidimensional and cyclic process of identity formation (Luyckx et al., 2008). While the identity processes model of Balistreri et al. (1995) focuses on *Commitment Making*, the three-dimensional model of Crocetti et al. (2008) and Meeus et al. (2010) assesses *Identification with Commitment* (Luyckx et al., 2005). Commitment is referred to by Marcia (1966) as the capacity of adolescents to make choices about core identity related issues through a process of exploring various alternatives. Nevertheless, it is argued that commitment also entails the capacity of adolescents to identify with and feel certain about particular choices. It is the ability to maintain commitments through the *Exploration in Depth* of the very commitments made. The idea is not about making permanent choices but rather on how adolescents identify with the choices already made. This too illustrates the cyclic and ongoing nature of identity formation (Luyckx et al., 2013; Luyckx et al., 2005).

The conceptualisation of identity as a dual cycle process involving *identity commitment* formation and the *evaluation of identity commitments* has been established (Crocetti et al., 2008; Luyckx et al., 2005; van Doeselaar et al., 2020). This is because dual cycle approaches, render a detailed understanding of Marcia's (1966) identity status model. The focus of the five-dimensional model is thus on the dual cycle processes that are cyclic in nature (Luyckx et al., 2008).

The idea is to approach identity formation as a dual cycle process and to predict identity development over time. The focus of the dual cycle process of identity formation is the formation and the evaluation of identity related commitments (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2013; Markovitch et al., 2017; Morsünbül et al.; 2016). Strong identity commitments are linked to the development of a sense of personal coherence. This is because these commitments offer individuals a sense of direction, which in turn gives them certainty about the future (van Doeselaar et al., 2018). In line with Luyckx et al. (2005) understanding of identity formation, the concept is thus defined as a recursive, long-term process, which entails continuous loops of feedback and reciprocal cycles which have a bearing on one another.

The first cycle comprises of identity commitments formation, which entails the exploration of alternatives and *Commitment Making*, based on the most satisfying choices. Identity commitments formation is divided into *Commitment Making*, and *Exploration in Breadth* (Luyckx et al., 2005).

Exploration in Breadth is the extent to which individuals are weighing and searching for different alternatives in line with their values, goals, and beliefs before they commit (Luyckx et al., 2006; Luyckx et al., 2008). This involves an active process, where adolescents reflect and gather information related to a number of different options and alternatives. It reflects the iterative nature of the identity formation process. According to research by Luyckx et al. (2005) on the dimensions of identity formation, *Exploration in Breadth* is regarded as a time of crisis and doubts about important life changing decisions and choices. As a result, these existential doubts hinder the concurrent and smooth formation of the process of commitments formation (Erikson, 1968).

Commitment Making is the extent to which individuals adhere to goals, beliefs, and values (Luyckx et al., 2008). In fact, strong commitments have been associated with a feeling of personal continuity, since committing to relevant identity domains gives individuals a sense of certainty and direction concerning their future (van Doeselaar et al., 2018). However, the fact that one has made a commitment does not inevitably imply that one identifies with or is confident in it (Luyckx et al., 2005).

The second cycle is identity commitments evaluation, which involves *Exploration in Depth* and *Identification with Commitment* processes. During the commitment evaluation cycle, adolescents engage themselves in re-evaluating and assessing their identity choices and

decisions by talking with significant others (Luyckx et al., 2005; van Doeselaar et al., 2020). Possible interplay between these two processes has been observed (Luyckx et al., 2005).

The first process under the second cycle is *Exploration in Depth*. This entails the in-depth re-evaluation of current choices and commitments and lays emphasis on the ongoing nature of the identity formation process (Luyckx et al., 2005; Luyckx et al., 2008). Adolescents tend to investigate one identity option using many varied approaches. This implies that adolescents' likelihood of engaging in continuous gathering of information, exchanging ideas and information about their existing commitments is very high. *Exploration in Depth* helps to strengthen and to evaluate commitments. This follows *Exploration in Breadth,* when adolescents are dealing with current commitments by actively reflecting on them and enquiring about different options and choices (Luyckx et al., 2005; Luyckx et al., 2013).

Identification with Commitments, which falls under the second cycle, implies that adolescents feel certain and can identify and internalise their choices. It is the degree to which adolescents experience a sense of identity that reflects their actual potential (van Doeselaar et al., 2020). This will result in feelings of certainty, happiness, and completeness. *Identification with Commitments* comes after in depth exploration of choices and decisions made, because these allow adolescents to make a thorough evaluation of their existing commitments. The outcome of the evaluation made will determine whether *Exploration in Depth* will be re-activated, to have more details about the commitments made. If individuals find that the commitments made are not satisfactory, there is a probability of going back to *Exploration in Breadth*, to search for other available commitments (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2005).

Exploration in Breadth and *Exploration in Depth* fall under the adaptive identity exploration processes. Therefore, depending on the outcome of the process, *Exploration in Depth* can be activated to allow adolescents to look for more information about commitments made. Whenever the individual is not satisfied with commitments made, they can go back to *Exploration in Breath* to allow them to explore for more alternatives. However, in both the formation and the evaluation of identity commitments cycles, adolescents tend to engage in maladaptive exploration, especially when they feel stuck, and tend to brood over identity options (van Doeselaar et al., 2020). In this connection, the fifth process of the five-dimensional model is *Ruminative Exploration*, which is the constant worry about one's choices and the

inability to commit to a given direction (Luyckx et al., 2008; Luyckx et al., 2014; Meeus et al., 2010).

Ruminative Exploration is often accompanied with elevated distress. Adolescents going through this stage, feel confused because of the unlimited number of possibilities (Luyckx et al., 2008). Moreover, much of their anxiety is due to the challenges posed by modern societies. Adolescents feel intimidated and pressured to make decisions about their goals, values, and beliefs, with little or no support. Thus, adolescents going through *Ruminative Exploration* are most likely to feel stuck in the process, brooding over the choices at hand rather than committing to them. This creates a feeling of perpetual exploration (Luyckx et al., 2008). Additionally, incompetence in resolving identity related issues, can contribute to anxiety, poor well-being, and distress (Beyers & Luyckx, 2015; Luyckx et al., 2008; Schwartz et al., 2011).

Thus, an attempt to order the dimensions of identity-formation into a process begins with *Exploration in Breadth*. This is followed by *Commitment Making*, then *Exploration in Depth* and *Identification with Commitment*. Finally, *Ruminative Exploration* is considered as a maladaptive process of identity formation and may occur at any given point of the identity formation cycle (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2008; Markovitch et al., 2017).

According to this model, making identity related choices is important for individuals to achieve a coherent identity, but it is not the conclusion (Luyckx et al., 2005). This type of approach to identity formation portrays adolescents as actively involved in the paths they take in life (Schwartz et al., 2005). Moreover, various individuals have different experiences of identity formation. The dual cycle process of the five-dimensional model allows for differential understanding of identity formation, since individual identity formation processes are generally influenced by a myriad of factors across time (Markovitch et al., 2017). For instance, the time and the degrees of exploration differ from one person to the other. Furthermore, the ability to commit to life choices forming a coherent identity varies from person to person (Cramer, 2017; Klimstra et al., 2013, Kroger et al., 2010; Markovitch et al., 2017). Therefore, it is essential to investigate the different styles which individuals use to approach identity related issues and the factors that contribute to identity formation in adolescents.

2.3.3. Social Ecological Perspective on Identity Formation During Adolescence

There is no linear way of going through identity formation trajectories. Moreover, identity development does not occur in a vacuum. A myriad of factors has been identified which account for individual differences in the formation of identity during adolescence (Crocetti et al., 2013b; Crocetti et al., 2017). Hence, it is important to investigate the differences in identity formation trajectories in adolescents and their causes, and some of the factors influencing the development of identity in adolescents will be discussed below.

2.3.3.1. Individual Characteristics and Identity Formation. Human development involves different aspects which develop at different rates during different stages of life (Louw & Louw, 2020). In this study however, the focus is on the adolescence stage of life. Adolescence is a time where individuals undergo tremendous transitions and a large number of changes, impact them in different domains (Tsang et al., 2012). Factors that determine how adolescents operate in their social structures and how they construct their identity are classified into three broad domains which will be elaborated in the following paragraphs (Ingalls & Stedman, 2017).

Physical development is the growth relating to biological changes occurring in the life span of individuals. However, adolescents experience accelerated physiological and physical changes (Tsang et al., 2012; Weiten, 2015). These changes are triggered by an increased level of growth hormones which are circulating in the body (Sigelman & Rider, 2015; Susman & Dorn, 2013). According to research, there is evidence that these changes have an impact on the brain, increasing the desire to engage in risky behaviours (Luna et al., 2013). These processes are not only initiated by hormones but are also influenced by environmental and genetic factors (Brittian, 2012; Forbes & Dahl, 2010; Op de Macks et al., 2011).

Cognitive development entails the processes that involve how individuals think about things which involve modifications in thinking abilities (Steinberg, 2015). For instance, the ability to form mental representations is regarded as fundamental in the formation of a coherent sense of identity, which becomes evident during adolescence (Brittian, 2012). One of the most salient cognitive changes taking place during adolescence is the emergence of a more complex thinking capacity. Individuals can thus think beyond self-definition to engaging in complex thoughts about society and self (Brittian, 2012). Furthermore, adolescents can consider multiple possibilities about their future career choices, their personality and identity. The ability to reason and generate systematic possibilities proves useful not only in scientific

problem-solving, but also in evaluating their beliefs and anticipating possible responses, by evaluating their viewpoints against other possible beliefs systems (Steinberg, 2015). In this regard, the role of adults is very important in helping adolescents shape their beliefs, values, and ideas about society (Brittian, 2012).

Moreover, adolescents develop the ability to think abstractly about concepts (Weiten, 2015). This helps them to challenge their own reasoning, engage in debates, and take given stances regarding different issues. The capacity to think hypothetically enables adolescents to take other peoples' perspectives into account by considering their points of view. Furthermore, adolescents develop the capacity to make decisions because of their ability to plan and to anticipate consequences. During this stage, adolescents can formulate and argue viewpoints. They develop interest and facility in social issues due to their growing social cognition. As a result, adolescents find it easy to engage in topics involving abstract concepts such as politics, friendship, religion, philosophy, and morality (Steinberg, 2015; Weiten, 2015).

Adolescence is a vital stage of development whereby individuals acquire the capacity to problem-solve more effectively. Thus, identity develops substantially during adolescence because individuals are in a better position to receive, store and finally manipulate information about their surrounding environment (Berzonsky, 2008; Brittian, 2012). During this period, individuals become more self-conscious and use increased introspection. In other words, adolescents tend to think about their own emotions and how other people think about them. Consequently, these processes allow for exploration and self-examination, which are important aspects in establishing a clear sense of identity. These ramifications of cognitive development come with a strong belief in the individuals' experiences regarding them as unique. This boosts the adolescents' feelings of self-importance and their self-esteem. However, such beliefs put adolescents at risk, especially when they fail to consider the consequences of their actions (Sigelman & Rider, 2015).

Furthermore, adolescents often have trouble in decision-making, because myelination of the brain proceeds from the spinal cord to the prefrontal cortex (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). The prefrontal cortex is associated with problem-solving and decision-making. Consequently, poor judgment can be attributed to the delayed development of the prefrontal cortex (Steinberg, 2015). Besides this, adolescent risk-taking behaviour is elevated because of their brain's sensitivity to pleasure and reward, which is linked to the early maturation of the subcortical dopamine circuits, which mediate pleasurable experiences (Luna et al., 2013). Impulsive

actions relating to this developmental phase, could be regarded as part of normal development (Erikson, 1968).

The limbic system is said to be hyperactive during adolescence (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). This commences with the onset of puberty, where adolescents experience emotional fluctuations. Besides the capacity to think abstractly and hypothetically, they also become hyper-sensitive to how others perceive them - especially their peers, which affects how they perceive their relationships, and the world around them (Steinberg, 2015).

Adolescence is regarded by all societies as a period of social transition to adulthood. According to research conducted on adolescents, it has been found that their development is greatly influenced by how society defines the social and economic role of an adolescent (Brittian, 2012). The great changes from childhood allow individuals to exercise new roles and be involved in different activities which alters their perception of self as well as their relationships. As a result, adolescents are exposed to many new options and they are expected to make important decisions (Erikson, 1958; Marcia, 1967; Steinberg, 2015). Moreover, expectations from society, family and school also change, offering an increase in social opportunities whereby adolescents can assert themselves (Brittian, 2012; Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), individuals interact with their environment and the environment with the individuals. These interactions are bidirectional because they shape both the individuals and their environments. Therefore, to have a better understanding of human development and identity formation in particular, one must consider the influence of contextual factors (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, Leonard, 2011; Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

2.3.3.2. The peer environment and identity formation. Identity formation is a crucial task faced by adolescents (Hewlett, 2013; McLean et al., 2014). Adolescents follow several avenues to facilitate the achievement of such a coherent sense of identity. Peer relationships are thus one of the important factors contributing to identity achievement, and during adolescence, relationships with peers are central to their life (Sigelman & Rider, 2015). In essence, peer relations give the sense of group belongingness which in turn plays on the identity development of the individual. Therefore, peer groups offer adolescents a platform where they can encounter numerous possibilities and alternatives which they can explore and even evaluate as part of their identity exploration process (Albarello et al., 2018; Crocetti et al., 2017).

The adolescents' desire to connect to others is thus fulfilled by their memberships in peer groups. Peer groups provide a space where adolescents can talk about their personal experiences, and receive encouraging feedback (MacPherson et al., 2016). Peer groups also offer adolescents an environment where they can explore different roles and test their abilities and competences whilst trying out different value systems. In this regard, adolescents' identity exploration processes are enhanced by the fact that they can compare themselves with their peers, as they evaluate different identity possibilities and options before committing to a particular lifestyle (Albarello et al., 2018). Moreover, peer groups offer adolescents a space where they can talk about their choices and test and implement them (Crocetti et al., 2014).

Given that adolescents are exposed to multiple alternatives to explore, they can thus navigate through identity exploration and commit to choices made. According to Brown and Larson (2009), adolescents tend to select friends who have similar interests. This reinforces their relationships and the type of commitments they make with regard to their identity. It has been stipulated that peers from the same class influence in depth exploration and commitment, whereas reconsideration of commitment and commitment, have been associated with peer relationships outside of school (Albarello et al., 2018; Meeus, 2011).

Peer membership is part of the developmental tasks posited by Erikson which facilitates the development of identity in adolescents (Erikson, 1968). The development of the psychological self is influenced by peers who offer adolescents the opportunity for social relatedness which contributes to their well-being. Adolescents are able to experience a range of emotions which brings about a greater awareness of one's emotions and those of others in the group. Peers are thus able to deal with feelings of guilt, fear and shame through encouragement and support they receive from their group mates (Erikson, 1968; MacPherson et al., 2016).

Involving oneself in romantic relationships also boosts the adolescent's status, sense of belonging and sense of identity in peer groups. Identity development is mostly influenced by dyadic friendships which involve reciprocal ways of sharing feelings and thoughts. Adolescents finding feelings of care, companionship and develop a deeper sense of self-understanding. Furthermore, ascribing to peer groups where individuals needs are met brings about self-assurance (MacPherson et al., 2016).

The opinion of peers is highly regarded by adolescents. However, some adolescents go through bad experiences of negative peer influences. For instance, when adolescents are negatively evaluated by peers they tend to conform their behaviour according to the opinion of

fellow peers as they value their input. Eventually they end up adopting the values, beliefs and behaviours of peers in order to feel a sense of belonging. In order to gain the acceptance of peers, some engage themselves in unhealthy activities such as disordered eating, smoking and substance use (Kiesner et al., 2010).

Peer relationships create an emotional link, which in turn triggers significant identity commitments. Therefore, the primacy of peer groups in identity formation during adolescence cannot be ignored. Moreover, it has been found that belonging to a peer group does not only impact on identity formation processes, but also on the psychological well-being of adolescents (Albarello et al., 2018). This happens to such an extent that perceived social support from peers, may reduce internalising conditions such as depression, anxiety, somatic complaints and may also reduce withdrawal (Attar-Schwartz et al., 2019). For example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, adolescents experienced enormous disruptions in many domains of their life. The majority of them had to attend remote classes instead of attending school in person, consequently, social dynamics among peers was greatly disrupted by the modification of in-school activities such as sports, and clubs. Hence, adolescents being overwhelmed by uncertainly and isolation may have led to strained relationship with peers (Lessard & Puhl, 2021; Wray-Lake et al., 2022).

2.3.3.3. The Family Environment and Identity Formation. The family context offers a good environment where social interactions taking place shape the identity formation of the individual. Moreover, the family system is regarded as a safe space where adolescents can explore (Sigelman & Rider, 2015; Shirima et al., 2021). Because it is a secure base, the family environment allows adolescents to gain self-confidence, enabling them to explore different roles while at same time working on their values and beliefs. Hence, parental guidance is regarded as crucial for adolescents to work successfully though identity related issues (Chhabra & Sodhi, 2012; Shirima et al., 2021). According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the family context forms part of the micro system, which influences the development of individuals. In this regard, it is important to take the family into consideration when understanding the formation of identity during adolescence. The different types of interaction taking place within the family systems, for example between siblings or between parents and their children are interdependent upon each other (Crocetti et al., 2017; Schachter & Ventura, 2008).

However, the family environment is not neutral (Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Crocetti et al., 2017; Scabini & Manzi, 2011). The question remains as to whether identity formation in

adolescents is triggered by the connectedness or the separation of parents. According to Bowlby (1988), secure attachment between parents and their children imparts confidence in adolescents. As such, a supportive and warm relationship between adolescents and their parents promotes and favours the exploration process of identity formation (Meeus, 2011). Furthermore, when adolescents have supportive mothers, they question their identity related choices and decisions less, thus becoming more certain about their actual commitments. This not only enables adolescents to venture into available choices, but also gives them confidence when making independent decisions as part of the exploration process of identity (Crocetti et al., 2017). However, growing up with less supportive mothers increases the chances of adolescents doubting their choices and engaging in searching for other alternatives (Meeus et al., 2010).

Identity formation has been positively linked with nurturing and warm relationships between parents and children. In this regard, maternal and paternal trust has been associated with *Exploration in Depth* and *Identity Commitment* (Crocetti, et al., 2010; Crocetti et al., 2017; Morsünbül, et al., 2016). Nevertheless, parents seem to be more intrusive when adolescents engage in *Exploration in Breadth* (Crocetti & Meeus, 2014; Crocetti et al., 2017). However, conflicts between parents and adolescents are common, and the gap between adolescents and their caregivers tends to grow increasingly, because they seek to achieve autonomy as one of the adolescent tasks (Havighurst, 1972). This can create a sense of insecurity, which can interfere with interpersonal relationships. Adolescents can also develop aggressive behaviours, emotional instability, avoidant cognitive strategies and develop anxiety, rule breaking and depression because of such identity insecurities (Crocetti et al., 2013a; Crocetti et al., 2017).

Disruption in families is another source of insecurity for the adolescent which may negatively affect their identity exploration processes. Adolescents living in disrupted families, generally caused by either separation, divorce, or death of the main caregiver, are faced with several challenges (Sigelman & Rider, 2015; Shirima et al., 2021). Adolescents growing up in such environments tend to feel overwhelmed by the challenges that come with assuming identity related tasks. Therefore, their identity processes of exploration and commitment may be hampered - negatively affecting the development of an achieved identity (Fomby & Sennott, 2013).

It has been noted that mothers and fathers influence the development of their children differently. On the one hand, fathers tend to offer possibilities of exploration, and those

showing broad exploration encourage adolescents to explore, even when they do not yet show strong commitments (Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Luyckx et al., 2016). As such, adolescents tend to identify themselves with their fathers' *Exploration in Breadth*. On the other hand, mothers tend to orient their adolescents towards consolidating and committing to their identity related choices and decisions. This implies that mothers' exploration in depth, which takes place when they engage in evaluating choices made, might lead to adolescents to doing the same. Therefore, adolescents observing their mothers may reconsider their own commitments and will be thrown into rumination, whereby they will start worrying about their future (Luyckx et al., 2016).

Baumrind (1971) claims that parental responsiveness is a great determiner of the kind of relationship which transpires between adolescents and their parents. Consequently, it can be said that the development of identity during adolescence is pretty much determined by the parenting styles of caregivers (Gralewski & Jankowska, 2020; Schachter & Ventura, 2008).

In this respect, the authoritarian parenting style which is characterised by high demands and control may negatively affect the development of identity, as adolescents will have limited opportunities to look at different options (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). The authoritarian style of parenting is also characterised by inflexibility and rigidity. Adolescents subjected to such parenting, tend to be rebellious and may show signs of depression, high anxiety or perform poorly in their academics (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Williams et al., 2014). Consequently, these factors may hinder identity exploration, which is core to the formation of a coherent identity. In fact, authoritarian parenting may lead to a foreclosed identity status, given that adolescents' opportunities to try out different options and to commit to an achieved identity are limited. Moreover, controlling parental relationships influence adolescents negatively, in that they find it difficult to commit to meaningful life goals, values and beliefs (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Marcia, 1966).

Other parents use the authoritative parenting style. This is generally characterised by low demand-control, with parents setting reasonable standards, consistent with the abilities of their children, being firm, and giving explanations for their positions (Baumrind, 1971). Adolescents with such parents, experience a warm, kind, and responsive relationship where they can negotiate their expectations. These adolescents enjoy parental support, which encourages them to explore and finally commit to chosen values and belief systems. Thus, the authoritative parenting style is positively associated with the development of identity (Gralewski &

Jankowska, 2020; Roman, 2011). As a result, adolescents show better academic performance, autonomy, increases competence, a more advanced moral judgement, less juvenile delinquency, and more adaptive orientation to peers. Authoritative parents encourage independence and autonomy in their children, which in turn leads to the formation of a coherent sense of identity (Beyers & Goossens, 2008).

In contrast, the permissive parenting style is associated with low demand-control and high acceptance (Baumrind, 1971). Permissive parents apply no authority and no demands over their children. However, the lack of guidance during adolescence often creates anxiety in individuals, thus hindering proper exploration and the development of an achieved identity (Chhabra & Sodhi, 2012; Sigelman & Rider, 2009). Permissive parenting may undermine the internalisation of parental norms and values and may block adolescents from opportunities to exercise their strengths and thus assume responsibility for their actions. Adolescents with permissive parents tend to exhibit low ego strength, perform poorly in academics, and involve themselves in reckless behaviour (Dehyadegary et al., 2012; Sigelman & Rider, 2015).

Parenting styles have been associated with positive adolescent outcomes in the development of identity. Therefore, authoritative parenting which is associated with support and guidance tends to be most effective, as adolescents are encouraged to use their internal resources optimally in the process of forming a coherent sense of identity. On the other hand, authoritarian parenting causes the development of identity to be hindered, and permissive parenting fails to offer any form of structure to adolescents (Gralewski & Jankowska, 2020; Noddings, 2005; Sigelman & Rider, 2015).

The development of a mature identity occurs when individuals' social needs and psychological demands are balanced (Chen et al., 2007). Poverty tends to increase adolescents' vulnerabilities in the areas of behavioural adjustment, school achievement, mental health, and psychosocial well-being (Funk et al., 2012; Reiss, 2013; Reynolds & Crea, 2016). Adolescents from poor families may struggle to gain access to proper food, safe housing, as well as experiences and material that stimulate them cognitively. Moreover, faced with a multitude of financial barriers and few career choices, adolescents from poor families tend to struggle to obtain a positive identity. In addition, low social economic status, stress, and instability are other factors that may hamper the formation of a coherent and positive identity for adolescents living in disadvantaged communities (Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz, 2001).

Furthermore, according to Lichter et al. (2002), and Conger and Donnellan (2007), families experiencing economic challenges tend to be prone to instability and stress. Thus, individuals raised or growing up in disadvantaged contexts, experience problems related to identity development, and establishing a clear sense of autonomy and decision-making. Moreover, adolescents from such backgrounds are more likely to manifest problem behaviour due to family conflicts and the increased gap between them and their parents (Liu & Ngai, 2020).

Poverty is linked with unemployment of parents, failure at school and increased numbers of adolescent pregnancies. Thus, growing up in poverty predisposes adolescents to transitional difficulties encountered between middle and late adolescence. Evidently, experiencing poverty tends to increase the adolescent school dropout rates, and affects individuals' achievement (McLoyd et al., 2009). For example, the impact of COVID-19 on families has been well documented (Govender et al., 2020). Many families in South Africa struggled economically during the COVID-19 restrictions and still suffer the repercussions of the strict lockdown. However, it is important to note that despite the conditions of hardships exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, some adolescents found refuge in spending more quality moments with family (Manchia et al., 2022; Oosterhoff et al., 2020).

2.3.3.4. The School Environment and Identity Formation. According to the integration and differentiation perspective, both institutional and individual factors have a bearing on the formation of identity (Liu & Ngai, 2020). In this regard, schools play an important role in adolescents' identity formation since they provide a supportive environment which can influence the developing identity in adolescents (Verhoeven et al., 2019). For example, schools play a role in supporting learners and encouraging adolescents to develop their academic identity and career identity (La Guardia, 2009; Liu & Ngai, 2020). Furthermore, the interaction between teachers, peers and schools has also been found to have an impact on the ethnic identity formation in adolescents (Brown, 2017).

Adolescents' priorities during this stage are to achieve good grades at school. Thus, the academic success of students and the construction of their identity depend heavily upon teachers' appraisals (Liu & Ngai, 2020). Moreover, schools are important socialising agents for adolescents, and school activities act as good sources for adolescents to learn their social roles and improve upon their self-knowledge (Wu et al., 2011). However, the reorganisation of identity relies heavily on the support offered by teachers (La Guardia, 2009; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz & Petrova, 2018).

Adolescents spend a lot of time at schools where they learn new activities and ideas. Moreover, these school contexts are vitally important to the formation of identity, as adolescents find support from teachers who foster the formation of identity through different educational processes (Kaplan & Flum, 2012; Rich & Schachter, 2012; Schachter & Galili-Schachter, 2012; Schachter & Rich, 2011; Silseth & Arnseth, 2011; Verhoeven et al., 2019). In essence, schools are the primary source of identity development for adolescents or are the most powerful factor capable of fostering it. Thus, it is important to explore the effects of school on several areas of identity development in adolescents (Rich & Schachter, 2012).

Schools that have caring teachers, who act as role models contribute meaningfully to adolescents' identity development. Ideally, a supportive school environment fosters confidence and creates the ability to overcome identity related challenges, thus facilitating greater exploration in learners. This nurturing aspect of schools enables the process of committing to particular values, roles, and beliefs through the integration of identity related information.

For instance, caring teachers impact positively on the identity development of the individual in several ways. The way teachers think about their learners and the kind of feelings and the types of relationship they maintain have tremendous effect on the self-perception of learners (Noddings, 2005). Adolescents receiving support from teachers, tend to like school and to proactively pursue their academic goals. They also show motivation in their studies, and socially. The supportive climate created by caring teachers also gives a sense of belonging to adolescents which in turn allows for identity exploration (Wentzel et al., 2010). On the one hand, perceived support from teachers enhances the behavioural, cognitive and affective domains of the adolescent. On the other hand, adolescents' self-confidence, self-efficacy and competence is enhanced by expressed support and care from teachers (Cornelius-White, 2010; Deci & Ryan, 2009). Such feelings about oneself serve to contribute positively to individual' identity formation. This is because adolescents in such school climates show high levels of confidence, successfully negotiating life values, roles and beliefs, and achieving a coherent sense of self. In addition, experiencing caring teachers fosters such learners' active involvement in identity exploration activities (Rich & Schachter, 2012).

Identification with role models also contributes to the formation of identity. Adolescents tend to have people they consider as role models or mentors, and they believe that they can transform themselves and become like their role models. It is noted that having adult role models positively enhance resilience and improves self-esteem, especially in adolescents living

in risky environments (Verhoeven et al., 2019). Adolescents are also inclined to have teachers as their role models, and the identification process is thus achieved when adolescents are exposed to teachers that they can emulate. Connecting with teachers that they admire positively impacts on the adolescents' identifications and identity. Therefore, the influence of role models of their developing identity is significant (Markovitch et al., 2017). Adolescents with teachers as role models also show success in their studies because they consider their studies as important and meaningful. Moreover, they have pride in high levels of self-esteem, resilience and academic success. Adolescents privileged to have role models, show high levels of self-confidence in undertaking identity formation challenges. This produces self-esteem, resilience and academic success and allows them to explore without fear (Romero et al., 2018; Verhoeven et al., 2019).

Teachers, schools, and classmates can all help to shape one's identity, whether consciously or unconsciously (Verhoeven et al., 2019). An unintentional process involves teaching strategies, selection of practices, peer norms and teacher expectations which at times have a negative outcome. However, schools and teachers can deliberately plan activities to support the formation of identity through experiences, such as *Exploration in Depth*, *Exploration in Breadth*, and reflective exploration (Carlone et al., 2015; Stapleton, 2015). However, to ensure maximum exploration of the educational practices, one needs to consider meeting preconditions such as having a supportive classroom climate and fostering meaningful experiences (Verhoeven et al., 2019).

A constructive way of influencing adolescents' identity development is by reviewing educational practices (Verhoeven et al., 2019). Therefore, focusing on explorative learning by introducing learners to new learning material and activities may significantly influence their formation of identity. As such, in-breadth exploration is facilitated by constantly and moderately introducing new areas of learning, which in turn spurs adolescents on to explore new identity dimensions. Moreover, explorative experiences may stimulate new interests, revive dormant talents, or prompt adolescents to try new identity roles (Bruin & Ohna, 2013; Carlone et al., 2015; Stapleton, 2015). Consequently, schools should provide adolescents with the possibility of integrating all important aspects of self into a coherent whole. Thus, focusing on other aspects of self, such as the physical, social, moral, spiritual and emotional, allows adolescents to experience themselves as whole individuals. These experiences, improve their

self-confidence in taking on identity formation challenges which improves the process of identity exploration (Rich & Schachter, 2012).

Positive schooling experiences are similarly linked to improving adolescents' perception of studies as meaningful. Validating learners when they express a sense of agency in school pushes them to actively engage in identity exploration. Such adolescents feel socially accepted and encouraged to engage in meaningful and purposeful activities (Jang et al., 2010). The experience of studies as being meaningful, further promotes adolescents' perception of oneself as able to take on life roles. Adolescents show great mastery motivation and ability to cope with identity related challenges. This enhanced self-confidence allows for *Exploration in Depth* of their world views, values, and life roles. Adolescents feel empowered by teachers who encourage expression of ideas, exploration of future choices, and decision-making processes. In essence, school affirms adolescents' sense of agency and identity exploration (Rich & Schachter, 2012).

However, such a sense of agency might have been hampered by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, due to the pandemic, many adolescents experienced disruption in formal education (Gittings et al., 2021). Many South African adolescents could not attend school during the hard lockdown period due to restrictions and nationwide closures. Mostly, adolescents living in disadvantaged circumstances were affected, as the schools they were attending lacked enough infrastructure to allow for remote learning (Govender et al., 2020). Additionally, distance learning opted for by some schools in impoverished communities did not work, as many adolescents from these contexts experience constant power cuts and do not have access to electronic devices. Therefore, adolescents' ability to engage in identity exploration through educational activities might have been hindered, as the schools lacked proper resources to facilitated optimal remote learning opportunities (Gittings et al., 2021; Govender et al., 2020).

Moreover, *Exploration in Depth* occurs when learners are offered opportunities whereby, they can re-evaluate current identities. This process is enabled by promoting hands-on, as well as on-site learning possibilities, and exposure to role models (Farland-Smith, 2012; Hughes et al., 2013; Jones & Deutsch, 2013). In this respect, adolescents will be able to learn new identities by exploring their feelings and thoughts through meaningful reflective learning experiences coupled with a conducive classroom climate. Reflective exploration, in essence, aids adolescents in better understanding what they value, who they want to become, and what

their interests are (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010; Ligorio, 2010). Hence, it is crucial to enable adolescents to connect what they learn in school, since it helps with the development of a stable and clear identity (Biesta, 2014; Vianna & Stetsenko, 2011; Verhoeven et al., 2019).

2.3.3.5. The Community Environment and Identity Formation. The influence of time and place on the development of the individual is emphasised by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) developmental model. According to the social ecological systems theory, development is influenced by multiple transactional contexts which are mutually reinforcing (Lerner et al., 2013; Gaias et al., 2018).

In the opinion of Erikson (1968), identity development involves both intrinsic and environmental factors. Such interaction between the environment and the individual is important in the formation of identity. In fact, the environment affords adolescents varied contexts which they can explore (Kroger, 2004). Therefore, it is important to underline the role played by significant others in the formation of identity, as support from significant others affects how adolescents make decisions as well as their kinds of choices (Bosch et al., 2012). Thus, adolescents without social support from friends or family feel challenged when it comes to the formation of their identity (Gfellner & Cordoba, 2011). As a result, these adolescents experience isolation and avoid socialising with others, thus limiting their opportunities to explore and commit to the identity choices they have made (Sica et al., 2016). In summary, social support and the development of social skills have been directly linked to the formation of identity during adolescence (Luyckx et al., 2013).

Adolescents also experience confusion when it comes to transitioning into adult roles such as work, citizenship, and family. Much of the confusion is brought about by the lack of clear boundaries and inconsistencies between the changes in responsibilities, social status or privileges leading to the social redefinition of the adolescent (Steinberg, 2012).

Neighbourhoods are at the centre of all social structures through which human life is organised and experienced. The choice of neighbourhood by parents affects adolescents' lives in various ways. This is because they spend a great amount of time with peers outside their home environment. Most interactions between adolescents take place in their neighbourhoods which offer them social and the physical space (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2011; Warner, 2018).

Neighbourhoods can serve as sources of opportunities or risks for adolescents. The socioeconomic contexts of neighbourhoods affect several domains of their well-being and

development. These include for instance, delinquency, violence, sexual activity, substance use, high school dropout, childbearing, educational attainments, mental and physical health (Dupéré et al., 2008). Inequalities in neighbourhoods create a gap in accessing resources available, and the economic and social situations of families can be risky for adolescents arising from their interactions with people in their neighbourhoods (Warner, 2018).

Disadvantaged neighbourhoods' effects on adolescents' identity development is enabled through processes explained in models such as institutional, collective influence, epidemic/contagion and social comparison. According to the collective socialisation model, the availability of a prosocial adult is important in providing informal guidance in the community (Warner, 2018). However, the institutional model puts emphasis on the capacity to regulate and the quality of social institutions. In this model, an understanding of how economic processes hinder equal distribution of resources necessary in running schools, youth development centres, child centres, recreational centres parks, social services, medical care is elaborated (Coulton & Spilsbury, 2014).

The epidemic/contagion model emphasises the influence of peers in creating a subgroup which transmits norms though communities and networks. This supports the idea that disadvantaged backgrounds encourage problem behaviour, because youth from such environments are exposed to peers who are involved and offer opportunities for problem behaviour. Adolescents who are not in school or in any form of institution are most likely to commit crime compared to school-going adolescents. Adolescents not attending school, are most likely to deviate since they do not have social bonds protecting them from engaging in deviant impulses (Thomas & Shihadeh, 2013).

Researchers have established the impact of neighbourhood conditions on adolescents' optimal development (Amoateng & Kalule-Sabiti, 2013). For instance, those living in impoverished neighbourhood are more likely to be involved in crime, bear children, and probably drop out of school because of poor achievement. Growing up in poor neighbourhoods also influences the quality of relationships which adolescents have with parents and others (Swahn et al., 2008; Warner, 2018). Moreover, adolescents' behaviour and values tend to be shaped by the norms they are exposed to. In addition, access to economic resources and other institutional services are inclined to be poor. As a result, they have to bear with meagre social services programmes. There is evidence that poor neighbourhoods negatively affect adolescent behaviour, mental health, and achievement. These effects are considered to have dire outcomes

on the individual, even more so than growing up in poor families or attending poor schools (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2011).

Poverty thus tends to increase the level of vulnerabilities experienced by adolescents and hampers their psychosocial well-being. Adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds are exposed to a multitude of risks. For instance, financial barriers hinder them from obtaining identity capital. Identity capital includes both the tangible and intangible resources that enable adolescents to develop a coherent and stable sense of self. In the case of adolescents living in conditions of poverty, both the tangible and intangible identity capital resources are involved in shaping their identity. This includes financial situation, social status of the family, self-esteem, locus of control and self-efficacy (Piotrowski, 2015). As a result, it is more challenging for adolescents living in conditions of poverty to develop a positive and clear sense of identity (Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz, 2001). In essence adolescents who circumnavigate around the hardships they face and achieve a coherent sense of identity are more likely to experience a higher sense of well-being (Schwartz & Petrova, 2018).

2.4. The Relationship Between Resilience and Identity Formation

According to Erikson (1968), adolescence is a period when individuals struggle to deal with the conflict between identity and role confusion. This phase related crisis may be caused by challenges faced by adolescents. Individuals can come out of the crisis feeling stronger, effective, and dedicated to their identity formation task (Waterman, 2020). Those who have an achieved identity tend to be more motivated, confident and able to overcome challenges than those stuck in role confusion. However, both identity development and risk factors influence each other. On the one hand, hardships, challenges, and traumatic events can impact the functioning of one's identity, while on the other hand, identity development determines how some risk factors are experienced by the adolescent (Tedeschi et al., 2018; Waterman, 2020). Thus, evidence showing how risk and resilience impact identity formation and vice versa will be discussed in this section.

Adolescents tend to follow different identity pathways during adolescence (Klimstra et al., 2010; Luyckx et al., 2008). While some adolescents pursue positive identity trajectories, others engage in less optimal paths. The type of identity trajectories undertaken is explained by many factors, and resilience is one of the areas of focus in understanding identity formation (Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013).

In past research by Sroufe et al., (2005), it has been noted that individuals undergo coherent and continuous developmental trajectories. As such, prior developmental challenges and how individuals managed them will determine how well they handle future challenges. Consequently, how well adolescents adapt to their environment is also aligned with their developmental tasks. In this regard, adolescents' ability to explore alternatives is guaranteed if challenges from previous developmental stages were sufficiently addressed. Addressing prior challenges offers adolescents internal resources that will not compromise their identity formation (Masten & Tellegen, 2012; McLean & Syed, 2015).

However, adolescents who grow up in disadvantaged contexts are exposed to many challenges such as bad treatment as children, economic adversity and external stressors from the community. Growing up in a poor community is linked to mental health problems especially during adolescence. This is because adolescents go through significant changes in all aspects of their lives (Zinn et al., 2020). For instance, adolescents have to juggle between building up relationships, schoolwork, peer influences and the exploration and experimentation in other areas. Failed identity exploration leaves them vulnerable to mental health problems. Therefore, adversities are regarded as unique developmental challenges during this particular developmental stage (Masten & Barnes, 2018). However, some adolescents grow up in adverse conditions and yet show positive adaptation. Thus, overcoming challenges related to the adolescent phase of development leads to healthy developmental outcomes, nevertheless, both the intrapersonal and environmental factors contribute to fostering resilience in adolescents. Identity development is one aspect of intrapersonal factors contributing to resilience in adolescents (Zinn et al., 2020).

The development of self-identity is presumed to foster resilience because adolescents have to make informed decisions regarding their future goals, values and beliefs. The adolescents' task during this critical stage of development involves focusing on academic aspirations, future orientations and ability to resist peer influence. Developing future oriented attitudes is linked to reducing the risk of developing mental problems. However, future oriented adolescents have the ability to overcome hardships and adverse conditions from their environment (Cui et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2014; Oshri et al., 2018; Zinn et al., 2020).

Academic achievement is one of the tasks adolescents have to grapple with in the process of identity formation. Therefore, exploring and thinking about their academic aspirations tend to be focused, and avoid involving themselves in risky activities. Such adolescents show a

strong sense of self-regulation (Zinn et al., 2020). Choosing friends is seen as a daunting process for some adolescents, consequently, peers become very important and play a big role in their social life. The ability to resist peer influence is a quality that leads to autonomy, and it is associated with cognitive maturation; moreover, future oriented adolescents show the ability to keep to their trajectories in spite of peer influence. Thus, investing in achieving academic aspirations, keeping goal-oriented thoughts and resisting peer coercion is associated with resilience, and directly influences identity development. Adolescents use these resources in their decision-making process, which brings together both the social and individual aspects of development and positively influences their well-being (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018; Zinn et al., 2020). In fact, these intrapersonal resources have been directly associated with resilience which comes with the development of identity, a critical task during adolescence (Zinn et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the effect of prior experience in the achievement of coherent identity is not inevitable. According to the principle of multifinality, identity formation is influenced by a dynamic interplay of resources and risks over time. Risks and resources determine whether individuals are resilient to overcome hardships, stemming from an interplay between their characteristics, and their social contexts (Masten & Tellegen, 2012). Risks tend to negatively affect the process of identity formation. Some adolescents exposed to risks may develop an oppositional or negative identity which may impact on the person's well-being. In the short and long-term, risks, may affect adolescents' ability to engage in active exploration of identity related alternatives and may act as barriers to capacity to commit to different goals and make identity related decisions. Risks may cause adolescents to stagnate in the diffused state of identity formation resulting in them neither exploring enough nor committing to a future path. The quality of resolutions taken by adolescents when faced with negative life events tends to be affected by the risks they are exposed to (McAdams & McLean, 2013).

Furthermore, the identity process is triggered by difficulties and hardships such as parental divorce. It is also argued that exposure to life threatening adversities offers adolescents opportunities for self-knowledge (McLean & Pasupathi, 2012). Therefore, the risk and resilience framework sheds light on the effects of pressure put on adolescents as they transition to adulthood. For instance, some adolescents become vulnerable to certain risks, whereas others may use the pressure as an opportunity for making life changing decisions (Masten et al., 2004; Obradović et al., 2012).

Extensive research has been done on the potential disruption of identity development when adolescents are exposed to severe degrees of risk factors. Those who are faced with traumatic events may alter the identity processes, dimensions, meanings and ideologies they hold (Scott et al., 2014; Waterman, 2020). However, traumatic events taking place in the life of the adolescent tend to have different outcomes. Some events may positively impact on the developing of already formed identity, whereas other events may negatively impact the process. It is thus clear that the impact of traumatic risk factors on the adolescent is complex and needs to be examined closely. Trauma can serve as a reinforcer in instances where adolescents have already committed to identity relevant choices. Some tend to show a continuation in their process of exploration by being more dedicated to their goals, roles, beliefs and values. In this case the challenge faced is used as a tool to confirm their identity related decisions. However, others, due the emotional suffering caused by the challenges faced, abandon their identity related commitments causing identity delays (Koni et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2011; Waterman, 2020). Depending on the type of environment and circumstances surrounding the adolescent, some individuals resume the same path of exploration whereas others abandon prior commitment. It may also occur that some identity related commitment or the exploration process is interrupted, or abandoned, altered, replaced or delayed (Waterman, 2020).

In essence, challenges affect the developing identity in many ways. Individuals showing resilience use the altered priorities as a basis for better function and which thus contribute positively to the individuals' well-being (Koni et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2011, 2015). Moreover, improved functioning is linked to increased identity coherence which leads to a sense of clarity and authenticity in their exploration processes. However, altered identity priorities may cause rumination and anxiety, thus interfering with one's functioning and well-being. This is caused by the feelings of being overwhelmed and disorientation. Especially when the challenges are of greater magnitude, they leave a greater mark on the adolescents' identity (Luyckx et al., 2008).

Personal and contextual resources, tend to determine the identity trajectory they take, depending on the type of risks adolescents are exposed to. Adolescents living in supportive environments may follow a positive path resulting to the integration of their identity, whereas adolescents lacking support may find it difficult to take on the exploration of different options before committing and thus end up in identity confusion (McLean & Syed, 2015). Higher

commitment is associated with well-being and is negatively linked to depression, procrastination, and general anxiety. *Commitment* is thus a good predictor of social, psychological and emotional aspects of wellbeing (Karaś & Cieciuch, 2018).

There are some inconsistencies with regard to the *Exploration in Depth* process of identity formation. Some authors have found that *Exploration in Depth* is linked to high levels of general anxiety and depression (Crocetti et al., 2008). However, *Exploration in Depth* has also been associated with adaptive dimensions of personality, linking it to positive outcomes in adolescents (Luyckx et al., 2005; Karaś & Cieciuch, 2018; Karaś et al., 2015). The *Reconsideration of commitment* process is connected with general anxiety, depression and delinquency in adolescents (Crocetti et al., 2008; Karaś & Cieciuch, 2018). In essence commitment to different roles, values and beliefs is regarded as the core factor in predicting well-being (Dimitrova et al., 2017).

Other risk factors such as societal level factors may also contribute negatively to the adolescents' identity development as they tend to filter through the proximal levels of their environment. For instance, low socio-economic status may be a barrier for the identity development in adolescents. Adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds are exposed to poverty, stress, chronic and high levels of negative events and may also experience discrimination and prejudice. Moreover, these adolescents face significant barriers to their identity formation since they have limited opportunities and few life choices so that they are compelled to stop exploring and end up working after high school (Liu & Ngai, 2020; van Rensburg et al., 2018). Sadly, adolescents from these contexts, tend to gauge and set standards for themselves according to adults from their environment who have limited lives. Exploration for many adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds is regarded as a luxury. For this reason, they prematurely commit themselves to choices and goals adopting identity related roles, while others end up not exploring their values, beliefs and roles nor committing to any goals. However, findings on identity formation show that both foreclosed and achieved identity statuses contribute positively to the individual's well-being (Luyckx et al., 2008; McLean & Syed, 2015; Schwartz & Petrova, 2018).

Furthermore, the risk and resilience framework enables researchers to assess the role of resources in the adolescent identity formation trajectory. Some adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds are constantly faced with challenges that can negatively impact on their well-being. However, others navigate towards identity formation by overcoming the hardships and

thus follow a positive pathway (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2002; Masten & Tellegen, 2012). Consequently, positive identity formation is regarded as a resource for adolescent psychological well-being. Questioning about values, goals and roles serves as a strategy that can motivate adolescents in identifying opportunities and putting in the necessary effort to attain them. The reason why personal goals are critical during adolescence is because they provide guidelines which help adolescents to identify better ways of spending their time and energy. It has been affirmed that having personal goals in relation to one's future predicts how adolescents adapt in the various identity choices they make. Authors have also found that those presenting a strong sense of self which is persistent over time develop a balanced sense of self-worth (McLean & Syed, 2015; Shulman & Nurmi, 2010).

Findings on the adaptive functions of identity have illustrated that adolescents endowed with autonomy, and motivation which are related to identity formation are most likely to adjust from maladaptive to resilient status (Masten et al., 2004; Masten & Tellegen, 2012). As mentioned before, both the foreclosed and achieved identity statuses are linked to psychological well-being (Luyckx et al., 2008; Swartz et al., 2011). However, adolescents with achieved identity present with a more personal internal resources than the foreclosed ones. They are endowed with a sense of purpose, autonomy, self-direction, and inner agency which make them flexible to adapt in any life conditions. This implies that, under less stressful conditions, adolescents with foreclosed status and achieved identity will function normally, but only adolescents with achieved identity status are resilient enough to navigate through high-risk conditions. Hence, identity achievement is associated with psychological well-being (Schwartz et al., 2011).

In line with the findings in the previous paragraphs, it is clear that the development of identity is linked to a stronger sense of resilience (Koni et al., 2019). Moreover, an achieved identity positively impacts on the well-being and health of adolescents. Those facing significant challenges benefit most from social identity, while those experiencing challenges show significant improvement of their resilience which is linked to the feelings of belonging and meaningful relationships, as they mould their identity in relation to their peers. This is attributed to a collective sense of responsibility and above all identity (Koni et al., 2019; Liu & Ngai, 2020). In addition, ethnic identity commitments, are associated with psychosocial growth. Adolescents faced with poverty and an unstable family environment experience an accumulation of stressors which negatively affect their psychological well-being (Evans & Kim, 2013; Torres & Santiago, 2018). Ethnic identity provides adolescents with a good sense

of belonging which acts a buffer in the face of hardships thus contributing to resilience (Williams et al., 2014; Torres & Santiago, 2018). Similarly, adolescents showing resilience tend to be stable, a phenomenon which is manifested across various identity domains. This stability in identity domains provides a psychological strength which allows adolescents to overcome threats to identity due to challenging events. As a result, they are able to keep meaningful commitments or keep exploring despite the hardships and obstacles to identity formation (Schwartz & Petrova, 2018; Waterman, 2020).

2.5. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a theoretical background toward understanding resilience and identity trajectories was explored together with an understanding of resilience and identity based on the social ecological systems theory. A conceptualisation of resilience from a social-ecological systems perspective was described, while a broad definition of resilience including protective and risk factors was discussed. In this chapter, it was important to underline how adolescents from deprived environments find it difficult to grow in a healthy way. In the same vein, it was valuable to emphasise that positive environments and supportive families, peers and communities, tend to produce more resilient people. On the other hand, adolescents from deprived environments tend to overcome obstacles while those from privileged background may fail to develop as expected. This was followed by definitions of identity, starting with a succinct conceptualisation of the construct according to lifespan human development. Subsequently the definition and the conceptualisation of identity as a construct and as experienced during adolescence was described. Theories on identity formation were also explored in detail. In this regard, Luyckx five-dimensional model of identity development which focuses on the developmental processes of identity highlighted specific aspects of identity which the socio-ecological systems theory failed to address. However, the socio-ecological systems theory, as the overarching theory for this study was applied to the development of identity in adolescents. The socio-ecological systems theory gives a more comprehensive picture about the interaction with the environment and with the social-economic context. The chapter concluded by highlighting the relationship between identity and resilience. The research design and processes used to carry out this research study will be described in the following chapter.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This chapter will focus on the research aim, and the research questions. An explanation of the research design and the research approach will be elucidated. Thereafter, data collection methods, sampling procedures and data analysis methods will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of relevant ethical considerations. Issues of rigour and legitimation in mixed methods research will then be highlighted and a concluding paragraph will summarise the content of the chapter.

3.1. Research Aim and Questions

In the literature review, the importance and relevance of studying identity and resilience over the years of adolescence in a South African context were discussed in detail. The use of the five-dimensional model of Luyckx et al. (2008) in understanding identity development was examined. Moreover, the interaction between identity, and resilience during adolescence was investigated. The scarcity of longitudinal studies in this regard was highlighted. Based on this understanding, the aim of this study was to examine longitudinal trajectories of identity formation based on the five-dimensional model of identity development, and to explore resilience as it pertains to adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa. This included an investigation of the risks and the protective mechanisms important in shaping resilience in this particular population of adolescents.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the identity and resilience trajectories of adolescents living in disadvantaged communities?

    a) Are there significant differences/changes over time in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) and Resilience? (i. e. What is the effect of time on identity and resilience?)

    b) Are there significant changes over time in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) for High and Low Resilience groups? (i. e. Does resilience have a significant impact on identity over time?)

2. How do adolescents living in disadvantaged communities perceive identity and resilience development processes over time?

a) What unique individual and systemic risk and protective factors are involved in the formation of identity and resilience?

b) How do individual and systemic risk and protective factors hinder or contribute to identity and resilience development?

3.2. Research Approach and Design

This study followed an equal-weight concurrent mixed methods approach. Furthermore, the study was longitudinal in nature.

3.2.1. Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research integrates quantitative and qualitative elements meaningfully so as to increase the depth and the breadth of a study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In mixed methods research the focus is on using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods concurrently or sequentially in a single study. This process provides a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010; McTavish & Loether, 2002; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

Mixed methods research is employed when addressing a variety of exploratory and/or confirmatory questions simultaneously. For that reason, researchers can generate and verify theory in the same study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). This facilitates a research process in which researchers can achieve a variety of goals simultaneously. For example, researchers can investigate the relationships between variables and explore why and how the predicted relationships happen (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

Moreover, it has been confirmed by several researchers that mixed methods research may result in stronger and better inferences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Harrison et al., 2020; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). This is because it may overcome the weaknesses inherent in certain single approaches by utilising the complementary strengths of integrating these approaches (Creswell, 2003; Johnson & Turner, 2003; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

In addition, mixed methods research offers opportunities for interpreting divergent results. Such findings bring value to mixed methods research because they allow for re-examination of the assumptions and conceptual frameworks used in each approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). Moreover, researchers can carry out inference audits and may finally design a new study for in depth investigations. Therefore, the research study may yield long term rewards, such as alerting researchers of the multifaceted nature of issues under study and offer opportunities to

develop more substantial and strong clarifications of social processes (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008).

Moreover, mixed methods enable the researcher to best understand the problem from different perspectives. The use of varied sources of data collection and analyses is also beneficial when studying complex social phenomena which are multifaceted (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The collected data is analysed, the findings are integrated, and inferences are drawn utilising both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This allows the researcher to look for complexities, conflicts, consistencies, inconsistencies, and contradictions arising in the research data. However, mixed methods research also poses some challenges. Practical challenges relate to time and availability of resources. As such, the researcher must allocate a lot of time and resources for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting on both quantitative and qualitative data for a single study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Identifying how the data is obtained in mixed methods research is important. For example, mixed methods may be concurrent and parallel also known as convergent, or sequential, exploratory or explanatory in nature (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell, 2003; Harrison et al., 2020; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The current study employed a concurrent design. In concurrent designs, researchers collect and analyse data independently, and then merge / compare the results of the quantitative and qualitative procedures of data collection with the purpose of better understanding and analysing the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Harrison, et al., 2020; Maree, 2011).

Concurrent designs entail the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data (Hatta et al., 2020). In contrast, in sequential designs, data collection and analysis of each approach follow one after the other, and the results of one approach rely upon the results of the other approach (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Even though, in concurrent designs, data collection in both the quantitative and qualitative approaches may be carried out on separate occasions, it is done at nearly the same point in time. In addition, in concurrent mixed methods research designs, the intention is not to use the data from one approach to change aspects of the other (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Data are collected and interpreted separately at first; each of the quantitative and qualitative strands is treated distinctly during this stage of analyses. After this, inferences are integrated. The interpretation of the findings is done by either merging or comparing the results, thus giving equal weight to both the quantitative and

qualitative procedures (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Hatta et al., 2020; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006).

A mixed methods research approach was warranted in this study to meaningfully integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches in an attempt to address the outlined research questions. In addition, this provided depth and breadth in understanding identity development and resilience in adolescents. The mixed methods research approach provided a complete and corroborated outcome of the research process of data collection, analyses, interpretation, and reporting.

3.2.2. Longitudinal Design

In addition to the mixed methods research approach, a longitudinal design was used. This type of design involves the collection of data over a meaningful period of time (Wang et al., 2017). In other words, longitudinal studies follow a given population of individuals over an extended timeline. Generally, participants are asked to give information about the topic of study on several different occasions which enables the conceptualisation and the assessment of changes over a given period of time (Menard, 2002; Ruspini, 2004; Wang et al., 2017). The periodical data collection allows for the analysis of changes from the participants' environment that shape the course of their life. This gives the researcher the opportunity to analyse the social phenomena and to have better understanding of the social change dynamics of behaviour during the period of the data collection. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to grasp the nature and type of changes as well as to recognise the temporal evolution of change occurring in participants (Ruspini, 2004; Wang et al., 2017).

One characteristic of longitudinal studies is the use of repeated or continuous measures to gather data periodically. Time intervals are generally determined either by the nature of the change processes or the effect of factors influencing the processes in question. These two factors, according to Wang et al. (2017), are the key factors which will determine the number of phases, time intervals and the length of the study. On that account, time intervals can range from a number of hours to a number of weeks for change processes requiring a short period of time; whereas change processes demanding longer time periods can range from several months to years (Caruana et al., 2015; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Ruspini, 2004; Wang et al., 2017).

Several longitudinal designs exist, such as cohort, trend, and panel surveys. In trend longitudinal studies, researchers are interested in studying individuals' inclinations and opinion

changes over time. Changes are examined by administering the same surveys to different people at different points in time. In cohort longitudinal studies, however, only participants who meet categorical criteria related to the researcher's principal interest are included in the study. Nevertheless, different people falling into the sampled category can participate at different time points of the study. A panel longitudinal design, which included interviewing the same participants at regular intervals and at different time periods was used in this study (Kearney, 2017; Ruspini, 2004).

The obvious advantages of using longitudinal design are that it allows the researcher not only to show how a particular phenomenon develops over time, but also to identify the possible causal nature of the change process (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Ruspini, 2004). In essence, the goal of a longitudinal research design is generally to increase the validity of inferences made (Wang et al., 2017). However, the presence of attrition is a limiting factor when conducting longitudinal research because of the high probability of reduction in the sample size when participants decide to leave. Moreover, it has been found that questioning the same participants repeatedly might affect the type of responses given in future time points of data collection. This is because participants may be less inhibited or might have gained new experiences and information between the different points in time (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Ruspini, 2004). As a result, this may affect the surveys and interview responses given by participants.

The above-mentioned limitations can be countered by ensuring that quality is maintained throughout the research process. Firstly, the population of interest should be identified keeping in mind the longitudinal nature of the study. Attrition can be overcome by ensuring that the initial sample is of a high quality (Duncan, 2000; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). Ideally, it is encouraged to follow up all participants right from the first time to the last time of data collection (Ruspini, 2004). Therefore, precise, and established rules with follow through mechanisms and schedules allow for a successful follow up of participants over the whole period of data collection. Furthermore, adopting suitable data collection methods that are effective, and opting for a reasonably long period of data collection enables the researcher to maintain the quality of data collection (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Ruspini, 2004).

A longitudinal design was used to examine and to explain identity formation trajectories in adolescence in a South African context. In fact, adolescence is characterised by important transitions, which involve multiple changes in the individual's life. The significance of these

transitions differs depending at what point in the life of the individual they take place (Meeus, 2011; Ruspini, 2004). Moreover, the relationship between identity formation trajectories and resilience was verified at different points in time. This involved collecting data over a period of twelve months with a gap of six moths difference between the initial phase, the second phase and the third phase. Thus, the longitudinal nature of this study, which entailed conducting repeated interviews and surveys to the same participants at different points in time enabled the researcher to capture the dynamic nature of identity and resilience (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). Furthermore, using a longitudinal design enabled the researcher to quantify changes in identity and resilience. It enabled description of the progression of events and factors contributing to the formation of identity and the development of resilience and identification of the processes, patterns and causes of change in identity and resilience in adolescents (Meeus, 2011). Using a longitudinal study allowed to answer the research questions on identity and resilience trajectories and adolescents' perception of identity and resilience development processes over time.

3.3. Participants and Sampling Procedures

The population of interest was male and female adolescent high school learners living in disadvantaged communities and attending local public schools in the Greater Taung Municipality in North West Province, South Africa.

Adolescence is a developmental stage which begins about the age of 11 to 13 years and ends between 17 and 21 years. Variation in the age boundaries of adolescence have been noted by several authors (Curtis, 2015; Steinberg, 2014; Louw & Louw, 2020). In order to remedy for such variations, it would be more appropriate to consider social cultural norms and psychological factors rather than relying fully on the chronological age. Given that adolescents take a long time to define their identity and are emotionally and economically dependent on their parents, it is against this background that adolescence can be demarcated between 11 to 21 years (Curtis, 2015; Louw & Louw, 2020; Steinberg, 2014). Therefore, adolescents between the ages of 12 and 24 years could participate in this study. This age range places the participants in the phase of transition during which adolescents work towards a synthesised identity (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Louw & Louw, 2020; Marcia, 1966). The same group of adolescent participants who formed part of this study was followed for 12 months. The term disadvantaged community is often used when describing communities with high rates of crime, unemployment, and poverty (Swahn et al., 2008). Disadvantaged communities have limited

recreational facilities, thus, the adolescents in such communities have been identified as vulnerable to drug abuse, alcohol, pregnancy, unemployment and gangsterism (Mokoena, 2006; Naidoo, 2000; Romero et al., 2018). In the context of this study, the disadvantaged community consisted of rural communities which were economically, socially, and educationally underprivileged by the South African apartheid government. Moreover, individuals living in such communities are still socio-economically deprived (Das-Munshi et al., 2016; Gradin, 2018; Mal-Sarkar et al., 2021).

The Greater Taung Municipality is in the North West province under the jurisdiction of Dr Ruth S Mompati District Municipality. About 95% of the Greater Taung Municipality is predominantly rural, and a large majority of the population rely on the agricultural sector for employment. A total of 98,2% of the municipal population classify themselves as black South Africans (Statistics South Africa, 2012). A total of 48,3% of the population is economically inactive, and 50% of the total population is unemployed (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2020).

Residents of Dr Ruth S Mompati District Municipality live in high degrees of poverty because of the area's socioeconomic gaps. Many the inhabitants have a low education, and minimal access to sanitation services and water. Furthermore, inhabitants of the Ruth Mompati Municipality experience service delivery backlogs (Department of cooperative governance, 2020). Lack of access to basic services leads to a poor quality of life and exposes adolescents to risk factors (Massetti et al., 2011). In previous studies, it was found that the population of this area is under researched in the South African context (Maree, 2010; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2012). Moreover, learners from these poor communities are faced with risk factors such as poor academic achievement (Romero et al., 2018).

There is a significant discrepancy with regards to educational opportunities between children from affluent milieu and those from poor socioeconomic circumstances (Graven, 2014; Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019; Spaull & Kotze, 2015). Schools in affluent milieus have better access to resources in comparison with schools located in poor rural areas. Thus, in order to address the issue of resource distribution in schools, the South African government classifies schools into quintiles (Dass & Rinquest, 2017). Quintile categories are based on the location of the school in relation to the socioeconomic attributes of the given community (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019; Sayed & Motala, 2012). Quintile one, two and three schools are classified as non-fees paying schools (Maistry, 2020; Naong, 2013; van Dyke & White, 2019). The majority

of schools in the Greater Taung District have been placed under quintile one, two and three by the Department of Basic Education (2021). In the current study, random sampling of schools was done using the Department of Education's ranking / list of schools, and only quintile one, two and three schools, were included. Letters of permission to conduct research were distributed to the different high schools in Taung; principals who gave their approval were contacted, and learners from three different schools were recruited for this study. Voluntary participation and the signing of the consent forms before taking part in the part of the research were also considered as inclusion criteria.

3.3.1. Quantitative Sampling Procedures

Convenience sampling was employed to select participants for the quantitative section of the study (Maree, 2011). For this type of sampling technique, the researcher makes use of readily available participants, and even though the results cannot be generalised, it is considered as less costly and a quick method of data collection (Stangor, 2015). Five hundred and sixty-four participants meeting the inclusion criteria were recruited to collect the quantitative data. The number of participants recruited was achieved, bearing in mind the longitudinal nature of the study and to counter possible attrition. All participants who took part in the first time point of data collection were followed through the three time points of data collection.

Recruiting participants can be challenging and especially so when it comes to a longitudinal study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Thus, researchers often use incentives to encourage participants to take part in a study (Allen, 2017). In the current study, to improve the response rate, a modest incentive in the form of refreshments (snacks and cool drinks) were provided at each time point after the completion of the questionnaires and the focus group interviews.

The final sample, excluding participants who took part in only one phase or two phases of the data collection period, consisted of 564 participants for all the three phases of data collection. The demographics of the sample are presented in a table format below:

Table 1:

Distribution of the Sample with Regard to Age, Gender, and Language (Quantitative)

		Frequency	**%**
Age	12	7	1.2
	13	40	7.1
	14	57	10.1
	15	93	16.9
	16	112	20.9
	17	118	16.7
	18	94	3.9
	19	22	1.1
	20	6	1.8
	21	10	.4
	22	2	.4
	23	2	.4
	24	1	.2
Gender	Male	269	47.7
	Female	295	52.3
Language	Setswana	542	96.1
	isiXhosa	14	2.5
	IsiZulu	3	.6
	Sesotho	2	.4
	Afrikaans	1	.2
	English	1	.2
	Shona	1	.2
Primary caregiver	Both parents	193	34.2
	Mother	256	45.4
	Father	22	3.9
	Siblings	23	4.1
	Extended family	49	8.7
	Others	21	3.7

Living arrangement	Both parents	236	41.8
	Only one	262	46.5
	None	66	11.7
Parent Marital status	Never married	356	63.1
	Married	177	31.4
	Divorced	31	5.5

Gender groupings were fairly evenly represented, with 52.3% female participants and 47.7 % male participants. The ages of the participants ranged from 12 to 24, with the mean of the sample being 16.22, a mode of 17, and standard deviation of 1.902. Most of the participants were Setswana speaking (96.1%). Is important to note that the majority of the participants had their mothers as the primary care giver, that is 45.4%. Additionally, most of the participants lived with one parent that is about 46.5%. With regard to marital status of parents, more than half the sample's parents were never married 63.1%.

3.3.2. Qualitative Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants for the qualitative section of the study (Babbie, 2010; Bernard, 2013). This approach requires the sample to be selected on the basis of the knowledge the researcher has of the population under study. Participants are selected because they purposefully contribute to the understanding of the research problem (Babbie, 2010; Creswell & Poth, 2018). This implies that the researcher identifies participants possessing specific characteristics of interest. In this study, inclusion criteria were based on age and gender groups. A nested approach was followed in that participants who took part in the quantitative section and indicated interest in the qualitative aspects of the study were approached (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Learners between the ages of 12 and 24 volunteered to participate in focus group interviews.

During each data collection time point, six focus groups with approximately eight members per group participated in the semi-structured focus group interviews. The optimal size of focus groups is debatable. Some researchers propose groups of eight to 12, while others suggest a size of six to eight or even five to six (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). Generally, homogenous groups can have four to 12 people, and heterogeneous groups can have six to 12 members. It is recommended that the size of the focus groups should not be too small as this negatively affects the quality of interaction between participants and not too big as this can become overwhelming

to manage (Gaižauskaitė, 2012; Sagoe, 2012). However, to cater for attrition, researchers can recruit up to ten participants because larger groups are hard to manage (Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Nyumba et al., 2018; Stewart et al., 2007). In this study, on average, each focus group had nine members so as to provide all participants with the opportunity to express their opinions. The demographics of the participants who took part in the focus groups are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2:

Distribution of the Sample of participants at each time point with Regard to Age, Gender, and Language (Qualitative)

		Focus Group1	**Focus Group2**	**Focus Group3**	**Focus Group4**	**Focus Group5**	**Focus Group6**	**%**
Age	14	0	1	0	1	0	1	5.5
	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	16	0	1	3	1	3	1	16.7
	17	3	4	2	4	2	4	35.2
	18	2	2	2	2	2	2	22.2
	19	2	0	2	0	2	0	11.1
	20	2	0	0	0	0	0	3.7
	21	0	1	0	1	0	1	5.5
Gender	Male	1	5	1	5	1	5	33
	Female	8	4	8	4	8	4	67
Language	Setswana	9	9	9	9	9	9	100

The age ranges of the participants who took part in the focus group interviews were between 14 and 21. The majority of the focus group participants were between the ages of 17 and 18. This means that the majority of those who participated in the focus groups were in their late adolescent years. There were more female participants than males, with 67% of the sample being female and 33% of the participants being male. All participants had Setswana as their home language.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected over a period of 12 months, with 6-month intervals, across three different points at time (T1, T2, T3), as has been done in previous short-term longitudinal studies investigating developmental trajectories in identity and psychosocial functioning (Luyckx et al., 2013).

At the onset of the study, learners were provided with information leaflets, briefing both the parents/guardians and the learners about the research study. Consent forms and assent forms were also given to the learners (Allan, 2017). They were encouraged to take the consent forms to their parents/ guardians. The confidential and voluntary nature of the study, and the benefits of taking part in the research were also highlighted (Allan, 2017). The signed consent forms and assent forms were then collected from the learners after three days. The researcher was introduced to the learners by a teacher appointed by the school principal. Data collection was done in English following that it is the media of education of the participants. Data collection procedures, which consisted of administering the survey battery and focus group interviews, are discussed in the sections that follow.

3.4.1. Biographic Details

In all sections of the research, basic identifying and biographic information was obtained through a biographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). The biographic questionnaire consisted of mostly closed questions regarding participants' age, gender, home language etc.

3.4.2. Quantitative Procedures

Standardised self-administered questionnaires were employed to collect quantitative data. The self-administered questionnaires were administered during study time. This was from 2 pm to 3 pm in the afternoon when learners were done with the school programme of the day or during their free periods. The same survey was completed during the three-time intervals; that is, at the initial phase, then after six months and lastly after twelve months In structured self-report measures, participants draw on their perceptions when answering the items. All participants got the same questionnaire, thus reducing bias or interviewer response effects (Bernard, 2013; Stangor, 2015). In fixed format standardised self-report questionnaires, the researcher makes use of batteries, and the use of more personal questions is enabled by the perceived anonymity and reduced social desirability (Bernard, 2013). The use of standardised self-report questionnaires has been found to be efficient when dealing with large samples, as it is time and cost efficient (Baker et al., 2016).

However, the use of self-report questionnaires is associated with acquiescent responding and social desirability (Stangor, 2015). Acquiescent responding is increased when participants tend to give the same (affirmative) responses instead of considering alternatives, while socially desirable responses correspond to positive description of individuals in ways that are socially acceptable (Wetzel et al., 2016). Biases in research studies are reinforced by the fact that, participants are not taken through the whole process of answering the items, consequently, increasing the chances of getting missing data (Baker et al., 2016; Stangor, 2015). To counter the mentioned limitations, anonymity and honesty was emphasised. Reversed stated items were used to reduce the effects of acquiescent responding.

3.4.2.1. The Dimensions of Identity Development Scale (DIDS). To assess the dimensions of identity the *DIDS* was used. The *DIDS* of Luyckx et al. (2008) was developed to assess the five aspects of identity formation (Luyckx et al., 2008; Mastrotheodoros & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017). Identity is viewed as a dynamic process involving the five dimensions of identity listed below: *Exploration in Breadth*, *Commitment Making*, *Ruminative Exploration*, *Exploration in Depth*, and *Identification with Commitments* (Beyers & Luyckx, 2016; Luyckx et al., 2008).

The subscales of the *DIDS* have been described by Luyckx et al., (2008) as follows: Firstly, *Exploration in Breadth* means that adolescents are actively searching for different alternatives before committing. *Exploration in Depth* refers to the re-evaluation of choices and commitments made on a deeper level. *Ruminative Exploration* is the degree to which adolescents find it difficult making any identity related choices and they experience psychological distress. *Commitment Making* implies the degree to which adolescents have explored relevant identity goals, values and beliefs and have made relevant choices. *Identification with Commitment* happens when adolescents internalise their choices because they can identify with and are convinced that they made the right choices.

The five dimensions proposed by Luyckx et al. (2008) are understood in a framework of two cycles in identity formation dynamics. The dual cycle model offers an integrative way of approaching identity development (Luyckx et al., 2006). The first cycle is commitment formation during which adolescents explore multiple possibilities and make preliminary commitments. This includes *Exploration in Breadth* and *Commitment Making*. In the commitment evaluation cycle, adolescents make in depth exploration, after which they can either choose to identify with the commitment made initially or restart the commitment formation cycle when not satisfied with choices made (Luyckx et al., 2006; Luyckx et al., 2014;

Mastrotheodoros & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017). However, in both cycles (commitment formation and commitment evaluation), adolescents can feel stuck and tend to ruminate over identity choices and decisions (Van Doeselaar et al., 2020). For that reason, the *DIDS* was used in this study to assess the Luyckx et al. (2008) five identity formation dimensions.

The *DIDS* consists of 25 five-point Likert-type items, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). High scores on each of the subscales are indicative of a high endorsement of that specific identity dimension (Luyckx et al., 2008). A sample of items used to describe each of the five dimensions are: *I know which direction I am going to follow in my life* (*Commitment Making*), *I think about different goals that I might pursue* (*Exploration in Breadth*); *I worry about what I want to do in my future* (*Ruminative Exploration*), *my future plans give me self-confidence* (*Identification with Commitments*) and *I think about the future plans I already made* (*Exploration in Depth*).

The *DIDS* is a reliable tool for data collection. In a sample of white high school learners, Cronbach's Alpha scores of .86, .83, .86, .70 and .85 for *Commitment Making*, *Identification with Commitment*, *Exploration in Breadth*, *Exploration in Depth* and *Ruminative Exploration* respectively were noted (Luyckx et al., 2008). Studies done on Japanese adolescents resulted in Cronbach's Alpha values of .92, .81, .75, .73, and .66 (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). The *DIDS* cross-cultural use has also been validated in various countries (Markovitch et al., 2017; Mastrotheodoros & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017; Van Doeselaar et al., 2020). Besides this, the *DIDS* has not only been proved to be a valid and reliable tool cross-culturally, but it also captures the longitudinal relations between the 5 identity dimensions (Luyckx et al., 2006). The *DIDS* was used in this study because it is a valid and a reliable instrument for *Commitment Making*, *Exploration in Breadth*, *Identification with Commitment*, *Ruminative Exploration* and *Exploration in Depth* in adolescents (Luyckx et al., 2008).

3.4.2.2. The Resilience Questionnaire for Middle-Adolescents in Township Schools (R-MATS). The *R-MATS* of Mampane (2012), was used to measure resilience development in adolescents. The *R-MATS* was developed to measure individual and systemic risk factors and the degree to which adolescents from disadvantaged South African backgrounds overcome the incapacitating effects of risk in their environment.

The *R-MATS* consists of 35 items employing Likert type rating scales. It consists of two subscales, *Resilience Subscale A* consisting of 11 items about the background of participants. *Resilience Subscale A* measures the perception of respondents' individual and systemic risk

and protective factors. It consists of yes or no items, ranging from 11 to 22. High scores on *Resilience Subscale A* are indicative of either a high perception of protective factors or a high perception of risk factors (Mampane, 2012). Some examples of the items on *Resilience Subscale A* are: *at least one member of my family has a job, my parents are still alive, I feel I am treated badly at home, I live in a brick house* and *I have enough food to eat at home.*

Resilience Subscale B has 24 items assessing the factors contributing to resilience with four-point Likert scale items ranging from true all the time (1) to untrue all the time (4) and subscale scale scores ranging from 24 to 96. High scores on *Resilience Subscale B* are indicative of high resilient behaviour (Mampane, 2012). *I am in control of what happens to me, I believe that I am able to do better, I know someone at school who cares about me and I can talk to, I am a tough person,* and *doing well in class is very important to me,* are examples of items from *Resilience Subscale B.*

A study with South African, middle adolescents from under-resourced backgrounds revealed a good internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of .82 for both of the following researchers (Mampane, 2012; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). The *R-MATS* was also used by Bonita (2019) on a study of black South African adolescents, and a Cronbach's Alpha value of .85 was reported. Thus, the *R-MATS* was chosen over other batteries because it proved to be a valid and reliable instrument. The *R-MATS* is thus an appropriate tool to understand resilience factors in adolescents living in low socioeconomic environments, challenged by multiple risks (Bonita, 2019; Mampane, 2012; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011).

The reliability of the Identity and Resilience subscales and is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3:

Reliability of Identity and Resilience Subscales

Variables	**Cronbach's Alpha**		
	Time 1	**Time 2**	**Time 3**
Identity: Commitment Making	.845	.869	.883
Identity: Exploration in Breadth	.793	.807	.844
Identity: Ruminative Exploration	.706	.722	.773
Identity: Identification with Commitment	.827	.869	.896
Identity: Exploration in Depth	.664	.691	.705
Resilience: Subscale A	.568	.602	.616
Resilience: Subscale B	.788	.845	.845

In the current study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the *DIDS* subscales (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth)* observed at Time 1 ranged between .664 and .845. During Time 2 of data collection, the highest Cronbach's Alpha coefficients value observed was: .869 and the lowest being .691. Whereas at Time 3, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values were quite high with lowest being .705. According to Foxcroft and Roodt (2013) the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient observed at the three points in time is acceptable when dealing with interest scales. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient indicates fairly good internal consistency.

In this study, the reliability of the *R-MATS* questionnaire *Resilience Subscale A* ranged from .568 to .616, while the *Resilience Subscale B* ranged from .788 to .845. *Resilience Subscale A*, had relatively low reliability in all three time points (.568; .602; and .616). Thus, only *Resilience Subscale B* was used in the operationalisation of resilience for the inferential statistics. However, *Resilience Subscale A* was still considered in the descriptive statistics.

3.4.3. Qualitative Procedures

Data were collected using focus group interviews. These are qualitative techniques used when the researcher wants to understand group dynamics and discuss issues about a given phenomenon (Cyr, 2016; Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Galliott & Graham, 2016). Focus groups interviews were used because they allowed the researcher to gain information regarding complex phenomena such as identity dynamics and resilience. This is because participants could work together to tackle complex issues (Cyr, 2016). Furthermore, information gained

through the focus groups provided background information about the research problem and generated new concepts and ideas in relation to the topic being studied (Galliott & Graham, 2016).

The advantages of using focus groups is that participants may feel more confident to speak and discuss issues in a group setting that they would otherwise not talk about in individual interviews (Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Galliott & Graham, 2016). It offers opportunity to challenge and develop other group members' ideas, or corroborate responses of other participants. Focus groups also allow participants to interact with each other in formulating answers to interview questions (Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Participants' lively interaction with each other contributes to a better understanding of the research problem. Researchers also get to learn more about the research hypothesis which is reinforced by the unstructured nature of the focus group interviews (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). Besides this, rich, and saturated data may be gained at both interactive and individual levels regarding the topic. Other objectives attained in using focus groups relate to better understanding of participants' thoughts, ideas, and opinions about the subject at hand. In essence, the interactions taking place between the participants spark new ideas and gaining rich data (Cyr, 2016; Galliott & Graham, 2016).

Individuals also tend to trust and to readily engage in self-disclosure in homogeneous groups (Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Nyumba et al., 2018). Therefore, suitable participants were recruited from those who had taken part in the quantitative phase of the research. Consequently, the focus group participants in this research shared similar characteristics such as age range, and social and ethnic background.

Furthermore, factors such as accessibility, distraction, comfort, and sufficient space should be taken into consideration (Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Galliott & Graham, 2016; Nyumba et al., 2018). Consequently, a convenient venue was identified, where the focus groups took place with the assistance of the school principals. This was an empty room from which all focus group interviews were conducted. The room was spacious, and all the participants could have a good view of one another and of the moderator. Focus group interviews with participants helped to gain insight into their ideas, feelings, thoughts, and attitudes about a given theme in a non-evaluative, non-threatening, and open environment (Harvey & Holmes, 2012; Silverman, 2006; Stewart et al., 2007).

Six focus groups were conducted during each data collection time point. The groups explored the factors that hinder/contribute to identity and resilience development processes in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities. These focus group interviews were conducted by the researcher herself. At the beginning of each discussion, the researcher briefed the participants about the topic and about the ground rules pertaining to confidentiality and the voluntary nature of the study. Participants were also informed that the discussions would be audio recorded.

The focus group interviews were semi-structured which gave room for flexibility, and the researcher was able to probe more on different issues raised during discussions through use of additional questions (Adams, 2015; Byrne, 2022; Galliott & Graham, 2016). Both the participants and the researcher engaged in a discussion involving predetermined questions (Adams, 2015; Byrne, 2022). Moreover, the researcher had the freedom to encourage participants to elaborate or even consider a new line of questioning introduced, to follow up what participants were saying. Besides this, it gave participants the freedom to express their ideas in their own words (Adams, 2015; Byrne, 2022; Galliott & Graham, 2016). An interview guide consisting of semi-structured questions and themes was developed beforehand by the researcher. Therefore, during all the time points of data collection, the researcher asked the participants the series of semi-structured questions to facilitate the focus group discussions, and to gain an *Exploration in Depth* of the topic of discussion.

Focus groups can take as long as 2 hours of time, depending on the topic of study, or until data saturation is reached. However, younger participants tend to lose interest and focus early because of their short attention span (Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Galliott & Graham, 2016; Nyumba et al., 2018). Given the age ranges of the participants, the researcher ended each focus group interview once data saturation was reached. Thus, each focus group took about 45 minutes. Different methods are used to collect data during focus groups, and in this case, audio and tape recording was used for data collection (Galliott & Graham, 2016; Nyumba et al., 2018). As a result, all focus groups were recorded and later transcribed verbatim (see Appendix G).

In focus group interviews, the researcher takes the role of a moderator which enables a smooth discussion to take place between participants through focusing attention on participants rather than on self (Galliott & Graham, 2016; Nyumba et al., 2018). As an experienced researcher, the moderator shows flexibility and patience. The researcher takes a non-judgemental position and as a good listener who is open minded, guides participants through

the focus group interviews in an unbiased manner. The researcher's attitude towards participants determines the amount and the quality of information that will be gathered. Thus, sensitivity to participants' needs and good leadership skills play a critical role when conducting and guiding the focus group process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Dilshad & Latif, 2013; Galliott & Graham, 2016). In this study the researcher was mindful of participants' needs and ensured that no participant felt coerced to engage during the focus group discussion. All participants were given the opportunity to contribute to the focus group discussion.

Challenges of using focus group interviews may occur when some participants feel the pressure to conform and thus tend to be hesitant to discuss certain issues in the presence of peers (Barbour, 2007; Galliott & Graham, 2016). In addition, group members may influence each other's ideas or agree to avoid discussing certain issues or cast them in a particular light. There is also the potential for participants' comments and responses to upset group members either directly or indirectly. Moreover, it has been established that boys tend to be talkative in mixed-gender focus groups. Similarly, errors emanating from the interviewer's involvement and probable power imbalance between participants and the researcher can be considered as potential disadvantages of using focus group interviews (Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Galliott & Graham, 2016).

The challenges mentioned were addressed by the researcher. The researcher briefed the participants about the aims and the objectives of the study. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the study, and thus freely consented to take part in the group interviews. An opportunity to ask questions before each group interview was given to participants. This made them feel comfortable and provided a safe environment where they could engage freely with one another and with the researcher. The participants were constantly reassured that there were no right or wrong answers and that all their opinions mattered and would be considered. A good rapport with the participants was established, and the researcher maintained a professional attitude all the time, while, remaining open to all contributions from participants.

3.5. Data Analyses

The aim of using mixed methods research is to provide breadth, depth, and value to the study findings. Mixing methods also allows the researcher to build more solid conclusions by integrating analyses and thus obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Bazeley & Kemp, 2012). Therefore, data is analysed across methods and time intervals, allowing for integrated inferences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Creswell,

2007). Using the mixed method, quantitative and qualitative data were integrated and analysed simultaneously. Both sets of data across three different points at time (T1, T2, T3) were eventually compared to facilitate comprehensive conclusions and quality meta-inferences.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Participants' responses were captured on Excel and then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 28, 2019). The following steps were taken: firstly, the questionnaires that were not completely filled out were discarded. Secondly, for items with two values crossed out, a median was calculated. Thirdly, participants who did not take part in all the three time points of data collection were excluded. For instance, 957 participants took part at Time 1 of the data collection. Whereas, 897 participants took part at Time 2 of data collection. Finally, 810 participants took part at Time 3 of data collection. However, only 564 participants took part at Time1, Time 2 and Time 3 of data collection. This number was achieved after manually sorting the data. Lastly, all the reversed coded items were reverse-scored.

Considering that the *DIDS* has been mainly used in Western, Asian and American populations, it was necessary to calculate the reliability of the scale in the context of the present study. Since the *R-MATS* was previously administered in a township context, it was also necessary to determine the reliability of this scale in the context of the current study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which is a measure used to ascertain the reliability of a scale was used to verify the internal consistency of the *DIDS* and the *R-MATS* (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Several researchers have ascertained that a Cronbach alpha ranging between .60 and .80 is acceptable (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013; Goforth, 2015; Loewenthal & Lewis, 2015; Multon & Coleman, 2010). Moreover, other factors such as population group, test length, and purpose of the scale should be considered when interpreting the internal constancy of a scale (Cronbach, 1951; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Basic descriptive data analysis of the sample was done. Frequency distributions for categorical variables included language, gender, and age group. Furthermore, to describe tendencies in the continuous variables, means and standard deviations were computed. The Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was calculated to establish the direction and strength of the relationships between identity and resilience over time.

In this study, identity (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) and resilience

(*Resilience A and Resilience B*) were measured and analysed at the three time points (Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3; each six months apart). The observation of variables' behaviour over time in a longitudinal design allows researchers to discover covariation patters among variables. In addition, researchers have the possibility to test for causality in both directions, which is otherwise challenging in cross-sectional designs (Burkholder & Harlow, 2003; Kearney, 2017). Furthermore, researchers can estimate the stability of constructs through the analysis of the relationship between successive measurements of the same variable. Thus, longitudinal analysis can lead to determining the cross-construct relationships which emerge after the within-construct correlation has been controlled. Consequently, these analyses, elevate the possibility of establishing causal models after examining the relationship between constructs (Burkholder & Harlow, 2003; Kearney, 2017).

Given the longitudinal nature of the study, repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) allowed the analysis of associations between the dimensions of identity and resilience across different points in time (Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3) (Juengst et al., 2017; Luyckx et al., 2013). Repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) were appropriate in this longitudinal study where multiple variables were tested at three time points. To test whether there were significant differences (changes over time) in the five dimensions of identity and two resilience subscales, repeated measures one-way and two-way ANOVAs were conducted (Allen et al., 2019).

One-way and two-way repeated measures ANOVAs test for differences when dealing with more than two groups. The advantage of the repeated measures ANOVA is that it allows the researcher to compare the means of two or more groups when the same sample is tested two times or more. In both one-way and two-way repeated measures ANOVA, one can only use one dependent variable (Allen et al., 2019; Howell, 2014). In one-way repeated measures ANOVA, the independent variable should have three or more groups/levels. When comparing differences between two or more groups, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA is computed (Allen et al., 2019; Howell, 2014). In a two-way repeated measures ANOVA, one makes use of two independent variables with more than two groups. Hence, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA test, is used to analyse the differences of means using two independent variables with more than two levels or groups. The advantages of a two-way repeated measures ANOVA is that it allows one to analyse main effects and interaction effects (Allen et al., 2019; Stangor, 2015).

Before performing the one-way and the two-way repeated measures ANOVAs, the following assumptions were checked (Allen et al., 2019): The dependent variables should be measured on a continuous level. In this study, all dependent variables (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth, Resilience A and Resilience B*) were measured on a continuous scale. The second assumption stipulates that the independent variable (Time) should consist of at least two categorically related groups. In this study, the related groups refer to the same participants who took part in all the three time points of the study (Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3). This assumption was not violated. The third assumption is the assumption of normality which states that the scores of each sample are distributed normally around the mean on the dependent variable. The assumption of normality was violated in this study for various of the dependent variables (Shapiro-Wilk = $p < 0.01$). The results showed that the distributions were negatively skewed because the majority of the participants in the sample obtained high scores on the dependent variables. According to Norman (2010), the assumption of normality for ANOVA refers to the distribution of means and not the data. In addition to this, the Central Limit Theorem states that, for larger samples sizes, means are approximately normally distributed regardless of the original distribution (Kwak & Kim, 2017). The fourth assumption pertains to the homogeneity of variance. This implies that each population of scores has the same variance. This refers to the sphericity, and repeated measures ANOVA's are particularly susceptible to violating this assumption. Violation of the assumption will lead to the increase of the Type 1 error. SPSS provides the Mauchly's Test of sphericity to test this assumption. If this assumption is violated, the Greenhouse-Geisser correction can be used (Allen et al., 2019; Howell, 2014).

First, to investigate the change in identity and resilience over time for the whole group, a one-way repeated measures ANOVA was done. After checking the assumptions for ANOVA, the statistical test to calculate *F* was done. The *F*-statistic gives an understanding of the total variability. In this study the *F* statistic was calculated to determine the effect of time on identity and resilience, i.e., how much of overall variability in the dependent variable is attributed to the changes in time. If a time effect on the dependent variables was observed, a post-hoc test was conducted to determine between which specific groups (i.e. time groups) differences were observed. If significant differences were found, a magnitude of effect was also computed in order to establish whether the differences were meaningful.

Secondly, to investigate the change in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) over time for High and Low Resilience groups a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was computed. Firstly, the participants were divided into a High and a Low Resilience group. The two groups were comprised of the 25% of participants with the highest scores on *Resilience B* (90 or higher; n= 147) and the 25% of participants with the lowest scores on *Resilience B* (80 or lower; n=136). Following this, the *F* statistic for each main effect was calculated, i.e., to find out whether resilience has an impact on the five identity dimensions over time. If a positive interaction effect was detected, only one level of the variable was examined to establish whether changes in that identity dimension was significantly different between Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. Finally, independent *t* tests were performed to determine specific differences between these groups over time (Time 1. Time 2, and Time 3).

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive reflexive thematic analyses as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2019, 2022), and Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), was utilised to analyse the qualitative data of the mixed methods research. The hybrid approach entailed generating themes identified from participants discussions to uncover meanings in relation to identity and resilience processes (Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The text was then organised for subsequent interpretation by analysing transcribed data. The following steps were considered when analysing the transcribed data: familiarisation, coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes, naming of prominent themes and writing up the results contextualised within the socio-ecological systems approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

Reflexive, thematic analysis enables the researcher to identify, analyse, and report themes generated within collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Reflexive thematic analysis is a useful research tool as it is also flexible. This type of data analysis has the potential to provide rich, complex, and detailed accounts of data. Reflexive thematic analysis is applicable across epistemological and theoretical approaches (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Moreover, Reflexive thematic analysis enables access into the world of participants. The researcher is also able to report meanings, experiences, and reality of participants and, above all, examine how different events, experiences, realities, and meaning

reflect social discourses (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

A hybrid approach to data analysis was used in this study to generate the patterns and themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This implies that the researcher followed inductive and deductive approaches to analyse the qualitative data gained from the focus group interviews. An inductive approach means identifying themes and patterns, after examining the data collected and generating a posteriori codes (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2020). It is not about trying to fit data into pre-existing codes but is achieved rather through carrying out a thorough examination of the generated data. A deductive approach is based on the researcher's theoretical interest in the study topic stemming from research questions, aims, and questions asked in the focus group interviews, and producing a priori codes (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022).

The reflexive thematic analysis is not a linear, but a recursive process whereby the researcher moves back and forth throughout the analysis process. A reflexive and iterative process ensures that the developed themes are founded on the original data (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The following process of analysis was followed in this study.

Phase one entailed familiarisation with the data and the transcription of focus group interviews. The transcription was done verbatim including all verbal and nonverbal expressions (see Appendix G). In transcribing the focus group interviews, the researcher did not only familiarise herself with the data, but also engaged in prior interpretation and meaning making of the data. Following this, the researcher read through the focus group transcriptions repeatedly searching for patterns and meanings. This enabled her to become familiar with the breadth and the depth of the content. It is advised to start with note taking and underlining ideas that will guide the coding process (Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). As a result, the initial contact with the data allowed the generation of preliminary ideas.

Generating a posteriori and a priori codes took place in phase two of the analysis after the researcher read and familiarised herself with transcribed data. A posteriori codes are linked to interesting aspects of the data and are a way of engaging with the text in a meaningful manner while assessing the relationships between coded data and the phenomena under study. The idea is to generate as many a posteriori codes as possible without losing the context of the study

(Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022). A priori codes, however, stem from research questions, aims and the interview questions. Hence, a list of a priori codes based on the demographic data was generated (Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Coding was done for potential patterns and themes, generating as many a posteriori and a priori codes as possible.

Phase three involved generating of themes stemming from the a posteriori and a priori codes. At this point, the researcher attempted to sort different codes, linking them with the aim of forming overarching themes. All a posteriori and a priori codes were compared, contrasted, sorted out, and put together by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2019). Themes and subthemes were constructed using the previously coded transcripts.

Phase four of the reflexive thematic analysis entailed refining of themes into coherent patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022). Unclear and unfitting themes were reworked in ways to either create new themes or discard unclear and disjointed themes. This was followed by checking the formulated themes against the whole data set to ensure that each individual theme generated reflected the participants' thoughts and ideas, and the theoretical understanding of the constructs under study.

Phase five involved further refining, defining and naming of themes in ways to identify the essence of each theme in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022). A detailed analysis of each theme was done by identifying the story that each theme told and how it fitted to the overall narrative of the data. Sub-themes were identified and analysed and classified hierarchically. Lastly, the researcher ensured that each theme identified and analysed was clearly defined.

Finally, the last phase of the reflexive thematic analysis entailed the writing out of the report in a logical, coherent, concise, and non-repetitive manner (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Byrne, 2022; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The writing up required the researcher to use data extracts that demonstrated and captured both the participants' views and supported the research questions and aim.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the Scientific Committee (Social Sciences) of the Faculty of the Humanities and the General Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State (UFS-HSD2019/1876) (see Appendix C). Authorisation to conduct the study was gained from the Department of Basic Education (see Appendix D) and

school principals (see Appendix F). Parental consent (see Appendix B) and the learners' assent (see Appendix B) were obtained from participants meeting the inclusion criteria

Throughout the study, the researcher adhered to ethical guidelines to serve the best interests of the participants (Health Professions Act, 1974). Ethical principles relevant to the proposed study included informed consent, autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence, confidentiality, respect for participants, impartiality and justice (Allan, 2017).

Participants should not be jeopardised in any way by their involvement in the study (HPCSA Booklet 6; Wassenaar, 2010). Similarly, researchers should not discriminate against participants unfairly based on their gender race, culture age, or social status. Moreover, participants should not be excluded based on their ethnicity, religious or spiritual beliefs (HPCSA Booklet 6). Thus, in this study the inclusion criteria were observed as mentioned in the sampling procedures to ensure objectivity. All participants whose parents consented and were willing to take part in this study were included. In summary, the recruitment, selection, inclusion, and exclusion of participants was done fairly and impartially.

Consent of participants is essential before conducting any research study. This means that the people involved have the right to know what is going to happen during the research process and have the right to decide whether they want to have that experience (Allan, 2017; HPCSA booklet 6, Health Professions Act, 1974). Research participants should therefore be given the necessary information about the effect and the nature of the study. Moreover, information should be given in a language that the participants understand as well as taking into consideration their capacity to consent (Allan, 2017; HPCSA booklet 6, Health Professions Act, 1974).

Information leaflets and consent/assent forms were handed to the identified schools after they had given their consent (see Appendix F). Prior to getting the consent and assent from parents and learners (see Appendix B), the school principals from the identified schools, were briefed about the aim, benefits, risks, and procedures of the research process. The school principals identified potential participants. Thereafter, the information leaflets, were written in languages understandable to both the participants and the people who were legally authorised to consent on their behalf. These were distributed to all learners who showed an interest in taking part in the study. The researcher obtained written consent of the participants parents/guardians (see Appendix B) because the participants who were minors did not have capacity to consent. Consequently, the participants' written assent was also required in this

study. Both the consent and the assent were obtained after the researcher had carefully briefed the learners about the rationale and nature of the study, including benefits and potential risks of taking part. Only learners who gave their assent and whose parents consented took part in the research study.

Participants should not be coerced into participating in a research study (Allan, 2017). To ensure the voluntary nature of the study, the population of study was approached, and they were informed about their right to refuse from taking part in the research study or to withdraw without any consequences. This applied in both instances of data collection, during the surveys and the focus group interviews. Moreover, at the beginning of each focus group interview session, participants were also briefed about the voluntary nature of the study and that the interviews would be audio recorded. Only participants who were comfortable and had agreed to take part in the focus groups were retained.

According to Babbie (2010), research where human beings are involved requires to be reviewed to ensure that the rights and interests of the participants are observed. The researcher was authentic and honest with participants and ensured that they were not deceived with regard to their expectations or any perceived benefits from taking part in the study. Furthermore, it was ensured that participants did not incur any costs by right of their participation in this research study. Deception in research should be explained to participants and any deceptive techniques used must be justified. Participants are not to be deceived in a way that their willingness to take part in research is affected (Allan, 2017). Therefore, no deception was involved while conducting this study, and the researcher ensured that the aim of the research was discussed with all learners taking part. Participants were made aware of the longitudinal nature of the study; thus, they made an informed decision to take part in it.

According to the principle of beneficence and non-maleficence, researchers should always act in the best interest of participants by prioritising their well-being, dignity, and health, and avoid harming them either emotionally, mentally, or physically (HPCSA booklet 6, Health Professions Act, 1974). Researchers are expected to be cognisant of the foreseeable consequences of working with minors and ensure that potential benefits outweigh potential harm (Allan, 2017). Any harm to participants resulting from their taking part in a research study must be avoided or minimised by the researcher (Babie, 2010). Moreover, the welfare of the participants must be promoted (Bless et al., 2013).

During this research study, possible harm resulting from taking part in the study was identified, and possible measures to counter any physical or emotional harm were anticipated. Generally, qualitative data obtained from participants may be intrusive, and their academic activities may be disrupted by virtue of their participation (Mampane, 2012). However, participation in this study did not pose any potential physical risks. In case of emotional discomfort linked to participation, the researcher was sensitive to identify the particular cases and referred them to the school's life orientation teachers. Social workers debriefing services (see Appendix E) was provided to the schools where needed. The researcher took responsibility to ensure that appropriate support was available at no cost to the participants.

Allan (2017) states that issues of confidentiality and anonymity must be discussed at the outset with participants. Full anonymity of participants was assured during the survey administration part of data collection. However, participants could only be assured of partial and not full anonymity during the focus group interviews (Mampane, 2010). During focus group interviews it's hard to monitor participants for confidentiality once the data collection session is done. Nevertheless, all data collected during the study, including participants' identifying particulars were kept confidential. Soft copies were encrypted whereas hard copies were kept in a locked cupboard only accessible to the researcher. The key was kept in a lockable drawer. In addition, all information obtained was used solely for research purposes and it was made accessible to other professionals at the University of the Free State. The research results were given to principals of the schools taking part. Moreover, it was intended to publish the results obtained for academic purposes, but participants' names and schools were kept anonymous to protect their identity.

Researchers should respect the privacy of people taking part in their studies. Participants should be treated well, and their opinions should be respected. Researchers should avoid involving themselves in improper relationships and be mindful of power relations with the participants (Allan, 2017; HPCSA booklet 6). The researcher was aware of the age group of participants and ensured that their rights were always respected. Throughout the research process, participants were reminded of their right to abstain from engaging in any content that they judged intrusive, especially during focus group interviews.

3.7. Rigour in Mixed Methods Research

Based on the good reporting of mixed methods study (GRAMMS) (O'Cathain, 2010), researchers are to report on the components of each approach, design type, data integration,

limitations, and information gained through the mixing of data (Harrison, et al., 2020). However, according to Wisdom et al., (2012), rigour is basically concerned with both the researcher's actions including the steps followed in the scientific process and how the researcher documented those processes to help with quality control. As stated by Harrison et al. (2020), in the Rigorous Mixed Method Framework, rigor gives a clearer picture of what the researchers did during their study, and it allows the assessment of quality in a study. In this regard, rigour is conceptualised as a continuum in mixed methods research. Therefore, demonstrating rigour in mixed methods research supposes ensuring validity and reliability of the study (Bless et al., 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study the criteria used to examine rigour for both components of the mixed method research involved: Credibility/internal validity, Dependability/reliability, transferability/external validity, confirmability/objectivity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Harrison et al., 2020).

In mixed methods research it is important that both the quantitative and the qualitative procedures meet the criteria for rigour (Wium & Louw, 2018). In this study, the validity and reliability of the self-report measures used were established. However, to allow for an integrative model of quality assurance, it was also important to establish qualitative validity by assessing whether the data obtained through focus group interviews was accurate. This implied examining the extent to which the data collected was credible, dependable, transferable, and confirmable (Bless et al., 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Perez, 2019). In addition, the legitimisation process which was used to assess other criteria unique to mixed methods research was also used to establish rigour and quality in this study.

Credibility aligns with the notion of internal validity of the findings in the quantitative component of the mixed methods research (Brown et al., 2015). Internal validity is used to determine whether the measures used reflect the actual constructs used in the study. In this research study, internal validity was demonstrated by making use of instruments whose content and face validity, were assured in previous research studies. Credibility on the other hand is not about, producing absolute truths, but the focus is on the process of validation (Bless et al., 2013). To ensure credibility of findings, different data collection methods can be employed and different aspects of collected data is evaluated to add rigour to the study (Brown et al., 2015; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this research study, credibility was ensured by use of an in-depth literature review, making use of multiple contexts, multiple observations, prolonged engagement and triangulating different sources of information collected from participants. The

use of multiple methodologies and data collection techniques such as focus group interviews, and surveys enabled the researcher to evaluate different aspects of collected data, thus, adding rigour, richness, and depth to this study (Brown et al., 2015). Mixed methods research enhances validity through cross validation procedures of triangulation. Rigour was also improved by the open discussion of the result findings and how integration and quality of integration was achieved from both the quantitative and the qualitative procedures of the mixed methods research (Garuth, 2013).

Assessing a study for external validity enables researchers to establish whether the findings can be regarded as relevant and be extrapolated to other contexts and across different settings, people and times (Bless et al., 2013; Lichtman, 2014). In this study, external validity was confirmed by looking at the possibility of generalising the results based on the sample size and sampling procedures used, and during the interpretation phase of the research findings. However, to ensure transferability, the question of representativeness is addressed given the use of small samples used in qualitative research. Therefore, transferability is defined as the degree to which research findings can be applied to other contexts and settings (Wium & Louw, 2018). Several ways such as purposeful sampling, a detailed, rich description of participants, the research process, context, setting, and procedures used allow for study replication, and give room for comparative studies to be carried out (Brown et al., 2015; Bless et al., 2013; Lichtman, 2014). Besides this, thick, rich descriptions allow readers to evaluate the transferability of information from one setting to another (Creswell, 2007). In the mixed methods research used in this study, transferability was demonstrated by providing detailed descriptions of the data collection process, contexts, and research situations, and the use of a big sample size. Moreover, using a mixed method research approach adds value by improving the quality of results not only because researchers gain a better contextual understanding but also because the results obtained are integrated with findings that are externally valid and generalisable (Garuth, 2013; Cronholm & Hjalmarsson, 2011; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017; Wium & Louw, 2018).

Quality in mixed methods research is also determined by dependability and reliability. Reliability is the ability to produce similar results across measures and time (Wium & Louw, 2018). Techniques such as the use of reliable measures were used in the quantitative component of the mixed methods research (Brown et al., 2015). This demonstrated that replication of the study with the same methods, context and participants would give similar results (Shenton,

2004). Reliability of the self-report questionnaires used in this study was demonstrated by use of statistical tests such as the Cronbach's Alpha. The use of closed ended questions in the surveys administered in this study and having multiple data sets contributed to reliability. Furthermore, dependability is defined as the degree to which the researcher can substantiate the occurrence of the findings. A detailed report of the research process should be included in the study in order to enable replication of the study by future researchers (Bless et al., 2013; Shenton, 2004). Dependability was attained in this study by giving an in-depth description of the research design, process of data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. An audit trail was established with the aid of computer-assisted analysis (Brown et al., 2015). This ensured that the findings were consistent and allowed for the review of the data analysis processes (Brown et al., 2015).

Confirmability and objectivity are ways used to assess replicability in mixed methods research by tracing the course of the research study step by step (Bless et al., 2013; Shenton, 2004). Objectivity is the criteria used to maintain rigour in quantitative procedures of mixed methods research. Objectivity allows replication of the research study if the researcher can use the same tools and follows the same procedures to collect and analyse data (Mampane, 2010). In this study objectivity was achieved by using proper questionnaires and appropriate data analysis methods. To ensure confirmability, a detailed description of the methods was done to enable other researchers to determine how far the findings could be accepted as an accurate and true reflection of the phenomenon under study. Moreover, a critical methodological evaluation and findings, increases confirmability of the study (Bless et al., 2013). The researcher ensured that the findings were a true reflection of participants' experiences, rather than the researcher's preferences. This was done through an elaborate methodological description to reveal to the reader the extent to which emerging constructs and data could be regarded as credible. Consequently, the researcher employed an audit trail by describing all the processes involved during the course of the research study (Shenton, 2004). This also involved an in-depth discussion of the purpose and aim of carrying out a mixed methods research earlier in this chapter which entailed giving evidence for the relevance of employing mixed methods research. Moreover, the researcher elaborated on the rationale and the value of mixed methods research, and appropriate questions were included. In essence, the advantage of using mixed methods research enhanced confirmability because the hypotheses generated were tested within one single study (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Reflexivity is a process whereby researchers reflect on how their assumptions, background, involvement, or participation influences research study conclusions (Chambliss & Schutt, 2013). This is an important aspect of trustworthiness, as researchers acknowledge how their role contributed positively or negatively to the research findings. The process is facilitated by tracing back the choices and all steps taken during the study as part of the investigation, and as part of building rigour (Chambliss & Schutt, 2013; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Trainor & Grue, 2013). Furthermore, researchers overcome issues of reflexivity when using mixed methods research approach by combining participants and researchers' views and by revealing relationships connecting variables while also uncovering meanings amongst participants (Bryman, 2006; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Triangulation and legitimation are both ways of evaluating the credibility of a mixed methods research study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017).

Legitimation is a term used in mixed methods research to describe reliability, validity, and trustworthiness (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Wium & Louw, 2015). When appraising the mixed method research in a critical manner, the legitimising procedure is crucial (Wium & Louw, 2015). In essence, mixed methods research is challenging when it comes to ensuring that the meta-inferences stemming from the research findings are trustworthy, credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable (Collins et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). In that case, it is based on the principle that assessing quality is a continuous process of evaluation which takes place throughout the research study to generate a good quality of meta-inferences (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Therefore, findings should be critically reviewed from both the quantitative and qualitative components of the mixed methods research, and an assessment of how the findings were integrated should be done (Garuth, 2013; Wium & Louw, 2015).

In this respect, the following threats to the legitimation process were addressed. Representation is a challenge faced in both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches when used independently. Small sample sizes and the difficulty to capture participants' lived experiences, have been highlighted in previous studies. However, in mixed methods research, capturing participants' experiences in both numbers and words poses a challenge (Collins et al., 2007). The issue of representation in mixed methods research is minimised by selecting samples compatible with the research design. Hence, in this study the sampling scheme,

sampling designs and sample sizes were informed by both the quantitative and the qualitative research approaches.

In this respect, the researcher employed a realistic, practical, efficient, and ethical sampling design. This implies that the chosen sampling design enabled the researcher to accurately account for the phenomenon under study. Likewise, mixed methods researchers have to bear in mind the differences in sample sizes between the quantitative and qualitative procedures (Collins et al., 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Besides this, the selection of the samples reflected the research objectives, the rationale, the purpose of using mixed methods research, and the research questions. The aim was to generate rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study and to obtain saturation of data. Moreover, the researcher ensured that inferences and meta-inferences stemmed from the sample that was taken from the population under study. As a result, following this process enabled the researcher to make projections to other population groups and contexts (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

Indeed, the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in mixed methods research, may involve contradictions, especially when the two approaches are compared and contrasted (Collins et al., 2007). Thus, in mixed methods research, the concept of integration is core. The question therefore is to understand the appropriateness of triangulation in a mixed methods research (Collins et al., 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Creswell and Plano Clark, (2018) highlight the issue of integration which implies the way quantitative and qualitative results are combined in mixed methods research. In this respect, integration in mixed methods research can take place during different stages of the research process. For instance, researchers can choose to integrate both the quantitative and qualitative procedures during their planning stage or during data analysis or at the conclusion of the mixed methods research. Different mixed methods research approaches demand different methods of integration (Harrison et al., 2020). In the concurrent mixed methods approach, the quantitative and the qualitative data are collected simultaneously, and the results are compared, contrasted, synthesised, integrated and merged as the final stage of data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Harrison et al., 2020; Vium & Louw, 2018).

Consequently, the issue of integration was decreased by ensuring that meta-inferences were made by combining both the quantitative and qualitative findings. This was applied by making sure that the threats to legitimisation were addressed at each stage of the research process in order to obtain credible, dependable, trustworthy, confirmable, and transferable results. In this

context, quality in this study entailed the continuous assessment of both the quantitative and qualitative components. The purpose was to generate good quality meta-inferences (Harrison et al., 2020; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Wisdom et al., 2012).

Longitudinal designs allow researchers to improved rigour (Burkholder & Harlow, 2003; Kearney, 2017). In this study rigour was improved by the observation of variables' behaviour over time and the capturing of repeated and sufficient information, recording the changes taking place by adequately describing such changes in variables (Perks & Roberts, 2013).

3.8. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the aim, purpose, and research questions were discussed, followed by an in-depth discussion of the mixed methods research approach, exploring both its advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, sampling procedures related to the study were elaborated. A detailed account of data collection and data analyses procedures was given. Finally, ethical considerations, issues of rigour and legitimation and the value of a longitudinal design in mixed methods research approach were highlighted. In the next chapter the quantitative and the qualitative results will be given in detail.

Chapter 4 – Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The quantitative and qualitative results are presented in this chapter. In the first section, the focus is on descriptive and inferential statistics. Under the descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations are calculated to describe trends in continuous variables. A presentation of how the identity subscales and resilience interact with one another over time is given under the inferential statistics. The focus of the qualitative results is to report on both the individual and systemic factors involved in the construction of identity and resilience as reported by participants. In addition, results on the impact of individual and systemic factors on the development of identity and resilience are presented.

4.1. Quantitative Results

In this section, a summary of the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses is presented.

4.1.1. Descriptive Statistics

The analyses, summary, and description of findings related to the sample are presented in Table 4. This includes measures of central tendency and variability including the mean, standard deviation, and the minimum and maximum scores, computed to provide basic information about the five identity and two resilience subscales.

Table 4

Minimum and Maximum Scores, Mean and Standard Deviations for Identity Subscales and Resilience Subscales

Variables	Min T1/2/3	Max T1/2/3	Mean T1	SD T1	Mean T2	SD T2	Mean T3	SD T3
Identity: Commitment Making	5	25	19.84	4.338	20.08	4.377	19.85	4.778
Identity: Exploration in Breadth	5	25	18.73	4.095	18.92	4.118	18.99	4.354
Identity: Ruminative Exploration	5	25	16.22	4.442	16.27	4.492	15.99	4.842
Identity: Identification with Commitment	5	25	20.18	4.055	20.02	4.352	19.91	4.621
Identity: Exploration in Depth	5	25	17.48	3.912	17.67	3.999	17.33	4.135
Resilience: Subscale A	1/2/3	11	8.84	1.819	8.88	1.868	8.71	1.957
Resilience: Subscale B	56/30/44	96	84.57	7.342	81.91	8.625	82.67	8.566

Table 4 can be summarised as follows: Participants' scores on the *DIDS* subscales (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) within the three time points ranged from 5 to 25. From the measures of central tendency and dispersion, it is important to note that most of the *DIDS* subscales scores tended to be in the higher ranges. For instance, the means of *Identification with Commitment* (*M* = 20.18, *SD* = 4.055; *M* = 20.02, *SD* = 4.352; *M* = 19.91, *SD* = 4.621),

and *Commitment Making* (*M* = 19.84, *SD* = 4.338; *M* = 20.08, *SD* = 4.377; *M* = 19.85, *SD* = 4.778) are quite high. This implies that the majority of the sample endorsed high values on these two particular subscales. High *Identification with Commitment* implies that most participants feel confident about choices made and this contributes to a coherent sense of self. High *Commitment Making* scores infer that participants were not actively searching for other options but had decided on the direction to follow with regards to their identity related goals and choices in life.

The *Exploration in Breadth* dimension means that scores were moderately high in all the three points in time (*M* = 18.73, *SD* = 4.095; *M* = 18.92, *SD* = 4.118; *M* = 18.99, *SD* = 4.354). The scores show that participants were to some extent involved in questioning, gathering of information, assessing alternative possibilities and consulting about other possible options they could commit to.

Exploration in Depth was moderately high (*M* = 17.48, *SD* = 3.912; *M* = 17.67, *SD* = 3.999; *M* = 17.33, *SD* = 4.135). Repeatedly worrying and considering alternatives can be stressful. Therefore, participants in this study, took some time to reflect on their current commitments with no intention of searching for other avenues.

Ruminative Exploration dimension of identity had the lowest scores (*M* = 16.22, *SD* = 4.442; *M* = 16.27, *SD* = 4.492; *M* = 15.99, *SD* = 4.842). The scores on this particular dimension, are indicative that either the participants lacked alternative options to pursue or were forced to prematurely close down the process of exploration due to stressful events such as COVID-19. Therefore, the participants did not go through reconsideration and worrying about other directions to take but were committing to their decisions and goals.

With regard to resilience, the *R-MATS* comprised of two subscales *(Resilience Subscale A* and *Resilience Subscale B). Resilience Subscale A* ranged from 11 to 22, and *Subscale B* had a possible score ranging from 24 to 96. The sample mean for *Resilience Subscale A* (*M* = 8.84, *SD* = 1.819; *M* = 8.88, *SD* = 1.868; *M* = 8.71, *SD* = 1.957) subscales did not vary much across the three time points, but the sample mean for *Resilience Subscale B* (*M* = 84.57, *SD* = 7.342; *M* = 81.91, *SD* = 8.625; *M* = 82.67, *SD* = 8.566). varied in all three points in time. Both scores for *Resilience Subscale A* and *Resilience Subscale B* were in the higher ranges. The means on both *Resilience Subscale A* and *Resilience Subscale B* indicate that a large proportion of the sample believe in their ability to overcome hardships and challenges, therefore, they endorsed

high values on the scales. This implies that the majority of the participants consider themselves as being resilient.

In conclusion, a brief presentation of the means, the standard deviations, and the score ranges obtained on the measures of identity and resilience were provided. According to the analyses, the participants mean scores on the dimensions of identity subscales (*DIDS*) did not change much in all three points over time. *Identification with commitments* scores were the highest followed by *Commitment Making* scores. *Exploration in Breadth* and *Exploration in Depth* mean scores were moderate, and *Ruminative Exploration* showed moderately low mean scores. Concerning the *R-MATS*, the *Resilience Subscale A* showed high scores but did not substantially vary across all three points in time. However, participants' scores on the *Resilience Subscale B*, were high and varied over time.

4.1.2. Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics were computed to answer the research questions, and the results are described. In the first part of this section, analyses related to the identity and resilience trajectories of adolescents living in disadvantaged communities are presented. The focus is on findings related to whether there are significant differences/changes over time in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment* and *Exploration in Depth*) and resilience (i.e. What is the effect of time on identity and resilience?). Furthermore, statistical analyses are presented to establish whether there are significant changes over time in the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identification with Commitment and Exploration in Depth*) for High and Low Resilience groups (i.e. Does resilience have a significant impact on identity over time?).

4.1.2.1. Change in Identity and Resilience Over Time for the Whole Group. To answer the first research question, a one-way repeated measures analyses of variance (ANOVA) was performed to analyse the associations between identity and resilience across different points in time. The *F* statistic was computed to establish the effect of time on identity and resilience. In other words, following the generated analyses, one can establish how much of the overall variability in identity and resilience is attributed to the change in time. Regarding assumption testing: The results of the Mauchly's Test (to test the assumption of sphericity) are presented in the next Table 5.

Table 5

Mauchly's Test Results for Repeated Measures One-Way ANOVA

Variable	Mauchly's W	Df	*p*-value
Identity: Commitment Making	.999	2	.658
Identity: Exploration in Breadth	.998	2	.532
Identity: Ruminative Exploration	.987	2	.022*
Identity: Identification with Commitment	1.000	2	.988
Identity: Exploration in Depth	.996	2	.354
Resilience: Subscale A	.995	2	.276
Resilience: Subscale B	.996	2	.309

* $p < .05$

The repeated measures one-way ANOVA results are presented in Table 6. With the exception of *Ruminative Exploration*, sphericity was assumed.

Table 6

Results of Repeated Measures One-Way ANOVA for Total Group (N =564)

Variable	**Time 1**		**Time 2**		**Time 3**		***Df***	***F***	***p***	***Eta²***
	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**				
Identity: Commitment Making	19.84	4.34	20.08	4.38	19.85	4.78	2;1126	.669	.513	.001
Identity: Exploration in Breadth	18.73	4.10	18.92	4.12	18.99	4.35	2;1126	.784	.457	.001
Identity: Ruminative Exploration	16.22	4.44	16.27	4.49	15.99	4.84	1.97;1111	.881^	.413	.002
Identity: Identification with Commitment	20.18	4.06	20.02	4.35	19.91	4.62	2;1126	.844	.430	.001
Identity: Exploration in Depth	17.48	3.91	17.67	4.00	17.33	4.14	2;1126	1.289	.276	.002
Resilience: Subscale A	8.83	1.82	8.89	1.86	8.72	1.94	2;1122	2.644	.072	.005
Resilience: Subscale B	84.55	7.34	81.91	8.63	82.66	8.57	2;1124	27.290**	.001	.046

** p <.001

^ Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used

From Table 6 it can be deduced that there were no significant differences in the identity dimensions between the three time points. *Resilience Subscale A* also showed no significant difference.

The mean of *Resilience Subscale B* showed a statistically significant difference between the three time points ($F_{2;1124}$ = 27.29; p < 0.001) with a corresponding medium effect size (Eta² = .046). The results indicate at least one statistically significant difference between the means

over time. To determine between which specific groups / time points the significant difference exists, a post hoc analysis with a Bonferroni adjustment was performed and the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment

Time (I)	Time (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std error	*p*
1	2	2.642	.380	< .001
	3	1.889	.364	< .001
2	3	-.753	.361	.112

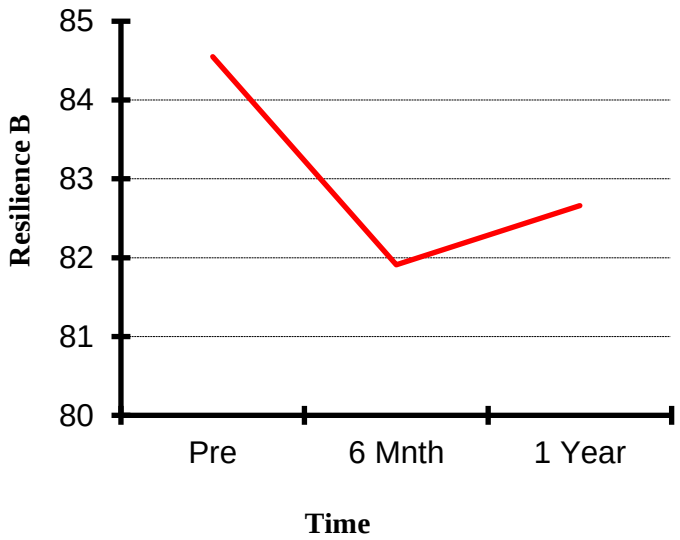
** p <.01

Bonferroni's post hoc results revealed that the pairwise comparison of *Resilience Subscale B* statistically significantly decreased from Time 1 to Time 2 (mean difference = 2.642; < 0.001), and from Time 1 to Time 3 (mean difference = 1.889; p < .001). However, no statistically significant difference (mean difference = -.753; p = .112) was identified between the Time 2 and Time 3 measurements.

The findings are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Changes in Resilience Subscale B over time



From the graphical presentation of the analyses, the mean for *Resilience Subscale B* dropped from Time 1 (M = 84.55, SD = 7.34) to Time 2 (M = 81.91, SD = 8.63) then slightly increased from Time 2 to Time 3 (M = 82.66, SD = 8.57).

In summary, the five identity dimensions (*Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration*, *Identification with Commitment,* and *Exploration in Depth)* seem to be stable over time. Subsequently, although slight changes were observed in the identity dimensions overtime, these changes were not significant. Furthermore, the findings presented show that mean scores on *Resilience Subscale B* dropped significantly from Time 1 to Time 2. It is noticeable that resilience started to increase again towards Time 3. However, the increase was still nonsignificant. Moreover, at Time 3, resilience was still significantly lower than during Time 1. This implies that participants struggled to maintain a stable level of resilience throughout the study.

4.1.2.2. Change in Identity Over Time for High and Low Resilience Groups. To answer the second research question, a two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to explore the impact over time of *Resilience* on *Commitment Making, Exploration in Breadth, Ruminative Exploration, Identity commitment, Exploration in Depth*. Participants were divided into two groups, a *High Resilience* group (the 25% of participants with the highest scores on *Resilience subscale B*) and a *Low Resilience* group (the 25% of participants with the lowest scores on *Resilience subscale B*). To establish whether resilience has an influence on the five dimensions of identity over time, the *F* statistic for each main effect was computed. The results of the Mauchly's Test are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Mauchly's Test Results for Repeated Measures Two-Way ANOVA

Variable	Mauchly's W	Df	*p*
Identity: Commitment Making	.972	2	.017*
Identity: Exploration in Breadth	.990	2	.254
Identity: Ruminative Exploration	.980	2	.061
Identity: Identification with Commitment	.995	2	.475
Identity: Exploration in Depth	.996	2	.556

* $p < .05$

The repeated measures two-way ANOVA results are presented in Table 9. With the exception of *Commitment Making,* sphericity was assumed.

Table 9

Results of repeated measures two-way ANOVA

Variable	Group	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3		*Df*	*F*	*p*	*Eta²*
		$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD				
Identity: Commitment Making	Low	19.20	3.98	19.43	4.49	18.99	5.27	1.95;552.4	.633^	.527	.002
	High	20.37	4.57	21.28	3.45	20.65	4.48				
Identity: Exploration in Breadth	Low	18.09	4.04	18.37	4.24	18.52	4.48	2;568	.106	.900	.000
	High	19.21	4.38	19.37	3.81	19.36	4.38				
Identity: Ruminative Exploration	Low	16.11	4.21	16.19	4.45	15.80	4.93	2;568	.231	.794	.001
	High	16.46	4.31	16.41	4.55	16.44	4.90				
Identity: Identification with commitment	Low	19.18	4.27	18.95	4.33	18.79	4.76	2;568	.705	.495	.002
	High	20.80	4.14	21.23	3.63	20.69	4.65				
Identity: Exploration in Depth	Low	16.38	3.68	16.87	4.21	16.94	4.06	2;568	2.62*	.073	.009
	High	18.57	4.09	18.44	3.73	17.76	4.33				

* p <.10

^ Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used

The results in Table 9 indicate that there was one statistically significant main effect for the dependent variable, *Exploration in Depth*, ($F_{2;568}$ = 2.62; p < 0.10) between the Low and High Resilience groups. The Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant for any of the three tests. This implies that the variance is homogenous thus meeting the assumption of equal variance of the ANOVA. To determine specific differences between these groups over

time (Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3), independent *t* tests were performed. The results are presented in Table 10

Table 10

Results of Independent t Test for two Resilience Groups over Three Time Points

Time	**Resilience**	**N**	$\overline{X}$	**SD**	***t***	***Df***	***p***
Time 1	Low	139	16.38	3.68	-4.749**	284	.001
	High	147	18.57	4.09			
Time 2	Low	139	16.87	4.21	-3.344**	284	.001
	High	147	18.44	3.73			
Time 3	Low	139	16.94	4.06	-1.649*	284	.050
	High	147	17.76	4.33			

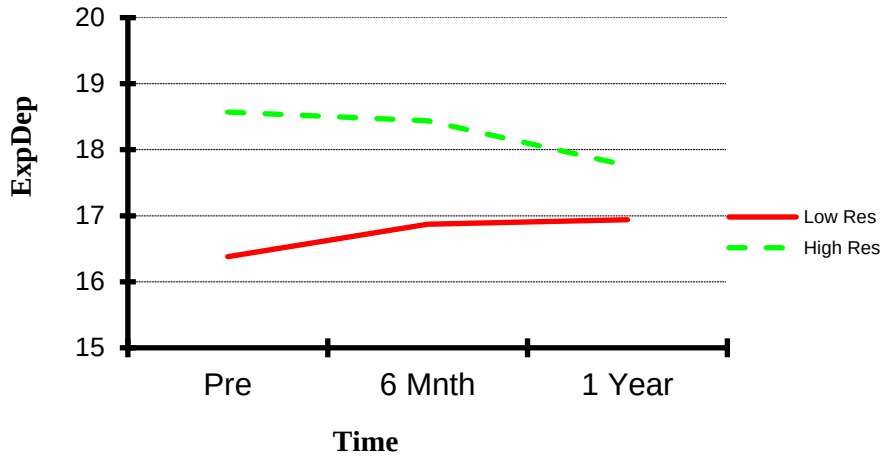
** p <.01; * $p \leq$.05

According to the results in Table 10, in all the three time points, the participants in the High Resilience group obtained a significantly higher *Exploration in Depth* mean score than the participants in the Low Resilience group.

The findings are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Exploration in Depth in High and Low Resilience Groups



Firstly, from the graphical representation of the results, it is visible that the High Resilience group's (green) *Exploration in Depth* scores decreased over time. This is an indication that participants with high levels of resilience tended to engage less and less in the re-evaluation of current decisions and commitments that the person has already made. Therefore, participants

in the High Resilience group, faced with multiple risks, developed strategies to overcome hardships and thus there was no room for re-evaluation of current commitment. This implies that the participants had chosen to committing to future directions, as they were not actively questioning and considering current choices and decisions.

Secondly, the graphical representation of the results, indicates that the Low Resilience group's (red) *Exploration in Depth* scores increased from Time 1 to Time 2 and very slightly increased from Time 2 to Time 3. This could imply that, participants showing Low Resilience battled to make identity commitments and therefore kept the exploration process ongoing. Probably they lacked confidence to commit to current identity decisions, as they had to deal with adversities they were facing during that particular period of time. As a result, battling to overcome challenges from their environment, the participants tended to engage in the re-evaluation of decisions already made. Even though some participants struggled with Low Resilience, they seemed to have considered constant re-evaluation of their commitments previously made so that they could strengthen their decisions. This explains the Low Resilience and gradual increase in the *Exploration in Depth* trend. From the results one can ascertain that the exploration process does develop progressively and at the same time speaks to the cyclic nature of exploration during adolescence.

In conclusion, the descriptive analysis showed that participants' mean scores on the dimensions of identity subscales did not vary significantly across the three points of data collection. The scores ranged from high to moderate to low. For instance, *Identification with Commitment* was high, *Exploration in Breadth* and *Exploration in Depth* was moderate and *Ruminative Exploration* scores were low. Both *Resilience Subscale A* and *Resilience Subscale B* scores were high. The scores of *Resilience Subscale A* did not vary over time whereas the scores of *Resilience Subscale B* varied across time.

Finally, the second research question was to determine whether changes in the five dimensions of identity over time could be attributed to High or Low Resilience groups. A significant difference was observed in *Exploration in Depth* for both High and Low Resilience groups.

4.2. Qualitative Results

The qualitative results are presented in this section. The results capture the experiences of adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts. To explore the participants' experiences of identity and resilience, a hybrid approach to reflexive thematic analysis was used. In addition,

the identifiers M, F and figures were used to indicate the gender of the participants and the chronological order of the transcripts respectively. In this section, the themes and sub-themes are presented in a table format, then described in a narrative format and illustrated by excerpts from the transcripts as captured during the focus group interviews.. See Table 11 below.

Table 11

Summary of Themes and Sub-themes

Main themes	**Sub-themes**
Exploring who I am: Balancing individual attributes and resilience	· Who I am is related to defining character traits, values, and goals · The significance of self-awareness
Risks and opportunities: The complexity in exploring identity and resilience	· Challenging conditions of poverty · Exposure to substances · Challenges of adolescent parenthood
Identifying what I can do: Using agency to cut through all of what pulls at us	· Agency is related to the direction I choose to take in situations of adversity · Showing agency in the face of adversity / Capacity to persevere in pursuit of personal vision
Relying on what I have: Holding to the dependable hand of significant others to navigate through landmines of life	· The role of significant others · The significance of religious beliefs

4.2.1. Exploring Who I am: Balancing Individual Attributes and Resilience

Participants utilised different expressions to describe their experiences of identity and resilience. The first theme developed is used to elaborate the adolescents' accounts of their identity exploration and what it means to be resilient. It was important for participants in this study to show the significance of their understanding and description of self and how it contributes to their ability to deal with challenges. Further it is important to highlight the stage related challenges they go through as part of the identity exploration process. In this section, the sub-themes generated are provided. Identity exploration seems to be defined in terms of character traits, values, and career goals.

4.2.1.1. Who I Am is Related to Defining Character Traits, Values, and Goals. From the participants' self-descriptions, it is apparent that identity is associated with character traits describing how they experience their sense of self and why such experiences are important to them. This is evident from participants' responses such as: *"I am calm, I'm simply an easy person yaaa I am talkative as I said previously, I'm talkative in a good in a bad way but mostly in good way" (17.13M).* Participants also mentioned other traits as elaborated in this statement: *"I am a shy person, but it comes to real things, I put my effort in them, sometimes I feel like I am very special, yeah I can do something" (2.15M),* and *"I consider myself as a happy, jovial and bright girl" (10.16F).* Furthermore, other participants described themselves in these terms: *"(…) I am a kind person and respectful person" (4.18F)*. Other participants defined their identity in terms of physical, sexual and emotional descriptors. This was explicated in statements such as" *"I think identity is about sexuality and how you feel who you are" (4.14M),* and *"identity it is who you are, it is what you are, your physical appearance and your emotional appearance" (2.35M).* From participants' descriptions, it is evident that participants did not only use isolated traits, but they also gave a holistic picture of their self-concept, including: *"identity, we are referring to the self, person in himself or herself" (2.33M).* and "*the way people are, your shadow, 'gore' your roles, who you are, the personalities" (1.22F).*

During the focus group interviews, it was apparent that participants did not purely dwell on their defining character traits as a way of understanding their identity. On the contrary, they defined themselves in terms of the values and goals they want to commit to. For example: *"I am a dignified person; I respect people a lot" (2.17M),* and *"I value other people, you know, opinions and like what they want" (14.6M).* Nevertheless, participants indicated the importance of leading by example as a trait that distinguishes them from other adolescents. In essence they viewed themselves as role models, such as the following: *"I want to be a big example to everyone I want to be I want to be good influence to everyone seeing me. Yeah, that's what I'm aiming for right now and that's what my personality is making. And that's how I am probably I'm the person who's unique" (17.13M).* These statements highlight the value of personal integration as a contributing factor to identity formation and resilience.

Moreover, in a discussion, participants referred to their experiences and abilities as something that differentiates them from others: *"The talents that I have" (1.40F),* and *"It is about my experience, talent, ability and intuitiveness" (4.16M).* Participants tended to describe themselves in terms of the future goals and career interests they wish to consider*: "My identity*

is (…) what am interested in to do" (5.2F). and *"My goal is to accomplish my matric and go to university and to my course to be a social worker" (5.24).*

In a similar vein, participants also included statements highlighting the challenges that they go through in view of their envisaged career in order to achieve a coherent sense of identity. For instance, statements like: "*About myself, right now I don't know about my goals even though I'm in grade 12, I don't know which career to choose from" (6.2M),* and "*I feel confused*" *(6.4M),* are an indication that the participants, put a lot of weight on their exploration processes although they seem to struggle. Other participants also contributed to the discussion by reiterating similar difficulties such as: *"Truly speaking I'm disappointed, I don't know what to choose" (6.6M).* This was echoed by other participant: *"I'm growing up I can see that there are many careers to choose, so why choose to be lawyer? I'm just in the world of confusion" (6.13F),* and *"right now am very very deeply confused. I don't I don't what to do, am really really confused my mind is like is like a spinning wheel, I don't know, I am I am doubting I am doubting all the careers" (11.25F).* These statements were included as they illustrate that identity confusion is deemed normative during adolescence.

Despite the challenges faced, participants emphasised their ability to engage in the exploration process. They took pride in a coherent sense of self, as elaborated in these excerpts: *"Identity is all about (…) what you like and don't like. It is all about your career choices. About what you want to become in life or what you don't want to become. About your beliefs, the talents you have" (8.4F*). Furthermore, this is enabled by identifying one's shortcomings and strengths as depicted in this statement: *"Identity may be finding your weakness or your strength may be even finding better ways to solve your problems …or dealing with yourself finding thinks that you will like and favour about yourself" (10.10M).* In fact, the emphasis on individual differences by the participants is crucial for adolescents to navigate successfully through identity related choices *"My experience makes me different from the other person" (2.26M).*

4.2.1.2. The Significance of Self-Awareness. Participants' deeper understanding of self is associated with their ability to decide on a particular path and thus transcend challenges, as indicated in this excerpt from the transcripts: *"Knowing who who I am it really helped because of knowing who I am it will determine on what I wanna be and what should I do… knowing who you are knowing what you want, it truly helps a lot" (17.23F*). In addition, participants emphasised the role of self-awareness in these terms: *"Only if you know what you want in life*

as an individual. Only if you know your weaknesses and your strength (…) that is when you start to face challenges" (2.60M). Participants echoed this point by reporting on the importance of understanding oneself and how this actually facilitates the process of exploration: *"Obviously knowing yourself clearly show you know where you are going…they will even see that you are determined in life you are a strict person and you are a person who wants to be something in life (….)and then knowing who you are clearly state I I can achieve most thing in life" (17.19M).*

Similarly, participants reiterated the value of self-awareness and how it is associated with their ability to navigate through life challenges. "*Knowing yourself better like is more important because like I think I think like is an art that you must master… your abilities, you're like your strength, your strengths, your ability in a weakness (…) I know you can win most battles you can know when to react on your things and not" (18.55M).* This included a description of a deep sense of self-awareness as one of the ways of overcoming challenges: *"Knowing yourself helps you to stand your ground whenever you feel like yeah. Like most of your problems" (18.57F*).

Participants reported how they search for self-awareness, as it is crucial in contributing towards resilience. For instance, in the focus group interviews, participants alluded to the idea of listening to one's inner predispositions: *"What you feel is right when it it always come within you" (17.18M).* The participants also used descriptors of identity that reflect personal encounters which enhanced their self-awareness, thus boosting their resilience. For instance, in this statement: *"It is all about the experience that I learnt from the other people. Like for example, in some I learnt so many things that you need to believe in yourself, don't doubt yourself and don't listen to other people, what other people say about your identity. That, is how I learnt everything and I even overcame the other challenges" (8.11F).*

On the contrary, participants acknowledged the challenges of attaining a coherent sense of self. They mentioned being aware of the myriad of changes happening to them which were triggered by puberty. *"When you grow up you start experiencing a lot of changes, a lot of transition, under the situation whereby you start seeing things differently, and you start putting yourself in a position whereby sometimes you won't understand or sometimes you have to accept yourself the way you are" (2.33M).* They illustrated their accounts in these statements: *"You feel your changing emotions (…) when you come to the stage of adolescence, you start to change, you start to feel like you are angry for others, you start to feel like you are alone in*

the world and selfish and other things" (2.35M). The participants' experiences are defined as appropriate and acceptable as they reflect stage related challenges. Even though the participants highlighted the difficulties encountered in the journey of self-discovery, it is evident that they try to overcome such challenges, as they eagerly reported in these statements: *"I think it's all knowing about what you want, it's all about knowing what you want, and what do you want to achieve as an individual in life. That gives you the motive part of living, and overcoming such obstacles in life" (2.95M).*

These subthemes were included as they portray facets of identity development in adolescents and how the exploration process leads to a coherent sense of self. In these statements, the participants' perception of self is based on character traits, roles and career goals facilitated by self-awareness. The description of self, given by participants is in line with the general way of understanding identity. It is evident that during the focus group interviews, participants referenced how one integrates the different perceptions of self to form a coherent and consistent way of approaching life challenges.

4.2.2. Risks and Opportunities: The Complexity in Exploring Identity and Resilience

The second theme generated elucidates the constant interaction between risks and opportunities and the pursuit of well-being by the participants. Living in disadvantaged communities comes with many challenges. Therefore, in this study, participants shed light on certain factors that might promote or hamper their exploration processes. With regard to generated sub-themes, it is apparent that the participants tended to view their identity exploration and resilience as directly affected by conditions of poverty, availability of substances, and adolescent parenthood.

4.2.2.1. Conditions of Poverty. Participants indicated that exposure to poverty leads to a plethora of other issues which tend to impact on their identity exploration and resilience. For instance, a number of participants highlighted that they are experiencing complex challenges in their families due to poverty: *"Mmm what has influenced me is my background because I've seen how my mother suffered raising me. She had to to to pay for my school fees. Had to buy my school uniform he had to take care of my siblings, and he had to take care of me, roughly. So what I'm really saying is that I wanna make my mom proud by trying to achieve my dream and my goals," (14.23F)*. In other discussions areas, participants described how poverty is linked to negative conditions such as family conflicts, and neglect: *"Family background is is very very hurtful because because because it I really I really I really grow I really grew up not*

knowing my father very well my real father very well. My my my real father my real father used to be a drunk but but his soul his soul rest in peace. My father my father used to be a drunk person. My brother is is a my older brother is drunk person. So, I so so so now so now so now my brother so now my brother is at home, he didn't finish school so so my mother so my mother so my mother so my mother really wants me to change the background the background to raise to raise to raise me to raise my family surname up" (11.25F).

Participants indicated that high school absenteeism can be explained by conditions of poverty they are facing: *"Other people like to dodge schools. Others are suffering find jobs to help their families" (4.30F*). Furthermore, participants, stressed how they are emotionally affected by the ramifications of poverty. In this statement, the participant brings to light other effects of poverty such as relocation to under-resourced communities and having to live with relatives: *"My mom my mom has lose her work… I have to come to Taung so that I should we should rebuild our life again (….) I have to I have to get used to live with my stepmother and she treated us, me and my younger sister so badly, telling us that he she is not our mother*" *(17.14F).* and *"The things I have experienced when I was growing up. They were hard. They made my mind set to think that hardship is mine" (3.51M).* These points are an illustration of how living in poverty threatens adolescents process of exploration and resilience.

Further discussions brought out new perspectives on how participants experience poverty: "*I was raised by my siblings in a smallanyana house*" *(3.53M) and "I know where I come from, the hard hardships that I've faced in life" (6.19M.* They continue by stressing that family circumstances act as a motivator to achieving their dreams*: "Your background at home, mm if your family is poor, you will like to pick yourself to see that I want to change the situation. And want to be the person that your parents want you to be" (2.63M)* and participants elaborated further on how living in poverty gives them the opportunity to think about their future *"Even if there are challenges in my life nothing can stop me from doing what I want and and no one will stop me from being the person that I want" (18.11M).* Consequently, a way of rising from poverty according to discussions in the focus groups seemed to be through education: *"I think is about your home ---, your background at home, when you see your background at home you see your mother suffering so you can to get to school so you can have a better future" (6.21M).*

4.2.2.2. Exposure to Substances. Most participants reported that conditions of poverty have led to increased use of substances in their communities. In the focus group interviews, participants referenced that they get involved in the use of substances, as it is made available

to them*: "I think, on the community, availability of drugs, yaaa that impacted so much in my life*" *(6.29M).* This is a reality that they are confronted with on a daily basis, and it is echoed in this statement: *"I saw in my environment most of people like are suffering like from like don't have jobs, you know, they they they like that's why that's why most of youngsters become smoke drugs, you know" (14.10M)* and "*I am living around people who like take a lot alcohol, so that put me under pressure to use drugs, or drink alcohol" (4.36M).*

Another participant stressed that the availability of substances led to unstable family situation *"(...) My parents drink a lot and I have my little brother. Sometimes after drinking alcohol, sometimes you get the house. And when you get in the house, sometimes they make noise. Sometimes he beat my mother" (9.55F).* In the excerpt that follows, participants illustrated that some of the adolescents use substances to escape from the reality of poverty in their homes: *"In the community there, children who are smoking drugs to escape how things are at their homes" (4.32F).*

Participants elaborated on the atrocities they face in their communities and how they affect them emotionally and they tend to find maladaptive ways of dealing with the issues: *"So, you start to smoke different types drugs like cocaine and other things. So that you cannot feel the pain you feeling before, So, you can to run away feeling you are feeling before or to think too much about things you have experience or you have seen. If you have seen someone being stabbed or killed in front of you. Those things stay in your mind. Every time you think, it hurts you from inside*" *(3.78M)*.

Participants, explicated how the use of substances affects them directly. In her report**,** *"Sometimes you lose your life around a small thing that does not come to life like taking alcohol in under age it causes you to get the wrong thing, to do one thing in life, and sometimes to get in trouble because of alcohol" (9.36 F),* she highlights phase related challenges of exploration. Other participants echoed their struggles with substances as described in this statement: *"(...) I almost got addicted to drugs. I wanted to become an alcoholic because I was confused on what I wanted and what I wanted" (11.33M)*. In addition, identity exploration as expressed by participants is generally associated with some form of confusion and doubt about one's goals, values and dreams.

Furthermore, other participants, added insights on how, despite exposure to substances, they try to navigate through muddled situations: *"I faced so many challenges in my life like so I have smoked I started smoking weed last of last year, drinking alcohol. I had I trick life (...)*

So what she told me encouraged me better to do better at school better in the streets so mom I started cutting fake friends and all the staff that I all did, smoking weed, drinking alcohol so like now am a changed person" (11.35M).

4.2.2.3. Adolescent Parenthood. Adolescent parenthood is one of the factors reported by participants that they consider as a great challenge to attaining their dreams. For the participants in this study, exposure to substances had destructive ramifications: "*Some of my friends go to sheebin to drink alcohol. Some of us we are studying for our what we are going to be. Then if you go to sheebin and we gonna go and drink lots of beers, we don't have mind to think, you don't have sometimes you go for a man for having sex without having any with that because of alcohol effect (...)" (15.2F).* In this study participants shed light on how some of the decisions taken lead to undesirable consequences: *"Me'em it is not their intention to fall pregnant. And things of getting pregnant. It's about things that you have told yourself or believe in yourself that I'm not going to do this, but at the end you will be in this situation and not know what to do or where to go (....) So, at the time you will be so miserable, so messy up and do not know where to go other than the clinic and social workers" (7.67F).*

From the above it is apparent that the participants get involved in risky activities which pose challenges in their lives. Besides, participants reported that adolescents with babies get frowned upon in the society: *"I am stressed about my baby, but sometimes when people see me…Maybe sometimes when I'm still away on something they laugh about me" (9.57F)*, bullied: *"I am a mother, they are expecting too much. When I try …they want to bully us" (4.26F).* Furthermore, the participants are mocked that they are after social grant because they cannot look after their own babies, as stated: *"(…) at school they hate us, some other people when you have a baby, they put you outside and talk bad about you they say you are after a grant" (4.51F).* Other participants indicated that they have to endure a lot of stress that comes with having a baby as an adolescent: "*When I was becoming a mother. I was very stressful because I don't have parents. So, this situation is stressing me because am not working and still a learner" (5.93F).*

From the second theme and subthemes, it became evident that participants are struggling to balance between adolescent related tasks but are hindered by challenges from their environment. Participants in the focus group interviews seemed to be of the opinion that living in poor socio-economic communities places them in vulnerable positions. From the highlighted statements, participants expressed the likelihood that dealing with the issue of substances might have affected the process of identity exploration and resilience. Considering that adolescence

is understood as the peak period for identity exploration and commitment, it is necessary that individuals engage in explorative activities. Despite the fact that the exploration process is fundamental to developing an integrated sense of self, some adolescents become vulnerable and thus susceptible to risk behaviours, whereas some manage to prevail in spite of adversity.

4.2.3. Identifying What I Can Do: Using Agency to Cut Through All of What Pulls at Us

The third theme generated from the focus group interviews showed that the adolescents attributed meaning to their active role in positively influencing their circumstances during their exploration processes. In the focus group interviews, participants indicated that what they can do translates into voluntary actions to change the course of their lives, thus directly influencing their capacity to explore and develop resilience. In this section, the role of participants' sense of agency is explained by focusing on the sub-themes that follow:

4.2.3.1. Agency is Related to the Direction I Choose to Take in Situations of Adversity. Adolescents taking part in the focus groups demonstrated a desire to identify and are resolved to find a way out of the challenges they are facing. From the previous section, it is evident that the background which participants come from plays a role in their identity and resilience processes. Hence, in this subtheme, issues related to underprivileged circumstances are emphasised by participants. For instance, they were able to identify the risks from their environment, as seen in the following statement: *"The community I live in and my home, they contributed to who I am today negatively (…) it is a disadvantaged community, so yeah you don't have things easy (…) but in other side I will do something to change that negativity" (6.27F).* Other participants added: *"It's at home, so my dad not being there for me, growing up to be who I am today. My mother suffering, hustling for jobs (…) I end up I ended up doing some things I regret in life. so, if I wasn't strong enough" (6.29M).* Moreover, participants are cognisant of the challenges faced as illustrated by this statement: *"(…) what I have experienced at home is really tough for me (10.16F).* Although some participants show a feeling of being overwhelmed, they are determined to rise above the hardships, as evident in the following statement: *"When I look at my background I just said to myself, you know with how my brothers and sisters and my siblings are living" I'm not going to be that person (…)" (10.43M).*

In addition to home circumstances, participants described conditions from their neighbourhoods that expose them to a number of risks. They explicated their experience as follows: *"Adolescents mostly get confused when they get to the adolescent stages. So, they end up doing drugs they become alcoholics and that mmmm that really pushes me to work more*

harder on my schoolwork and my hustle life" (11.32M). In this respect, during the focus group interviews, the participants described how, as adolescents, they are highly prone to succumb to environmental pressure. Nonetheless, they demonstrated how they dealt with the consequences of the wrong choices made, as seen in the following statement: *"When I started to have an infant whereas I am still in school, that is when I started to realise, because I didn't bunk school at the time, I didn't feel discouraged, but at the same time when I was schooling, I was working at the same time in town, in car wash during the weekends…I had to encourage myself that no matter what, when the baby is going to be brought to this earth, she must have something to eat, she must have something to wear"(2.80M).* This point echoes how the participant showed resilience in his behaviour. He juggled between school and a part-time job in order to provide for his child. Furthermore, other participants were in support of the opinion that having a baby as an adolescent comes with a lot of challenges, as stated in the following: *"I've got so much strength and so much hope before I got a baby and having a baby. I told myself that it's not going to stop me even what I want to do. And I will still continue that to study what I want as long as I have support from my mother to look after my baby when I'm out. (…) I will achieve everything that I want" (7.65 F).*

Regarding this perspective, other participants echoed the need for sorting and sifting the situations that put them in vulnerable positions, as illustrated in these statements: *"With my friends many of them they are smoking many of them they are they are doing things which are not suitable for them and they were they starting to smoke (…)I started to tell myself from them (…) I stood up by the time they were taking wrong decision"(10.39M).*and finally deciding on the trajectory to follow, as reflected in this statement: *"Then now (…) I can see that drinking alcohol is not enough, drinking alcohol is not good and bad friends are not good. And now I'm ready to change and then I'm hoping the best in grade 10" (15.2F).* In essence, participants indicated the need for goal directedness as an essential tool to deal with challenges they are exposed to, bearing in mind that they live in underprivileged communities.

4.2.3.2. Showing Agency in The Face of Adversity / Capacity to Persevere in Pursuit of Personal Vision. Participants did not only dwell on diagnosing threats from their environment, but they are also motivated to bringing about change. In this perspective, the exploration of identity formation and resilience was attributed to feelings of being in control, and perseverance. Participants showed that they are driven, and intend to positively influence the conditions of hardship they are living in. They illustrate their determination in these terms: "*I*

want to go far with life and I want to be someone in life" (17.10F). Besides, participants are resolved to transforming their situations: *"I'm going to be different and I'm going I'm going to change the situation that I'm in and I'm going to stand firm and make sure that I reach that better life and I reach my goal and I follow and I stand firm make sure that" (10.43M).* This participant's statement implies that the he relied on self to prevail in identity related challenges *"It is not only going to come so easily to me and I must look and look out for that, I make sure I achieve" (10.43M).* Their self-description included reference to making decisions based on their personal experiences as stated: *"I have experienced that the way people live is not the kind of life I want to live. I want to live and create my own life" (3.51M).* They also used statements such as *"I am fighter and don't give up easily and very ambitious and don't let anyone step on my way" (3.8M)* and, *"I don't lose hope, on what I want to be, or want to do, and keep pushing myself and until I reach my own dreams" (7.58M).* Statements like these, reveal that participants constantly question themselves about their goals, values and beliefs, which is an indication that nothing could hinder them from achieving their goals.

Participants expressed having confidence in themselves: *"I believe so much in me". (7.60F).* In other words, what helped them to explore and commit to certain decisions was their ability to navigate through challenges faced. *"I think in my everyday self-commitments and my wishes will come true" (7.60F),* This was evident in the following: *"I will say, since I have so much challenges in life, they gave me faith and I believe that it will happen no matter what happens, no matter what the situation is and the challenges and my situation is so tough and I never thought that I would rise from them" (7.60F).*

For these participants, overcoming hardships paves the way for a coherent identity which in turn reinforces their self-confidence as is evident by this statement: *"I know that I'm strong. I know like I told myself like nothing can beat, nothing can beat me up even when I fall, like I know like I gonna get back up like I'm a soldier. A soldier is a soldier no matter what happens to me but to come back up" (18.30M).* With this awareness, participants indicated that they are deliberate in their decision to achieve better conditions of life as was evident in the statements: *"I grow up where I have to hustle, to find my way through. To work, to do everything, dirty works" (3.49M).* Basically, participants firmly believe that their inner strengths act as a buffer against conditions of risk, as elaborated in this statement: *"(...) no matter the challenges no matter how tough the situation maybe I can solve it myself and I will be able to solve it and make it and make it a happy end for my sake" (10.16F).*

Of importance to participants appeared to be the need to transform the conditions of hardships in their immediate environment and the community at large through prosocial activities, as illustrated in this statement: *"I want to help my mother on the path that she's going on. And I want to help her with my siblings" (17.10F).* As such, they firmly believe in their ability to change their home circumstances. For other participants, the choice of prospective careers was guided by their desire to alleviate conditions of deprivation in their communities as evidenced: *"If I will pass my matric with good marks, I would to continue with my studies in the university and take a course get a professional so that I can help the homeless child to have a home. They need a home and love, food" (5.22M).* and *"My actual dream was to become aaa a social worker. I wanna be a social worker because I want to help some children in our community" (14.12F).* In fact, some participants have to limit their exploration process due to life challenges. They prioritise the needs of their family as stated: "*I have also decided that am not going to university ooo I just want to go straight to work because I want to help my mother" (18.3F).*

Essentially, participants are aware of the important role of education in transforming lives, and one participant illustrates it in these terms*: "But I want to push harder on school and I want to push a lot of things that, I want to push the subject that I chose at school harder and I want to take it seriously so that I can I can go far on life" (17.10F).* The hardships participants are facing, serve as a motivator to focus on their studies as a way of overcoming hardships and creating an opening for better opportunities as stated: *"What kept me going on and not quitting with schooling ma'am is because of the of the background that I come from and what happens around me in my community and it it is how I was before and who I am now?" (10.43F).* In addition to focusing on education, participants believed in the role of self, as evident in this statement: *"When you are an adolescent, the thing is you need to focus on yourself to overcome everything you go through more especially challenges. you need to be yourself, it needs to come within your heart first to face other things" (17.5.M).* Moreover, the participants' keep a positive attitude about their future to keep on going in spite of the challenges as illustrated by the following excerpt: *"What I did is that I used to get myself in the mirror and say to myself that I'm a brilliant girl. And whatever challenges that come my way, I'm going to whatever challenges come in my way I'm going I'm going to win them over" (10.48F).*

Participants identified agents from their environment that act as a threat to their identity formation and resilience. Nevertheless, participants alluded to the fact that the hardships faced

are factors that played a role in promoting exploration and resilience. In addition, the participants pointed out the intricate link between their future goals and the need for deliberate actions to achieve their dreams even under challenging circumstances. Contrary to the common trend, some participants chose to engage in activities that result in positive consequences. Basically, in this study, participants demonstrated the agency of investing on their inner strengths to overcome hardships. Hence, it takes faith in oneself to thrive in harsh conditions.

4.2.4. Relying on What I Have: Holding to the Dependable Hand of Significant Others to Navigate Through Landmines of Life

The fourth theme generated from the focus group interviews is an illustration of the importance of significant others in the process of identity exploration and resilience in the life of the participants. During the discussion, the participants explained that the exploration of who they are, what they can do and what they have occurs in their connection to significant others and their religious beliefs. In this section, the role of the significant others and religious beliefs in promoting identity exploration and resilience is accounted for as narrated by participants, focusing on the following sub-themes:

4.2.4.1. The Role of Significant Others. From the discussion in the focus groups, participants provided evidence of how they experience their strength as adolescents in relationship with others in their environment. Participants stressed the need to find someone they trusted with whom they can share about their struggles with identity exploration, given that such experiences shaped their resilience. The critical role of the community, family and school in supporting the participants is explained in these statement: *"Like me, I can't face my own challenges, I wonna speak with someone to help me to build my soul, yeah I can't face my own challenges, I have a feeling, I can give up, while I am lonely, I feel I can give up" (1.137F).* In this statement, the participant feels helpless and thus relies on external help. Participants in this study indicated a certain degree of proactiveness in seeking help. For instance, in this statement: *"How I found support from (…) because lots of them are from my neighbourhood area and they do they do always support me even they don't that much. I'm feeling so at least I have people around my area who stand by me and give me advices and tell me to stand firm and focus" (10.65 M*). In addition, participants stressed the need for venting, as it eases the weight from their shoulders *"When I share with someone like I feel like I'm kind of lifting like my burdens for me" (18.33M).* Besides, they acknowledged the value of support: *"I was sharing what is happening in my life maybe they try to help me to overcome the challenges that*

I face in my life. Give me support" (10.63M). They also expressed the need for confidentiality: *"Most of the time, I talk about my problems with people I trust mostly" (14.16M).*

The direct role of family on participants' experience of identity exploration and resilience when faced with hardships was apparent. Some participants gave a general impression of the sub-theme by alluding to the following: "*I have got such such supportive, parents. They always support me no matter what kind of things I'm going through, no matter how hard it is they always support me, they always got my back" (17.11F).* Participants' experience of support from family members acts as a scaffold which helps them to arise from challenges: *"Some challenges in life I overcome because of the encouragement I get from my parent" (3.15F)*. Similarly, during the discussions, it was evident that having a close-knit family connection contributed to participants' exploration, as stated: *"Me and my family we have a strong bond. My family supports me in every step I take, so they showed love in my life," (2.91M).* In further discussions the role of mothers in promoting participants' identity exploration and resilience was highlighted: *"My mother – motivate me. Maybe is giving me positive minds so she is the only one, she is the only person whom I can trust" (6.38M),* and "*The support from family and others encourages me complete my matric when they pass their matric" (5.34F).*

Other than family, the role played by school factors in influencing how the participants experience identity exploration and resilience is highlighted as evident in this response: *"About my challenges, I was thinking about killing myself then I told my Life Orientation teachers what I was thinking*" *(9.79F)*. The importance of having teachers who are available to meet learners' needs seemed crucial in giving emotional support to learners as stated*: (…) she said to me that I am doing well at school, you won't fail, many people face a lot of challenges could hear it and it honestly, I didn't know what I was thinking. She told me people face lots of challenges. This is your first challenge, think about your future, so she told me that I am gonna be strong enough and I am gonna be a psychologist" (9.79F).* Moreover, participants viewed schools as a place where the exploration of their future careers is facilitated. This exploration process, according to participants, was enabled by active discussions held with teachers regarding subject choices. Participants found satisfying responses which gave them hope about their future roles and goals, as evidenced in the following excerpt: *"When I was in grade 8, I suffering when doing maths. I didn't know how to use method I found a solution. I asked my teachers to help me because not doing maths may make me fail and not improve my career. So that is why I got help. I know now that I will improve my career" (8.67F),* and *"I will be*

suffering of something and needing help, I will start consulting for example one of my teachers here in school, we start sitting down sharing some views" (2.69M). In addition, participants highlighted the protective role of the school is promoting resilience in learners, as teachers tended to give them a space to talk about their challenges: *"(…) out there were teachers there who were giving me encourage encouragement in what I have to do" (10.41M)*. Besides this, participants referenced the trusting relationship they have with teachers as something that enables them to talk about their challenges: "*Like at school, sometimes the children like to laugh at me, I don't understand about the English, like when I say something they laugh at me, they don't want to correct me to say something right. So, I say I will not want help from other learners. I will only want from the teacher" (9.60F).* In this connection, participants tended to appreciate the nurturing attitude of teachers towards learners as expressed in this statement*: "I have seen teachers many teachers taking care of their school learners" (10.37F).*

4.2.4.2. The Significance of Religious Beliefs. Participants stated that other ways of dealing with hardships were acquired through their religious beliefs. Generally, participants preferred to consult with fellow church members for support as is evident by this statement**:** "*I have my spiritual, at church I have my spiritual mother and fathers and sisters, the ones I share my problems with. And keep me growing spiritually and have strength when I have weaknesses, I go to them and talk to them about my problems and give me more power, to face challenges" (1.120F).* Moreover, some participants referenced that they find solace in their religious beliefs: "*I am a Christian, I would like to say that if you put God first everything is possible" (2.73M*). In this statement the participant preferred to find encouragement in scriptures: *"I used to read my Bible each and every Sunday, got motivational quotes from the Bible, that tells that in life whether you like it or not there are difficulties to be faced with. So, I stayed with that positive believe" (2.88M).* In addition, keeping oneself busy with church activities was described by participants as a way that gives them strength to overcome hardships they are facing: *"What really helped, I was busy with church activities and the church I attend it makes to know that I have to practice what I pray for" (4.45M).*

Consequently, for the participants in this study, their exploration of identity and resilience occurred when they engaged with significant others. In this section, participants stressed the value of religious beliefs in overcoming hardships. Despite the fact that participants understand themselves as being endowed with the power to positively influence the challenges they are experiencing, they indicate the need for support from their environment.

In conclusion, the qualitative section of the results generated four main themes with sub-themes using the reflexive thematic analysis of the data. In the first theme, adolescents demonstrated the agency of investing in their inner strengths to overcoming hardships. In this theme participants used their personal experiences to describe how they perceive identity exploration and what it means to be resilient. It was critical for participants to demonstrate the importance of self-awareness and their ability to deal with obstacles. Here, identity exploration appears to be defined in terms of internal definitions of self and their perception of inner power to overcome challenges. The second theme entailed an elaboration of risks and opportunities, their impact of the developing individual, and how the participants faced them. The third theme pertained to the exploration of personal strength, and adolescents' role to positively influence their circumstances during their exploration. Therefore, adolescents proactively choose attitudes that bring about change in their lives. In the fourth theme participants highlighted the importance of other systems in promoting exploration and resilience. In essence, the emphasis was on the fact that change occurs within self and within the context of the larger community.

4.3. Chapter Summary

In summary, the quantitative and qualitative findings were succinctly elaborated on in this chapter. Firstly, descriptive and inferential analyses were presented in the first section of the chapter. The mean and standard deviations computed, gave a good description of participants scores in relation to their responses on the *DIDS* and the *R-MATS*. The scores ranged from high to moderate to low on both the *DIDS* subscales and the *R-MATS* subscales. One-way repeated measures ANOVA results gave a clear picture on the relationship between the five dimensions of identity and resilience over time. According to the two-way repeated measures ANOVA analyses, changes in the *DIDS* subscales were attributed to High and Low Resilience groups. Findings revealed significant differences for both resilience groups. In particular, *Exploration in Depth* showed significant differences.

Secondly, four main themes and their subthemes were generated and described using reflexive thematic analysis. Participants described themselves as active agents endowed with a sense of agency, self-awareness, and thus able to overcome hardships. In addition, participants' general perception of identity and resilience was elaborated on considering their understanding of risks and opportunities. Moreover, the value of other systems in the development of identity and resilience as elaborated by participants was captured. In essence, participants perceived themselves as individuals who flourish when favourable conditions are provided by the

community at large. This way of understanding identity and resilience speaks to the mutual and constant interaction between the individual and the systems they grow in. A detailed discussion of the results is given in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 5 - Discussion of Results

In this section, an integration of both the quantitative and qualitative results will be presented. Firstly, the descriptive statistics relating to the categorical data and the score ranges will be discussed. Secondly, the quantitative findings on the change in the five identity dimensions and resilience over time for the whole group will be examined. Thirdly, the change in identity over time for both High and Low Resilience groups will be presented. Fourthly, interesting qualitative findings will be discussed. All results presented in this chapter will be discussed in relation to existing body of literature, the literature review and corroborated with the qualitative findings. Lastly, a summary of the main points will be presented.

5.1. Integration and Discussion of the Quantitative and the Qualitative Findings

The aim of this study was to identify identity trajectories in adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts using the five-dimensional model developed by Luyckx et al. (2013) and to examine whether these identity trajectories are linked with resilience. The second aim was to explore how adolescents living in disadvantaged communities perceived identity and resilience development processes over time. Additionally, the researcher sought to find out what unique individual and systemic risk and protective factors are involved in the formation of identity and resilience and how these factors hinder or contribute to identity and resilience development in adolescents.

A number of longitudinal studies examining identity formation processes have been conducted (Hatano & Sugimura; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Meeus, 2011; Ruspini, 2004). However, little research to date has evaluated longitudinal trajectories combining identity and resilience in adolescents from disadvantaged contexts. In the current study, the effect of time on identity and resilience was tested. All but one identity dimension showed a substantial change over time in relation to resilience. Thus, the quantitative analyses produced results regarding the five dimensions of identity and resilience over time. In addition, significant results regarding exploration in depth in relation to whether individuals showed High or Low Resilience were observed. The qualitative findings offered an in-depth understanding of adolescents' experiences of identity and resilience focusing on systemic and individual factors.

5.1.1. Descriptive Statistics Tendencies

With regard to the demographic characteristics of the sample, the following were observed. A majority (45.4%) of the participants have their mothers as the primary care giver.

Additionally, the majority of the participants (46.5%) live with one parent. With regard to marital status of parents, more than half the sample's parents (63.1%) were never married.

This could be explained by the fact that most South African families are nuclear and extended. Moreover, a majority of both the nuclear and extended families are headed by women (Ratele & Nduna, 2018). Besides, the concept of absent fathers is well known, especially among families from disadvantaged backgrounds, where by fathers migrate because of employment. Moreover, many other factors such as death, unknown, contested, undisclosed, conjugal obstacles, obstructed access and denied fatherhood explain the high levels of women headed families (Amoateng et al., 2017; Block, 2016; Padi et al., 2014). Therefore, it can be hypothesised that participants in this study might have grappled to build a coherent, consistent sense of self and resilience. Nevertheless, despite the challenges, they found support from significant others, especially from their mothers, which enabled them to gain strength to adapt when faced with hardships (Theron, 2019; Nagi et al., 2021). For this reason, the social ecological systems theory puts emphasise on the importance of interactions within systems and the individuals. Moreover, many Africans keep good connections with others and enjoy the fruits of reciprocal connectedness. Similarly, the impact of living in a disadvantaged environment on the identity and resilience is well documented (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Crocetti et al., 2017; Ungar, 2018).

In addition, the qualitative findings demonstrated that participants expressed the important role played by their mothers in fostering identity exploration and resilience. In essence, literature underlines the role played by women including mothers, female teachers, social workers, aunts and sisters to promote adolescent well-being (Theron, 2019; Nagi et al., 2021). Participants acknowledged the critical role played by their mothers in sustaining them both physically and emotionally. This role played by mothers in identity development during adolescence has been widely documented. Adolescents with supportive mothers tend to be certain about their identity commitments and are inclined to take less time to explore for alternatives (Crocetti et al., 2017).

The focus groups revealed the distress which participants similarly experienced through having one parent as the breadwinner. For example, participants feel stressed when they see their mothers struggling to make ends meet. Some highlighted the pain their mothers go through while searching for jobs so that they can afford to pay for basic necessities for the family. On the one hand, such situations acted as catalysts that kept them focused in their

studies; hence all their deepest desire was to find a job and contribute to the life of the family. On the other hand, adolescents expressed being forced to cut short their identity exploration task and commit prematurely to a certain path. In this manner, finding a job was a way of sustaining their families, nonetheless, it also meant that they could not proceed with studies and achieve their dreams. Although participants had a good will to contribute to the survival of their families, they might have felt overwhelmed by taking up adult tasks for which they were not well prepared. Consequently, adolescents living in such an environment tend to feel overwhelmed with identity tasks, thus hampering the exploration and commitment processes (Fomby & Sennott, 2013).

Additionally, some participants appreciated their mothers for looking after their babies. This allowed them to pursue school without stressing so much. Moreover, mothers acted as motivators for the participants through encouraging them to focus on their goals and dreams. It is generally known that mothers play an important role in the lives of adolescents. Having supportive mothers, reduces doubt when it comes to the exploration of alternatives. Additionally, adolescents get to make important identity decisions without much struggle, as they feel certain about their current commitments (Crocetti et al., 2017; Meeus et al., 2010). The categorical statistics relate to trends observed in the dimensions of identity and resilience in adolescents.

Although participants in this study showed high scores on the dimensions of identity processes, no substantial changes were observed over time (twelve months period). All the *DIDS* subscales showed scores in the higher ranges with *Identification with Commitment* and *Commitment Making* being among the highest. *Exploration in Breadth* and *Exploration in Depth* were moderately high whereas *Ruminative Exploration* was the lowest of the five dimensions. These results are consistent with studies done on Japanese adolescents (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). Besides this, studies done on Western adolescents confirmed a similar trend, whereby part of the sample showed high levels of identity achievement, scored high on both commitment and exploration processes and scored low on *Ruminative Exploration* (Luyckx et al., 2013). The participants in this study seemed to have clear identity related goals and engaged in moderately exploring them. Besides, they considered gathering information from others regarding their current goals but did not dwell on that, as indicated by the moderate *Exploration in Depth* scores.

High *Commitment Making* scores imply that individuals took minimal time to explore for alternatives. However, according to Berzonsky et al. (2007), adolescents presenting high commitment patterns are classified under an information seeking style. This implies that adolescents in this study were able to get opinions about their identity related decisions. Additionally, there is an interplay between the five dimensions of identity. For instance, *Commitment Making* and *Identification with Commitment*. A number of participants show increasing levels of identity commitments, while a good number similarly show increased levels of *Identification with Commitment*. In the opinion of Luyckx model (2008), this implies that the participants were moving back and forth between the commitment formation cycle and the commitment evaluation cycle. According to the dual cycle process, *Identification with Commitment* is an outcome of *Exploration in Depth*. In this study, participants, engaged in moderate levels of assessing the current commitments. They did want to find more alternatives by engaging in *Exploration in Breadth*. Conversely, a few participants tended to ruminate on the choices made. *Ruminative Exploration* could have occurred at any level of the identity process (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2008; Markovitch et al., 2017). It is wise to note that low *Ruminative Exploration* might suggest that participants appeared to resonate deeply with identity choices made.

Ruminative Exploration scores fluctuated slightly over time. While the changes observed were not significant, the slight changes could be linked to a number of factors which influence the identity process of individuals. Generally, adolescents influence the path they choose to take; however, supportive relationships, for instance peers, family and the larger community allow adolescents to explore for possible identities (Liu & Ngai, 2020). In this regard, the value of peers in identity development has been underlined, given its centrality during adolescence. Peers are regarded as promoters of identity achievement as they offer a platform for exploration. Individuals can discuss their choices, and test and implement them (Crocetti et al., 2014). In the focus group interviews, participants mentioned finding support from peers, as well as feeling challenged by peers. Therefore, they had to learn to affirm themselves in order to avoid bad influence and successfully negotiate identity alternatives.

In essence, adolescents should be enabled to discover their passions by trying on different roles and learn through trial and error. This means that individuals are expected to constantly review their decisions, as the choices made during adolescence are inconclusive. Looking at the high scores in *Identity Commitment*, and *Commitment Making*, moderate scores in

Exploration in Depth and *Exploration in Breadth*, and low *Ruminative Exploration* it is highly likely that the participants in this study had varied experiences of identity. During adolescence, adolescents frequently take different identity trajectories (Klimstra et al., 2010; Luyckx et al., 2008). While some adolescent participants pursue meaningful identity trajectories, others take less desirable routes. Moreover, the time taken, and the degree of exploration is unique for each individual (Cramer, 2017; Klimstra et al., 2013; Kroger et al., 2010; Markovitch et al., 2017). This could explain the itinerary taken by participants in the study. Moreover, participants underlined similar challenges in the focus group interviews, as they highlighted the constant pressure encountered from their environment to engage in risky behaviours. For instance, although some adolescents grow more susceptible to particular risks, others may use the pressure to make decisions that would change their lives (Masten et al., 2004; Obradović et al., 2012).

Additionally, the scores, can be viewed as an expression of the context which the participants hail from. In this regard, the families of the participants played a great role. A body of research elaborates on the value of the family in identity development during adolescence. Generally, families offer a secure environment for exploration (Sigelman & Rider, 2015; Shirima et al., 2021). In this respect, Bowlby (1988) noted the importance of secure attachment between parents and adolescents. In essence a warm, nurturing parental relationship allows for identity exploration. In fact, nurturing relationships have been linked with *Exploration in Depth* and *Identity Commitment* (Crocetti, et al., 2010; Crocetti et al., 2017; Morsünbül, et al., 2016).

This pattern is explained by the qualitative data, where participants showed high levels of agency, confidence and commitment over time, in pursuit of future directions. Prior research underlines the critical role played by individuals' agency during adolescence. Adolescents who show agency are able to overcome challenges and hardships from their environment. Besides this, agentic adolescents manage to navigate through identity exploration and experiences of hardships (Adler et al., 2016; van Doeselaar et al., 2020). Moreover, participants seemed to be resolved about the direction to take regarding their future goals, and illustrated their capacity to thrive in hardships. Aware of the risk posed from their environment, participants aimed at maximising the use of the opportunities available to them by showing mastery and self-efficacy (Ungar, 2018).

Considering contextual factors, the participants in this study are from rural areas of South Africa where they are faced with multiple challenges (Mampane, 2014, Ndimande, 2009;

Romero et al., 2018). Therefore, the high *Commitment Making* and high *Identification with Commitment* showed by these participants, is partly due to the conditions of poverty they face in their daily lives and the lack of alternatives (McAdams & McLean, 2013; Romero et al., 2018). In the focus groups, they referred to these factors by indicating how a poor background such as lacking the basics, being raised by a single parent, or dropping out of school to find jobs in order to sustain their families forced them to commit to available identity options. Similar outcomes were found in adolescents living in deprived environments (van Rensburg et al., 2018). In addition, participants, emphasised that stressful family circumstances acted as the catalysts that enabled them to be more goal directed and more determined to focus on the already identified choices. These findings are consistent with previous studies which highlighted high *Commitment* trends of identity trajectories followed by adolescents living in disadvantaged rural contexts (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). This could be due to the fact that growing up in rural areas means less exposure, less alternatives and few role experimentation opportunities (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Morsünbül & Cok, 2014; Shirima et al., 2021). Moreover, the identity trajectories followed by adolescents depends on available resources (Karaś & Cieciuch, 2018; McLean & Syed, 2015; Waterman, 2020).

Both *Resilience Subscale A* and *Resilience Subscale B* scores were in the higher ranges. Moreover, the sample showed low *Ruminative* scores, which can explain the high *Commitment* scores. Basically, it implies that the participants in the study did not dwell on searching and questioning identity choices. Most probably, the trend observed can be linked to how adolescents from this context solved past identity and resilience related tasks. For instance, it has been established in prior studies that people go through coherent and continuous developmental trajectories (Sroufe et al., 2005). As a result, how effectively someone handles future obstacles will depend on how successfully they handled developmental challenges in the past. Thus, the developmental tasks that need to be completed during adolescence are also connected with how successfully adolescents adapt to their environment. In this sense, if difficulties from earlier developmental stages were adequately addressed, adolescents' ability to consider alternatives is guaranteed in one way. In essence, adolescents can develop internal resources by addressing earlier difficulties that won't jeopardize their identity construction (Masten & Tellegen, 2012; McLean & Syed, 2015). Therefore, less involvement in trying to resolve identity problems, as noted in this study, could be linked to participants' certainty about their goals, roles and values, and might have led to the observed High Resilience scores.

However, there seem to be different trends between previous findings regarding identity and well-being. In previous research, adolescents tended to engage in continuous rumination which lead to lower well-being. Moreover, the effect of having too many alternatives, lack of guidance and support, and social pressure on well-being has been highlighted (Morsünbül & Cok, 2014).

Parallel to these findings are the qualitative results generated. Participants in this study experienced high resilience. Many of them spoke about their need to persevere in pursuit of their goals, values and beliefs. Essentially, they reported not dwelling so much on threats from their environment but felt the strong need to change the course of their lives. These results are substantiated by a body of research which affirms that adolescents are endowed with the ability to influence their environment positively or negatively but are also impacted by situations from their environment (Mampane, 2014; Romero et al., 2018). Numerous studies have been conducted on the possible disruption of adolescent identity development caused by exposure to high levels of risk variables. For example, adolescents who experience traumatic events may have altered identity processes, according to Scott et al. (2014); Waterman (2020), and different outcomes might result from traumatic situations that occur. In situations where adolescents have already made commitments to make identity-relevant decisions, trauma might act as a reinforcer. Some adolescents exhibit a continuation of their exploratory phase by becoming more committed to their objectives, roles, beliefs, and values. In this instance, the difficulty encountered is a tool to support their identity-related judgments. However, some adolescents forsake their identity-related obligations as a result of the emotional pain brought on by the problems and challenges they confront and which causes identity delays (Koni et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2011; Waterman, 2020).

Adolescents can also identify resources from their environment that contribute positively to their well-being (van Breda, 2019; van Doeselaar et al., 2020). Therefore, participants in this study felt in control of some of the challenging circumstances, and driven; thus, their dream was to change the conditions of hardships. This was emphasised by their resolve to transform situations from the challenging environment by having confidence in themselves. These results are similar to resilience studies on adolescents that found increased levels of resilience in adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts (Theron et al., 2013; Ungar, 2015). Basically, difficulties and challenges have a variety of effects on the formation of identity. Some adolescents choose to continue down the same route of exploration, while others renounce previous commitment, depending on the type of environment and circumstances. Additionally,

the research process or any identity-related commitments may be halted, abandoned, changed, or postponed (Waterman, 2020). Adolescents who are resilient use their new priorities as a foundation for improved performance, which improves their wellbeing (Koni et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2011, 2015). Additionally, enhanced identity coherence is associated with enhanced functioning. Adolescents who are experiencing identity coherence display a sense of authenticity and clarity in exploration processes. However, adolescents' functioning and well-being may be hampered by shifting identity priorities, which can lead to rumination and anxiety. This is brought on by overpowering and disorienting feelings. The problems leave a bigger impression on the adolescents' identities, especially when they are more significant (Luyckx et al., 2008).

5.1.2. Change in Identity and Resilience over Time

There was no significant time effect on all the identity dimensions and *Resilience Subscale A,* whereas there was a significant difference between all the three points in time for *Resilience Subscale B.* However, some trends in identity and resilience over time should be noted. For instance, the dimensions of identity and *Resilience Subscale A* showed a stable trajectory. Noticeable changes in *Commitment Making*, *Ruminative Exploration*, *Exploration in Depth, Identification with Commitment Exploration in Breadth* and *Ruminative Exploration* from Time 1 to Time 2 to Time 3 were established. Specifically, *Exploration in Breadth* increased linearly over time while *Identification with Commitment* decreased linearly over time. *Commitment Making*, *Ruminative Exploration*, *Exploration in Depth* showed initial increases followed by later decreases towards the end of the study.

It is important to note that these trends seem to be noticeably stable among identity dimensions across all three points in time. A similar trend in identity dimensions was reported by Luyckx et al. (2013) among Western adolescents. The stability in trajectories can be explained by the fact that this study was based on a short-term longitudinal design (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2013). In addition, the stable trajectories observed in this study reflect the disadvantaged context of the participants; in particular the effect of going through adolescence in a context that lacks resources and in a society that is rapidly changing towards individuation (Côté et al., 2016; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). The majority were classified as stable identity trajectories, implying that they maintained their style of identity exploration throughout the period of data collection in this study.

This could also be explained by the fact that adolescents from underprivileged backgrounds experience discrimination and prejudice in addition to persistent and intense negative events, poverty, and stress. Additionally, these adolescents have substantial obstacles to developing their identities because they have few possibilities and options in life which forces them to quit exploring and to work after high school (Liu & Ngai, 2020; van Rensburg et al., 2018). In fact, many adolescents from underprivileged families view exploration as a luxury. Because of this, some adolescents assume identity-related roles and prematurely commit themselves to choices and goals, while others end up neither committing to any goals nor examining their values, beliefs, or roles. However, research on identity demonstrates that both achieved and foreclosed identity statuses benefit an individual's wellbeing (Luyckx et al., 2008; McLean & Syed, 2015; Schwartz & Petrova, 2018). Furthermore, prior studies have assessed the influence of resources in the course of adolescent identity formation using the risk and resilience paradigm. Some adolescents from underprivileged contexts are confronted with difficulties most of the time, which may be detrimental to their wellbeing. However, some adolescents manage to successfully overcome challenges faced by taking meaningful paths (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2002; Masten & Tellegen, 2012).

In contrast with findings by Hatano and Sugimura (2017), the scores on the dimensions of identity did not substantially vary across time. These findings were surprising, as adolescence is a stage where individuals engage in heightened exploration of various identity alternatives. Hence, weighing and discarding of irrelevant identity options is regarded as the main task of adolescents (Beal & Crocetti, 2010; Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et al., 2013). Actually, asking questions about beliefs, goals, and roles tends to help adolescents see opportunities and put in the necessary effort to take advantage of them. In this regard, personal objectives are important during adolescence because they act as a guide to assist adolescents find better ways of spending their time and energy. Besides, it has been proven that having personal goals for the future affects how adolescents adapt to their varied identity decisions. Additionally, researchers have discovered that adolescents who have a strong sense of identity experience a balanced sense of self-worth (McLean & Syed, 2015; Shulman & Nurmi, 2010).

The trend observed regarding the non-significance of time on all the identity dimensions and *Resilience Subscale A* and the significant findings on *Resilience Subscale B* were confirmed by participants during the focus group interviews. Although the dimensions of identity and *Resilience Subscale A* were stable over time, some noticeable changes were

observed as indicated. These changes could be linked to many other factors. One of them as reported by participants is their ability to rely on available resources. It implies that adolescents have the ability to identify resources in their environment and use them for their own well-being (van Breda, 2019).

Firstly, the linear increase in *Exploration Breadth* was possible because participants felt the support from significant others. Having the community, the school and family as support systems encouraged adolescents in this study to explore for more alternatives. In fact, according to Bronfenbrenner (1974) ecosystems theory, all the systems constantly interact thus contributing to the development of the individual. Moreover, socialisation and individual growth are influenced by people's active engagement with their surroundings (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). In this regard, Bronfenbrenner (1979) demonstrated the significance of individual abilities and the environment in shaping individual developmental outcomes. He did so by using the process-person approach. This assumes that everyone is an active participant who shapes and is shaped by it their environment, thus adolescents engage with social ecologies to promote growth (Ungar, 2018). Adolescents can access resources and possibilities that are unique to the teenage stage thanks to the mutual connection between the individual and the environment (Rutter, 2012).

Therefore, the support systems acted as a buffer against challenges they were facing at the time and encouraged exploration of alternatives. Moreover, participants narrated how they managed to overcome hardships because of the support they received from family. Noteworthy research classified the family not as a source of resilience for adolescents but also as a resilient system where adolescents feel safe to explore (Ratele & Nduna, 2018; Shirima et al., 2021; Sigelman & Rider, 2015). In addition, participants similarly highlighted the protective role of school as they found teachers they could confide in and talk about challenges they were facing. In fact, the role of teachers in identity exploration and fostering resilience has been underlined in previous studies (Jefferis & Theron, 2017; Mampane & Bower, 2011; van Breda, 2019). Moreover, a supportive school environment has been linked to identity exploration in adolescents (Liu & Ngai, 2020; Verhoeven et al., 2019).

Secondly, according to the quantitative findings, the participants showed a decrease in *Identification with Commitment.* This implies that participants in this study experienced some uncertainties about their choices, therefore they struggled to internalise them. On the contrary, other studies have shown a positive association of well-being with *Commitment Making* and

Identification with Commitment. Precisely, *Identification with Commitment* had the highest impact on well-being. This was explained by the fact that in *Identification with Commitment*, adolescents feel that the commitment is aligned with their values, goals and beliefs (Luyckx et al., 2008; Morsünbül & Cok, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2011). Although participants mentioned grappling with identity decisions, they acknowledged feeling driven to achieve their current goals.

Also observed were the initial increases and later decreases in *Commitment Making*, *Exploration in Depth* and *Ruminative Exploration*. In essence, multiple factors could be linked to the trend observed (Côté et al., 2016; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017). Basically, the qualitative results support these findings. Participants reported trying to navigate through risks and opportunities thrown at them by life. They highlighted contextual factors such as poverty as obstacles to the exploration process and resilience. Experiences of poverty with its ramifications such as neglect by parents, conflicts in families and absenteeism from school pushed participants to question and to doubt their identity choices. Some wondered whether it would be better to quit school altogether, work and provide for the family. These findings reflect the outcome of most adolescents living in disadvantaged communities as has been indicated by various researchers (Mampane, 2014; Ndimande, 2009; Romero et al., 2018; Theron et al., 2022).

What was observed in the quantitative findings was that some participants experienced an increased level of *Exploration in Depth.* This means they engaged in questioning the present choices. In addition, some participants also showed an increased level of *Identity Commitment* at the beginning of the study, but both dimensions eventually decreased and a similar pattern was observed for *Ruminative Exploration*. It is important to note that no meaningful trends were uncovered. This means that these trends in identity did not generally appear to be gradual throughout the study. However, the present findings might foreshadow how developmental trends could look like for adolescents living in disadvantaged environments.

The initial increases of *Exploration in Depth, Identity Commitment,* and *Ruminative Exploration* suggest some form of identity exploration and maturation. As observed, the participants did not only succeed in strengthening their commitments, they also initially identified themselves with the commitments made. However, a solid identity structure did not emerge, as the exploration and commitment processes of individuals in this study eventually declined. Our findings are in contrast with previous studies, whereby linear trends of the

exploration and commitment processes were observed (Meeus et al., 2010). This might imply that the participants in this sample were experiencing stressors that hampered the establishment of firm identity choices (Schwartz et al., 2005). Such stressors could be the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the strict lockdown restrictions that were implemented in South Africa (Cohen-Scali et al., 2021; Republic of South Africa, 2021). The lockdown restrictions exacerbated the condition of poor families, as access to basic necessities and service delivery were affected creating food insecurity. This is consistent with findings on the link between living in conditions of poverty and levels of psychological stress in adolescents (Gittings et al., 2021; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz, 2001; Zinn et al., 2020).

The results in this study therefore indicated that the participants were exploring their identity and resilience during very challenging and unprecedented times. However, it was found, according to Bronfenbrenner (2005) that the role of history and time could have influenced the identity and resilience trajectory taken by adolescents in this study. As such, conditions of poverty which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic affected adolescents in the social, political and economic spheres (Gittings et al., 2021). Therefore, the participants were prompted to use both intrinsic and extrinsic available resources to navigate through the challenges faced, as was illustrated in the focus group interviews.

According to the focus group interviews, the participants displayed an increased awareness of the interaction between risks and opportunities (Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2018). They verbalised issues which hampered their identity exploration process and resilience such as poverty, availability of substances, and adolescent parenthood. For participants in this study, it appeared that poverty had several ramifications in their lives. For instance, they highlighted grappling with conflicts in their homes, neglect, high rates of school dropout, relocation when parents lose their jobs and living in shacks. In addition, participants emphasised the emotional impact of poverty in their lives. These observations made by participants, stem from contextual factors linked to living in disadvantaged settings. Intrinsically associated with poor communities is exposure to violence and poor or unavailable support structures and resources (Mampane, 2014; Ndimande, 2009; Romero et al., 2018).

Participants reiterated the effects of poverty on their identity development and resilience. Most participants highlighted involvement in substances and adolescent parenthood as the ramifications of poverty. Their involvement in the use of substances could explain why the sample in this study struggled to follow a linear trajectory of identity formation for identity

dimensions, as was documented by previous studies. Participants spoke about the toxic environment they hail from as a risk factor. Others mentioned the use of substances as a way of coping with adversities within their communities. In addition, participants mentioned using substances to deal with confusion and doubt about their future goals and dreams, which explains the findings on *Ruminative Exploration*. In fact, several authors have highlighted vulnerabilities caused by exposure to poverty (Dupéré et al., 2008; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz & Petrova, 2018).

Regarding resilience scores, *Resilience Subscale B* decreased initially, although these decreases increased at Time 3, but the increase was not significant. Resilience scores fluctuated significantly throughout the study which showed that participants in this study started off well but as time went by they struggled to maintain or improve their resilience scores. The high scores on resilience could be explained by the fact that the data collection period started just before the strict lockdown and the tough experiences of COVID 19 in South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 2021). However, the second period of data collection took place at a period of time when the participants had experienced a lot of changes in their lives due to COVID-19. Similar results were obtained from previous studies, where participants were faced with uncertainties regarding the future, were distressed over the probability of not continuing with their studies, and harboured fears of contracting and even dying of COVID-19 (Gittings et al., 2021; Govender et al., 2020). The trend observed in this study lays bare the effects of contextual factors in fostering resilience in adolescents. During the strict lockdown, the participants' ability to exercise agency was limited. Participants felt vulnerable and helpless since they had to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions which meant that they had to stay indoors. These regulations exacerbated the social-structural vulnerabilities and life challenges. In fact, living in poor conditions meant that their livelihood and future was put on hold by strict the COVID-19 regulations. This created psychological distress due to stressors they experienced. Hence many of the participants struggled to buffer against both psychological and material pandemic related shocks (Cohen-Scali & Erby, 2021; Gittings et al., 2021). Therefore, the indirect effects of COVID-19 exacerbated the precarious socio-economic and significantly impacting on participants' psychological well-being which is visible by the significant drop of resilience scores between Time and Time 2 (Cohen-Scali & Erby, 2021; Gittings et al., 2021). However, participants in this study found their footing by the Time 3 of data collection, where some small increase in their resilience was observed. This may be due to the relaxation of COVID-19

restrictions and the fact that some adolescents actually experienced positive effects due to the pandemic. These included spending more time with family, having more time for their hobbies and exercising, and that learners resumed classes though not on a daily basis (Manchia et al., 2022; Oosterhoff et al., 2020).

Participants in this study were motivated to rise up above their hardships but were met with many obstacles. This explains the decrease in the resilience pattern observed in the quantitative findings. However, the findings are in line with participants' experiences, as they indicated their struggle to beat the odds when exposed to risk factors from their environment which explains the slight increase towards the end of the study. It is obvious that the participants indicated goal directedness to deal with hardships faced. These findings are in keeping with South African studies on adolescents living in under resourced contexts. Scholars have established the link between an adverse environment, socio economic deprivation, a struggle for basic needs and lower levels of resilience (Cluver et al., 2013; Gradin, 2018; van Breda, 2019). On the contrary, other studies have shown discrepancies in that some adolescents manage to thrive despite hardships and exposure to contextual risks (Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2018; van Rensburg et al., 2018). Consequently, participants accounts revealed that, participants in this study desired to change and overcome the challenges faced. Essentially, beating the odds for these adolescents exposed to so many risk factors meant that they had to strive to break the cycle of poverty (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Phasha, 2010; van Rensburg et al., 2018). In fact, it has been found that adolescents living in conditions of hardships develop resilience and thus successfully navigate through identity exploration and commitment (Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2011; Ungar, 2018).

5.1.3. Change in Identity Over Time for High and Low Resilience Groups

Associations between identity dimensions with High and Low Resilience was investigated using the *t test*. Results indicated significant findings for *Exploration in Depth* in both High and Low Resilience groups. As mentioned, a statistically significant main effect was observed for *Exploration in Depth* between High and Low Resilience groups. The trend observed for both High and Low Resilience groups over time was as follows: there was a substantial decrease in *Exploration in Depth* over time for the High Resilience group. Whereas there was an initial increase in *Exploration in Depth* for the Low Resilience group followed by a slight increase towards the end of the study. It is important to note that previous research on identity documented that identity trajectories are extensively affected by personal and contextual

factors and thus tend to vary (McLean & Syed, 2015). This explains the trend observed in the two resilience groups. Moreover, according to prior research, identity and resilience both impact on each other. Hence, challenges faced impact on the ability to explore for alternatives, whereas identity formation is likewise by affected by challenging circumstances (Tedeschi et al., 2018; Waterman, 2020).

To substantiate for the decrease in *Exploration in Depth,* it is well documented that adolescents who find support flourish and tend to engage in identity exploration. When adolescents re-explore their existing commitment, they can relate to the goals, values, and beliefs re-considered, resulting in the integration of their identity (Erikson, 1968; McLean & Syed, 2015). On the contrary participants in this resilience group tended to commit prematurely without engaging in the re-evaluation of existing commitments. Moreover, the inability to engage in *Exploration in Depth* of their future goals might have provoked some anxiety which explains the further decrease of the scores of *Exploration in Depth*. Similar results were obtained from prior studies. Some authors link *Exploration in Depth* with high levels of anxiety and depression (Crocetti et al., 2008). The current results corroborate previous findings on *Exploration in Depth* and resilience. However, some inconsistencies have been highlighted regarding *Exploration in Depth.* According to Luyckx et al. (2005); Karaś et al. (2015); Karaś & Cieciuch, (2018), exploration in depth has been positively associated with well-being in adolescents. The inconsistencies observed can be explained by the fact that adolescents do not follow a linear path to identity and resilience. Some adolescents are able to take on positive trajectories while others get involved in less optimal paths (Klimstra et al., 2010; Luyckx et al., 2008; Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013).

This struggle to re-evaluate one's identity choices could be due to a number of factors. Firstly, the study population was taken from a disadvantaged context. This implies that adolescents are constantly faced with unstable family economic situations, struggle to access proper food, safe housing and above all, they lack experiences and material which cognitively stimulates them. Besides this, such challenges predispose adolescents to instability and stress (Mampane, 2014; Ndimande, 2009; Romero et al., 2018). Additionally, growing up in adverse conditions is linked to poor mental outcomes (Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz, 2001; Zinn et al., 2020). Moreover, according to Waterman, (2020), adolescents' exploration process can be interrupted, depending on the type of environment they find themselves in. Consequently, some end up abandoning, altering, replacing or delaying prior-commitment.

Secondly, previous studies reiterate the detrimental role of poverty, chronic and high levels of negative events, and stress on the adolescent development process (Koni et al., 2019; UNICEF, 2011, 2015; van Rensburg et al., 2018). Additionally, faced with multiple financial barriers, limited opportunities and few life choices, adolescents feel obliged to stop exploring, thus interfering with the process of achieving a coherent and positive identity (Liu & Ngai, 2020; van Rensburg et al., 2018). Basically, exposure to risks, which may limit adolescents' capacity to actively explore identity-related options, may act as obstacles to their ability to commit to diverse goals and make identity-related choices. This implies that adolescents end up stagnating their exploration processes by neither exploring enough nor committing to a future path (McAdams & McLean, 2013). Moreover, given that adolescence is a time when individuals undergo numerous transformations, adolescents tend to feel overwhelmed by having to juggle between building up relationships, schoolwork, peer influences and experimentation in other important areas of their lives. Basically, hardships are regarded as deleterious to the identity exploration process and resilience (Masten & Barnes, 2018; Zinn et al., 2020).

Lastly, data was collected during the outbreak of the pandemic. The effects of this on adolescents living in deprived environment have been well documented (Gittings et al., 2021; Govender et al., 2020). This implies that some adolescents felt overwhelmed and even disoriented due to the magnitude of the challenges experienced. Therefore, the focus was shifted more on survival needs rather than thinking about their identity choices. Moreover, challenges of greater magnitude tend to have a bigger impact on identity exploration (Luyckx et al., 2008).

In contrast some authors argue that challenges offer adolescents opportunities for self-knowledge. Therefore, some adolescents tend to flourish even when exposed to adversities, whereas others succumb to certain risks arising from their environment. In essence, adolescents that thrive in difficulties take the challenges as opportunities for making significant decisions. Consequently, findings on identity and resilience show that some adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds manage to navigate towards identity formation (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2002; Masten & Tellegen, 2012).

In addition, not engaging in *Exploration in Depth* suggests that adolescents settled on available options. It can be that they opted to commit to already existing choices. Therefore, considering the decline in *Exploration in Depth*, it can be concluded that some of the

participants ended up sticking to their current decisions. These results are similar to findings on achieved identity. According to several authors, achieved identity is positively related to well-being (Luyckx et al., 2008; McLean & Syed, 2015; Schwartz & Petrova, 2018). These findings were further corroborated by participants' experiences as generated in the qualitative results. Faced with many challenges, participants found it important to sort and to sift situations that put them in vulnerable positions and to finally choose the trajectory to follow.

There are some noteworthy observations which can be made regarding the gradual increase in *Exploration in Depth* followed by a slight increase towards the end of the study on the Low Resilience group. Most probably, this group of participants battled to maintain a linear increase in the exploration process which resulted in the constant re-evaluation of existing identity decisions. This suggests that, in addition to battling with hardships, the participants might have also been uncertain about their future goals and dreams. Besides, it has been proven that having personal goals for the future affects how adolescents adapt to their varied identity decisions. Also, researchers have discovered that adolescents who have a strong, enduring sense of identity also exhibit a balanced sense of self-worth (McLean & Syed, 2015; Shulman & Nurmi, 2010). The struggle with Low Resilience suggests that this group of adolescents have a weak sense of autonomy and low motivation, which substantiates for the slow increase in their *Exploration in Depth*. Authors have underlined the link between autonomy, self-direction and well-being (Masten et al., 2004; Masten & Tellegen, 2012).

Hence, it is apparent that the level of resilience has a direct effect on *Exploration in Depth*. These findings concur with Koni et al. (2019), that identity exploration is associated with a stronger sense of resilience. Moreover, Low Resilience experienced by the adolescents could have been due to an accumulation of stressors, lack of meaningful relationships and an unstable family environment which in turn affected their identity exploration process (Koni et al., 2019; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Torres & Santiago, 2018).

Adolescents who exhibit resilience also tend to be stable, which shows up in a variety of identity areas. Due to their psychological resilience, they are better able to deal with identity threats brought on by difficult experiences. They are also able to continue exploring or keeping meaningful commitments despite difficulties and barriers to identity formation as a result (Schwartz & Petrova, 2018; Waterman, 2020).

Consistent with the focus group interviews, some tended to view themselves in terms of their future goals, while others highlighted the value of personal integration in identity

exploration and resilience. However, in describing their character traits, they also indicated that they put a lot of weight into their exploration process as they battled to decide on the direction to take. The challenges the participants faced are regarded as typical of the adolescent development stage (Erikson, 1968). In essence, according to Luyckx et al., (2013), it is normal for adolescents to move back and forth in the process of exploration. In fact, *Exploration in Depth* is activated to enable adolescents to explore for more clarity about commitments made, and when they are not satisfied, they can revert to the previous process to look for more alternatives.

The slow increase of the *Exploration in Depth* for the Low Resilience group could also be explained by participants' quest for a deeper understanding of self, as suggested in the qualitative findings. Participants underlined the significance of self-awareness in the decision-making process and as a tool to transcend life challenges. Moreover, they believed that a deep sense of self-awareness is crucial for building resilience. The results indicated that participants exhibited strong awareness regarding their sense of self in association with their ability to transcend hardships. They underlined that knowing "who am I and what I want" helps not only in deciding the path to follow but also motivates them to overcome challenging environmental circumstances. Participants acknowledged the value of self-awareness, and they showed an eagerness to engage purposefully with experiences that enhanced their self-awareness. This is due to cognitive changes taking place during adolescence which opens adolescents' thinking process beyond self and towards the society at large (Brittian, 2012; Weiten, 2015).

Participants also faced difficulties in attaining a coherent sense of self. Notably, they battled with bodily changes and emotional fluctuations. This might be related to changes in the brain occurring during adolescence, which might impact on self-perception. During adolescence, individuals become more self-conscious and have heightened introspection (Brittian, 2012; Sigelman & Rider, 2015; Weiten, 2015). This is in line with participants' experiences in this study.

According to research, goal directed adolescents and those who have a sense of direction take time to ponder about future goals and dreams. This enables them to survive better when met with life challenges (Turliuc et al., 2015). Participants in this study also acknowledged experiencing challenges in attaining a sense of internal consistency. They grappled with fluctuating emotional states and the many changes that come with puberty. This is expected

during adolescence when individuals undergo tremendous transitions (Tsang et al., 2012; Weiten, 2015).

Moreover, the trend observed in *Exploration in Depth* could partly be explained by the categorical data. As presented, many of the participants live in families headed by single mothers. Literature shows that living in single parented homes can be challenging for adolescents, since disruption in families is regarded as a source of identity insecurities (Crocetti et al., 2013a; Crocetti et al., 2017). Moreover, most participants in the focus groups indicated how their families were struggling to make ends meet. Most of the participants however, also reported enjoying a nurturing relationship with their mothers. This could explain the significant *Exploration in Depth* scores, for example, prior research on identity proved that maternal trust fosters in depth exploration (Crocetti, et al., 2010; Crocetti et al., 2017; Morsünbül, et al., 2016).

5.2. Other Qualitative Findings on Adolescents' Perception on Identity and Resilience

In this section, more qualitative results will be presented. Whereas the previous section focused on both quantitative and qualitative results, this section represents an inductive approach towards highlighting remnant qualitative themes. The findings will likewise be integrated with relevant literature. The discussion will entail two overarching sub sections: identity exploration: a multifaceted construct and identity and resilience: implications for future perspectives.

5.2.1. Identity exploration: A multifaceted Construct

The qualitative results showed that the exploration of identity is a complex task for adolescents. In this study they expressed the difficulties of defining their identity and speaking about changes in their identity exploration process. The difficulties experienced could be due to the fact that the participants have to negotiate many challenges in their communities. At the same time, they also have to actively engage with the exploration of alternatives related to religious, occupational, values, political ideologies, spiritual and cultural in tandem with their identity choices (Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz, 2001). Identity remains a complex construct to define for adolescents, given its multidimensional nature. Consequently, exploration of identity for the population in this study remains a complicated task. Identity formation is not a once off process but is considered as continuous and cyclic in nature (Erikson, 1968; Luyckx et at., 2008). Moreover, adolescents in this study were faced with a plethora of challenges due to their socioeconomic setting associated with poor education, violence, high levels of crime and

dysfunctional social services (Amoateng & Kalule-Sabiti, 2013; Byliefeldt, 2019; Mampane, 2014; Ndimande, 2009; Warner, 2018). Nevertheless, identity exploration was associated with physical aspects, personal goals, motivations, commitment and psychological well-being.

For the participants in this study, emphasis was placed on physical descriptors in exploring their identity. They noted that observable characteristics were core in contributing towards the definition of self and experienced this area as personal. For instance, the participants were conscious of the biological changes they were experiencing such as heightened production of growth and sexual hormones and secondary sexual characteristics. Such changes tend to be linked with psychological insecurities, increased self-conscious and heightened preoccupation with physical appearance (Ingalls & Stedman, 2017; Tsang et al., 2012; Weiten, 2015).

It was important for adolescents in this study to elaborate on their physical, sexual and emotional states. By doing so they imagined themselves as holistic human beings with all states intricately interconnected. Literature highlights the fact that adolescents are not only preoccupied by changes in self-perception but also by the major changes in their self-image. Such changes are prominent during adolescence as they tend to be more self-conscious (Brittian, 2012; Marcia, 1980; Steinberg, 2015; Weiten, 2015).

Additionally, participants used descriptors such as traits, values and goals to define their experiences of identity. According to Erikson (1968) and Havighurst (1972), identity formation is a fundamental task for adolescents. In this study, identity was mostly understood in terms of a deep sense of self as mentioned using the descriptors such as “I am calm”, “I am talkative”, “I am shy”, “I am a special person”, “happy jovial”, “I am bright”. Participants indicated that their understanding of self is intricately related to certain character traits or psychological qualities. In essence, having a clear image of self, provides meaning and purpose (Chen & Yao, 2010; Erikson, 1968; Havighurst, 1972; Klimstra & van Doeselaar, 2017).

Additionally, participants also used abstract concepts to describe themselves. This is due to the fact that they have the ability to think hypothetically and abstractly about concepts. Moreover, capacity to think hypothetically enables adolescents to take other people’s opinions into consideration (Steinberg, 2015; Weiten, 2015). In this study, participants viewed themselves as dignified people who were respectful and tended to view other people’s opinions as important.

More particularly, being faced with challenging circumstances, seemed to put weight on commitments and motivations as a way of constructing participants’ identity. Hence, they

moved from self-descriptors to considering themselves as role models for other young people. They aimed at bringing about positive influence in their communities. Besides, personal integration was viewed as an important journey in the process of exploration and commitment. Moreover, it was clear that participants had a future perspective of themselves. They found pride in their talents, abilities and intuitiveness. Their future goals and careers were personified in their identity. They would for instance use terms such as "my identity is what I am interested to do". In addition, most of them imagined that a bright future is linked to completing matric, attending college and getting a profession. These findings correspond to a vast body of research on identity formation during adolescence, and in particular identity trajectories of adolescents from disadvantaged circumstances. Adolescents from deprived environment and especially black South Africans view academic achievement as something important (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Phasha, 2010; van Rensburg et al., 2018).

Finally, the focus group participants acknowledged going though challenges and therefore, understanding their identity was important to them. In essence, participants perception of self and their ability to overcome hardships was apparent in the focus group interviews. They emphasised the importance of highlighting one's weaknesses and strengths as a tool to navigate through identity related choices. Basically, scrutinising one's values, goals and beliefs is critical to achieving a coherent sense of self (Erikson, 1968; Havighurst, 1972; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Swartz et al., 2011).

5.2.2. Construction of Identity and Resilience: Future Perspectives

Participants in the focus group interviews elaborated on different approaches they use in order to overcome challenges and hardships and thus construct a coherent sense of self. It is important to note that participants reported benefitting from the same resources at Time 1, Time 2, and Time 3. For instance, the majority of participants identified, family support, faith-based support, and educational aspirations as important resources that contributed to their identity and resilience processes over time. Similar findings were reported in a longitudinal study, where adolescents described drawing on the same resources over time (Theron & van Rensburg, 2018; Liu & Ngai, 2020).

Some participants relied heavily on family and in particular on mothers. They felt safe to engage their mothers about situations they were going through and on issues about their future prospects. This could be substantiated by the fact that most participants came from single headed families, and thus they considered their mothers as confidants. Hence, this implies that

in this particular context of adolescents, caring women were important figures of support (Nagi et al., 2021; Ratele & Nduna, 2018).

Adherence to religious practices also helped participants to adapt. In this case, religiosity can be considered as a protective factor for adolescents from this context. Basically, participants preferred to consult with church members whom they referred to as 'spiritual mothers' or 'spiritual fathers' or 'spiritual sisters. In fact, some participants reported finding solace in religious practices like reading the Bible, prayer, and practicing their faith by attending church. Participants' experiences are underlined by authors which support the idea that adolescents associate their ability to overcome challenges through people with whom they have informal positive connections. These findings are also consistent with prior South African research on resilience which has highlighted cultural and religious values (Theron et al., 2013; van Breda, 2019). Consistent with the social control theory, individuals are influence by constant interactions with their social surroundings (Liu & Ngai, 2019; Schwartz, 2001).

Having connections, whether formal or informal, has been viewed as the ways which adolescents use to access material resources, manage to adapt, focus in education and find comfort and belongingness. Generally, the participants associated support received to caring women in their lives and rarely spoke about fathers. Studies have shown that adolescents seldom regard their fathers as emotionally supportive (Block, 2016; Theron, 2016; Zulu, 2019).

However, it was important to note that not all participants had shared experiences about the type of support they found useful over time. Some reported finding safe conversational spaces, comfort, advice, access to resources and love in religious milieu, whereas others felt safer to reach out to peers and friends. Still others preferred to confide in immediate family members and find guidance and support from them. Participants' experiences are in line with the Differential Impact Theory, which underlines that individual differences should be taken into consideration when analysing the type of resources that are useful for adolescents' well-being (Theron, 2019; Ungar, 2018). Moreover, other studies have found contrasting conclusions, thus indicating the need for caution against the belief that all resilience enabling resources will have enduring effects over time in different settings (Collishaw et al., 2016; Eisman et al., 2015).

Hence, depending on the type of stressors, some adolescents will find it useful to exploit psychological resources while for others, social resources will be more effective. In essence the aim is to be able to tailor make resources according to their individual needs and

circumstances. As elaborated in the ecosystems approach, important areas of focus involve looking at personal resources, effective schools, supportive family environment, and effective communities (Theron, 2019; van Breda & Theron, 2018).

In essence, participants' approaches to problem-solving are in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecosystemic approach which emphasises the interconnections between the individual and the larger systems in the fostering well-being (Masten, 2018; Ungar, 2018). In fact, prior research suggested the need for emphasis on all systems which have direct or indirect influence in the life of the individual and not only on individual determinants (Theron, 2019). Therefore, given the cultural interconnectedness of most African communities, it is common for adolescents to seek help from caregivers and community members (Theron, 2019; Zinn et al., 2020).

5.3. Chapter Summary

The discussion of the study results in this chapter first started with descriptive statistics and corroborated them with the qualitative findings. Secondly, the inferential results were also discussed and integrated with the qualitative results. The descriptive discussion included the distribution of the sample with regard to primary caregivers, living arrangements and parents' marital status. Additionally, the descriptive findings were presented and corroborated with qualitative findings. Considering the inferential statistics, findings related to the effect of time over dimensions of identity and resilience were discussed. These were substantiated with previous research and integrated with qualitative findings. This was followed by an integrated discussion of the relationship between *Exploration in Depth* and High and Low Resilience groups. Discussion of these findings was based on the research questions, and in relation to prior research and the literature review. Finally, a description was highlighted of other themes relating only to the qualitative findings. In chapter 6 below, important findings, limitations, recommendations and the conclusion of the chapter are presented.

Chapter 6 - Summary of Important Findings, Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study. In the first section, an outline of noteworthy findings will be given focusing on the main contribution of the study. The second section will contain a succinct discussion of the limitations of this study. The last section will elaborate the recommendations on how future studies can improve the current study followed by concluding statements.

6.1. Summary of Important Findings

In this section, noteworthy findings are given pertaining to the study on longitudinal trajectories of identity formation, based on the five-dimensional model of identity development. Resilience processes are explored as they pertain to adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa. The idea is to highlight the contribution of this study.

This study identified identity trajectories in adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts, using the five-dimensional model developed by Luyckx et al. (2006) and Luyckx et al. (2013) and explored whether these identity trajectories are linked with resilience. Most of the findings were consistent with existing literature, but some inconsistencies were also highlighted. In essence, it is important to note that this study gave new insights into the perception of the interaction of identity and resilience in adolescents.

The findings indicate that both the *DIDS* and *R-MATS* are reliable and valid tools to assess identity and resilience respectively, as dynamic processes. This is consistent with literature where they were found to be valid and reliable tools for measuring identity and resilience respectively (Bonita, 2019; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Mampane, 2012; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Markovitch et al., 2017; Mastrotheodoros & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017; Van Doeselaar et al., 2020).

The study confirms past literature on identity and resilience by underlining the important role of adolescence in human development (Erikson, 1968; Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Luyckx et al., 2008; Marcia, 1966). The differences between the dimensions of identity and resilience indicate the core role of exploration and commitment during this developmental period. The study has revealed that the participants have clear identity goals as indicated by the *DIDS* and *Resilience* scores. It is important to note that this study illustrated the uniqueness of this population group of adolescents living in a disadvantaged environment by highlighting that

they are not defined by the hardships experienced. A number of authors highlight the ability of adolescents to thrive in hardships and rise above the plethora of risks they are exposed to (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Mampane, 2014; Masten, 2011; Phasha, 2010; Ungar, 2018; van Rensburg et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the study contributes to literature on the important role of agency in pursuit of future directions. Throughout the focus group discussions, it became clear that the participants were active agents influencing their identity and resilience trajectories and their understanding of these dimensions. The remarkable sense of agency can be identified as the driving force of all lived experiences in an attempt to build a coherent sense of self and to overcome hardships from their environments. As a result, the participants were in constant interaction with the different systems in their environment. For instance, participants indicated that agency was related to the direction chosen in situations of adversity. Here the role of agency in facing adversity with the objective of pursuing future goals and dreams was evident. In this context, it is important to note the contribution of past research on the role of agency in identity and resilience (Mampane, 2014; Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018; Rich & Schachter, 2012; Turliuc et al., 2015; Zinn et al., 2020).

Another key finding refers to the change over time in the five identity dimensions. The *DIDS* and the *Resilience Subscale A* revealed quite stable trajectories in this study. It shows that participants tended to maintain the same exploration strategies and that there were no significant changes in their environment in a context lacking resources. These observations are valuable as they confirm the detrimental effect of poverty on adolescent development. Moreover, the effect of poverty on identity and resilience has been amply documented by researchers (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2011; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Schwartz, 2001; Swahn et al., 2008; Warner, 2018).

The noticeable changes on *Resilience Subscale B* are important to highlight. Participants showed an initial decrease in resilience followed by a non-significant increase. The fluctuation in resilience reiterated the important aspect of resilience as a dynamic process underlining the value of the longitudinal aspect of the study. Moreover, the study confirms a nonlinear trajectory of resilience. It is unsurprising, because resilience tends to be affected by temporal factors, in this case the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, some adolescents tend to thrive in hardships. In fact, according to past research, the nature and the type of changes occurring in the lives of adolescents have the ability to impact on the normal development of the individual

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Gaias et al., 2018; Lerner et al., 2013; Ruspini, 2004; Wang et al., 2017).

Noteworthy findings illustrate the interaction between identity and resilience. The significant association between *Exploration in Depth* in both High and Low Resilience groups is important to note, as they reveal the association between identity and resilience. Although previous studies show the connection between resilience and identity, in this study the novelty is only directed to *Exploration in Depth* and resilience. Some participants struggled to engage in the re-evaluation of identity choices made, while others flourished in their exploration task. Hence, not all adolescents follow a similar trajectory of development. The participants also highlighted a number of ecosystemic factors contributing to identity and resilience processes. These findings highlight the interactional effect between *Exploration in Depth* and resilience as previously noted in a number of studies (Luyckx et al., 2005; Karaś & Cieciuch, 2018; Karaś et al., 2015).

Considering risk and protective factors, it is important to note that this study underlines the impact of the constant interaction between individuals and their environment. Characteristics of the different ecosystems played a substantial role in the participants' lived experiences of identity and resilience. Moreover, the participants' interactions with others had the greatest impact on their understanding of who they are and their ability to deal with hardships. Those interactions gave them a sense of acceptance, belonging, and assurance and they did not feel judged. It is important to note the high volume of studies underscoring the cyclic relationship between the individual, the environment. Since both entities tend to constantly influence each other (Amrhein, 2017; Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Du & Kim, 2020; Gaias et al., 2018; Liebschutz et al., 2015; Masten & Tellegen, 2012; Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018; van Rensburg et al., 2015; Zinn et al., 2020).

A noteworthy finding related to participants' ability to recognise available structures and to actually make use of them in the process of their identity development and resilience. Hence, it is important to note the value accorded to family, school peers and the community at large. Particular attention was given to the important role played by mothers in fostering identity exploration and resilience. These findings reiterate the important role played by all systems surrounding adolescents, while at the same time it puts emphasise on the role of agency in positively influencing adolescents' environment and circumstances (Theron, 2019; Theron &

van Rensburg, 2018; Koni et al., 2019; Liu & Ngai, 2020; Nagi et al., 2021; van Rensburg et al., 2015).

In essence, adolescents in this study understood that the exploration of who they are, what they can do and what they have occurs in connection with significant others and their religious beliefs. Therefore, it was crucial for participants to highlight the role of their significant others and religious beliefs in promoting identity exploration and resilience. Furthermore, adolescents in this study appreciated the role played by women, religion and school in reinforcing their well-being. The mentioned resources were useful and more effective for these participants, considering individual needs and contextual factors. These noteworthy findings have been substantially described in previous research (Lerner et al., 2013; Masten, 2016; Steinberg, 2015; van Breda, 2019; van Rensburg et al., 2018; Weiten, 2015).

6.2. Limitations of the Study

Strengths and limitations are inherent in both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Babbie, 2010). It should be noted that the current study was a mixed method approach and longitudinal in nature. The advantage of this was that it was an objective process which integrated both quantitative and qualitative elements meaningfully with the purpose of increasing depth and breadth of the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Moreover, a longitudinal design provided a better understanding of trajectories followed by school-going adolescents from disadvantaged South African contexts. However, longitudinal studies have attrition as a limiting factor (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Ruspini, 2004; Wang et al., 2017). In this study the attrition rate was moderate, although some participants did not take part in all the three points in time of data collection. In the present study, a mixed method research approach with a longitudinal design (Caruana et al., 2015; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010; Ruspini, 2004; Wang et al., 2017), was employed to investigate the variables *identity*, and *resilience.* Thus, the results provide complete and corroborated levels of the participants identity and resilience processes.

The study was conducted in in three different local public schools in the Greater Taung Municipality in North West Province, South Africa, with the aid of non-probability convenience sampling for the quantitative aspect of the study, and purposive sampling for the qualitative aspect. These methods are quick and cost-effective, but the samples are not representative (Maree, 2011; Stangor, 2015). Moreover, only those attending quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools were included in the sample (Dass & Rinquest, 2017). Hence, the results of the

investigation of the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation based on the five-dimensional model of identity development and resilience cannot be generalised to the population of adolescents living in disadvantaged communities of South Africa.

The pitfalls of the self-report surveys and focus group interviews used to obtain data in this study were that participants may have given responses which were not reliable (Durrheim, 2010; van de Mortel, 2008). Hence response biases and social desirability could influence the validity and internal consistency of the measures employed in this study (Dalton & Ortegren, 2011; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013; van de Mortel, 2008). Additionally, responses reflected the current mental state of participants who did not get the opportunity to give detailed information in self-report surveys. However, the use of focus group interviews overcame the weaknesses of the self-report surveys (Adams, 2015; Byrne, 2022; Galliott & Graham, 2016). Moreover, the surveys used in this study had sound psychometric properties. Furthermore, the information collected in both the quantitative and qualitative approaches, was purely based on participants self-reporting and individual experiences. It would be valuable to consider involving parents and teachers who may have had a different perspective of the issue at hand.

In this study, some of the identity and resilience theories discussed were developed for a Western population and not primarily for the South African context. Influential theorists like Erikson (1968), Marcia (1980), Masten (2014), Luyckx et al. (2008) and Ungar (2011) were used to formulate the constructs used in this study. In light of the contextual factors and the historical background of the participants, these theories should be used with caution. However, it is important to note that South African research studies were also included to account for the contextual understanding of the adolescents (Mampane, 2014, Theron, 2018; van Rensburg, 2015).

Furthermore, researchers' experiences, beliefs and biases might have influenced the research process, in particular the qualitative aspect of the study (Axinn & Pearce, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Galliott & Graham, 2016). The researcher therefore ensured that the results generated reflected participants accounts by including verbatim from the transcribed data material (see Appendix G). In addition, the researcher's cultural background might have influenced the interpretation of the participants experiences. The use of constant feedback from the supervisor and peers from the research study group, together with keeping a reflexive journal were used to counter researcher bias.

The survey instruments and the focus group interviews were conducted in English, whereas the majority of the participants' first language was Setswana. Most probably, the language used in designing the questionnaires might have been difficult to understand for this particular group of participants. Moreover, some participants struggled to express themselves fluently during the focus group interviews. This might account for the less than optimal reliability of *Resilience Subscale A* scale of the *R-MATS* (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). This is a sign that the participants struggled to understand what was measured because of their language proficiency levels.

6.3. Recommendations

Having discussed the findings, the following recommendations can be proposed. Firstly, the use of a long interval longitudinal design and follow participants for a longer period of time is recommended. This will better capture the long-term processes of the measured variables. Also, to deal with the high attrition rate of participants, it is important to plan for incentivising the retention of participants (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017).

Secondly, the use of probability sampling techniques to obtain a representative sample which can be generalised is recommended (Maree, 2010). This implies that the researchers should consider participation of both school attending adolescents and non-school attending adolescents. Thus, it is advisable that future studies should consider adolescents who have dropped out of school to give a better representation of identity and resilience processes.

In addition, the data collected were from underprivileged adolescents experiencing conditions of poverty and the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, nationwide data are needed in order to make comparisons with adolescents living in different areas and under different circumstances for the results to be generalised. It would be interesting to find differences in identity and resilience trajectories for adolescents from affluent and deprived contexts. Moreover, researchers should consider doing proficiency tests on participants prior to administering surveys and focus group interviews. Preferably, participants should be given the opportunity to respond in the language with which they are competent (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Therefore, the use of surveys is advised which are designed in the participants home language or the use of a translator during the process of data collection. Further, gender invariance was not investigated in the current study. This can be addressed by the systematic collection of data thus providing opportunities to investigate for identity, resilience and gender differences (Rivnyák et al., 2022).

Focus group interviews were conducted for the qualitative approach. Therefore, in order to advance research related to identity and resilience, using individual interviews would produce rich data, as participants would feel more comfortable to express themselves.

The current study employed the five-dimensional model of Luyckx et al. (2008) which focuses on the future domain of identity. However, future studies can focus on exploring multiple domains of identity to enable a holistic approach to identity integration (Hatano & Sugimura, 2017; Syed & Mclean, 2016).

Individual and systemic factors contributing to or hampering resilience were investigated in this study (Mampane, 2012). In future, instead of focusing on the general factors contributing to resilience, it will be valuable to focus on factors that adolescents consider as important in fostering resilience. Moreover, understanding the important role played by traditional African, beliefs, values and customs in shaping resilience will bring new insights in the research on resilience and adolescents (Theron et al., 2013; van Breda, 2018).

The socio-ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (2005) was the main theoretical approach used in the current study. Hence, all the systems were considered in understanding the reciprocal influence between the individual and their environment in the process of identity formation and resilience. Therefore, directly involving other actors such as caregivers, teachers and community leaders would provide a better understanding of identity and resilience in adolescents.

6.4. Conclusion

The findings evidenced that the *DIDS* and the *R-MATS* proved to be valid and reliable tools to assess identity and resilience processes which shaped adolescents living in disadvantaged contexts. Moreover, the study provided a better understanding on how eco-systemic factors interact with individual characteristics to influence their identity and resilience trajectories.

The relationship between identity and resilience illustrated in this research detailed characteristics of the identity and resilience trends taken by adolescents experiencing hardships. The study also revealed differences in identity and resilience trajectories between Western and non-Western contexts. Adolescents enjoying the exposure to diverse options tend to have several possibilities to choose from. Therefore, paying attention to cultural and social environments around adolescents will boost new insights.

Moreover, the contribution of these findings can inform the education department in planning life orientation programmes, community health care workers and teachers. The study

results can be used in facilitating health care workers in their continued professional development and informing therapeutic practices. It can assist practitioners to be mindful of individual experiences as these might have a bearing on the treatment regimen and the therapeutic approach to be used.

Although the findings are not generalisable, the outcomes can be used to facilitate new theoretical developments. These can have an extensive impact on adolescents having to endure hardships, especially those struggling to cope with the process of identity formation and resilience. The experiences of the participants in this study can direct allied healthcare workers in tailor-making therapeutic treatments according to the identified resources. They can also build awareness about the implications of living in conditions of hardship and its impact on identity exploration and resilience. The study contributed to identifying the adolescents who are thriving, and the conditions enabling them to adapt despite the challenges faced in order to empower those who are struggling to adapt.

Equally important, schools should identify ways of promoting identity development and resilience by offering adolescents learning experiences which foster breadth and depth learning experiences. This will stimulate them to explore new avenues through *Exploration in Breadth* or be assisted to re-evaluate existing choices and decisions through *Exploration in Depth*. In essence, restructuring the curriculum so as to enable varied ways of exploration and experiences and redesigning classes to facilitate exploration will allow adolescents to construct a coherent sense of self which in turn will positively impact on their well-being.

In this chapter, the aim was to highlight the noteworthy findings, the limitations, and give recommendations for future studies. Hence, it can be concluded that the research aim of this study was attained.

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Appendix A – Biographic Questionnaire

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS·UV
HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

Biographic Questionnaires

Please answer the following questions by marking the appropriate box with an X. All information provided will be treated with confidentiality.

Surname							
Name(s)							
Date of birth							
Age	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Grade	8	9	10	11	12		
Gender	Female			Male			
Do you live with biological parents?	Both parents		Only one		None		
Are your biological parents …?	Never married		Married		Divorced		
Who is your primary caregiver?	Both parents	Mother	Father	Siblings	Extended family	other	
How many siblings do you have?							
What is your home language?							

Appendix B – Informed Consent Documents

Consent from Parents /Guardians

I, _____ (parent/guardian), confirm that the person asking consent for my child to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to agree to allow my child to participate in the study.

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications.

I agree to the audio recording of the focus group interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Name and Surname of Parent/Guardian: _____

Name and Surname of my child: _____

Name of the school of my child:_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____Date: _____

Assent from Participants

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my Assent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report and journal publications.

I agree to the audio recording of the focus group interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed assent agreement.

Name and Surname of Participant: _____

Name of school_____

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Full Name(s) of Researcher(s): _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C – Ethical Clearance Letter from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Humanities

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA
UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

28-Nov-2019

Dear Miss Shirima, Catherine CM

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2019/1876

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Prof Derek Litthauer
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Digitally signed by Derek Litthauer
Date: 2019.11.29 16:31:15 +02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: 051 401 9398 / 7619 / 3682
RIMS@UFS.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za

Appendix D – Ethical Clearance Letter from the Department of Education

Education and Sport Development
Department of Education and Sport Development
Departement van Onderwys en Sport Ontwikkeling
Lefapha la Thuto le Tlhabololo ya Metshameko
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

Private Bag 1036
Taung
8580
Tel: +2753 994 1868/9
Fax: +2753 994 1162
Email:makhoanak@nwpg.gov.za

DR RUTH SEGOMOTSI MOMPATI DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUB-DISTRICT MANAGER

Enquiries : MOENG D.M
Email : modisaotsilemoeng@nwpg.gov.za
Telephone : 078 802 0619

DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

TO : **ALL PRINCIPALS**
GREATER TAUNG SUB-DISTRICT

FROM : **ACTING SUB-DISTRICT MANAGER**
GREATER TAUNG SUB-DISTRICT

SUBJECT : **APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – DOCTORAL STUDIES**

This serves to confirm that permission is granted to **Ms Catherine M. Shirima** to conduct research studies in the schools of Greater Taung Sub-District. At the end of her studies, we would be greatful if she could furnish us with her findings.

Against this background we strongly recommend that schools should give her necessary assistance.

Yours faithfully

Mr D.M MOENG
ACTING SUB DISTRICT MANAGER

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DR. RUTH MOMPATI DISTRICT
P/Bag X1036 • TAUNG 8580
-09- 30
Tel: 053 994 1868/9
NORTH WEST PROVINCE
GREATER TAUNG AREA OFFICE

Appendix E – Ethical Clearance Letter from the Department of Social Development

social development

Department:
Social Development
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2030 NDP

GREATER TAUNG SERVICE POINT

Agricultural Building ▪ Taung Station 8580 ▪ **Greater Taung**
Tel: +27 (53) 994 –8900 /01 ▪ Fax: +27 (53) 994 – 1741 ▪ dchuaka@nwpg.gov.za

ENQ: TSUMBEDZO NEMUTANZHELA

SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR GRADE 1

TO: UNIVERSITY OF THE FREESTATE

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

205 NELSON MANDELA DRIVE/ RYLAAN

PARK WEST

BLOEMFONTEIN

9301

FROM: Ms DINEO CHUAKA

SERVICE POINT MANAGER

DATE: 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

SUBJECT: AGREEMENT FOR REFERAL OF CLIENT FROM STUDENT PSYCHOLOGIST

This letter serves to inform your esteem office that Ms Catherine M. Shirima is permitted to refer her clients to our department for further interventions.

Hope you find this in order

Yours in service delivery

Ms Dineo Chuaka

Greater Taung Service Point Manager

Appendix F – Letter of Permission from the School Principals

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS·UV
THE HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

2019/10/30

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Request for learners to participate in a research study

The purpose of this correspondence is to ask for your permission to conduct a research study at your school.

I, Ms Catherine M. Shirima I am currently registered as a PhD Student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I am conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilient development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context.

This study involves completion of surveys on dimensions of identity development and resilience development; to explore and to describe aspects contributing to identity formation and resilience development by conducting focus groups interviews. Interviews will be audio recorded.

Participation in this study will be over 18 months. This implies that learners will be asked to participate in three different time periods with a six months gap (Time1, Time2, Time3). Validated questionnaires will be used to collect data. Each session will last for 45 minutes to complete the surveys. The focus group interviews will be done once. These interviews will last for about 45 minutes.

All data collected during the study including learners identifying particulars will be kept confidential. Soft copies will be encrypted whereas, hard copies will be kept in a locked cupboard. All information obtained will be used solely for research purposes and it will be accessible to other professional at the University of the Free State. The results obtained will be published.

Participation in this study is voluntary and learners may withdraw without any consequences.

I would be grateful if you could gather the learners together to allow the researcher to brief them about the research study. I would also request to please ensure the availability of the Life Orientation teachers to assist with debriefing.

Your collaboration is much appreciated.

If there are any questions please address them to the researcher Ms Shirima (kathymgs@yahoo.com; 0608715109) or to Prof Naudé (naudel@ufs.ac.za; 051 401 2189).

Kind Regards,

Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Department of Psychology / Departement Sielkunde
205 Nelson Mandela Dive/Rylaan, Park West/Parkwes, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika
PO Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika, T: +27(0)51 401 2187, www.ufs.ac.za

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I, [redacted] hereby give permission to the researcher to conduct the research study at the mentioned school [redacted] understand that the learners' participation in this research study is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.

Name and Surname: [redacted]

Signature : _____

Date: 20/10/2019

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
[redacted]
2019 -10- 31
[redacted]
083 591 5208
DR RUTH SEGOMOTSI MOMPATI
NORTH WEST PROVINCE

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I, [redacted] hereby give permission to the researcher to conduct the research study at the mentioned school [redacted] I understand that the learners' participation in this research study is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.

Name and Surname: [redacted]

Signature : [redacted]

Date: 30/10/2019

[redacted]
P.O.Box 5698, TAUNG, 8584
2019 -10- 30
Tel: (053) 994 2168
DEPT OF EDUCATION NORTH WEST

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

UFS·UV
HUMANITIES
GEESTESWETENSKAPPE

[redacted]

LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

I, [redacted] hereby give permission to the researcher to conduct the research study at the mentioned school [redacted] I understand that the learners' participation in this research study is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.

Name and Surname: [redacted]

Signature :

Date: 04 DECEMBER 2020

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
[redacted]
04 DEC 2020
PRIVATE BAG X 542, TAUNG 8594
TEL: 053 994 1144
FAX: 053 994 1747

Department of Psychology / DepartementSielkunde
205 Nelson Mandela Drive/Rylaan, Park West/Parkwes, Bloemfontein 9301, South Africa/Suid-Afrika
PO Box/Posbus 339, Bloemfontein 9300, South Africa/Suid-Afrika, T: +27(0)51 401 2187, www.ufs.ac.za

Appendix G – Transcripts

Wave I-Focus Group 1 School 1

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2020/03/16
Duration of focus group / interview	43 minutes 27 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
3.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 1 Male participant
- 8 Female participants

1.1 **Interviewer**: Good afternoon guys

1.2 **Participants** (all): Afternoon

1.3 **Interviewer**: So, my name is Catherine and I am studying at the University of the Free State. I am doing a PhD in Psychology, and I'm carrying out research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context. So, identity formation involves an active questioning about one's values, beliefs and roles, in the society. When we think about identity, you question about your own values your own beliefs and what kind of role you play in the society, at your age now. And whereas, resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships. So, when you think about resilience what comes to your mind? Resilience is the ability to overcome difficulties or those situations that happened to be challenging, and you managed to overcome them. So, we are going to discuss around such concepts: that is, identity and resilience. So, in our discussion this afternoon, I want you to talk about your views and experiences on how you see your identity formation and what you think about your resilience development. The two things: identity formation and resilience development. But in our groups so that we can manage time well, and we can also enable a good discussion, we have a few rules:

The first one is that all of you should know that the information you are giving me is confidential, it will not be shared by anyone outside this group. And what we say stays in the room. Okay

1.4 **Participants** (all): Mmm

1.5 **Interviewer**: And we are called to respect each one's opinion. So, what each one of you says is respected by the other person. We should avoid interjecting when people are talking. And there are no right or wrong answers. So, you are speaking about your own experiences regarding identity and resilience formation. However, if you feel uncomfortable in discussing specific questions you may refrain from answering them. You are reminded that your participation is voluntary, and you may pull out at any point of the research without any consequences. Isn't it all of you volunteered to participate in this focus group?

1.6 **Participants:** (all): Yes

1.7 **Interviewer**: Ok, I just wanted to be sure that you wrote your names and you accepted to participate from your free will. But just know that you are not coerced, so you can still decide to leave or to continue without any consequences. And this session will be audio recorded to enable me to track back what we have discussed, in order for me to have the information, write it down so that I can be able to work on it, later on. Otherwise, I will not be able to capture everything you are going to say if I don't record, okay.

So, if you are comfortable and willing to continue you may please fill in the biographical questionnaires. Biographic questionnaires are what you have in front of you. Is it fine?

1.8 **Participants** (all): Yes

1.9 **Interviewer**: Ok, so everybody is ready, isn't it? Are you all ready?

1.10 **Participants** (all): Yes

1.11 **Interviewer**: Ok then can we start? Can we start?

1.12 **Participants:** (all): Yes

1.13 **Interviewer**: Ok, so, my first question, I would like to ask you to participate, to engage…if I ask a question, you can give your answer; every one of you can give their point of view with regard to their own experiences. So, the very first question is that what do you know about identity development, or what is identity?

1.14 **Participants** (some): Whispering

1.15 **Interviewer**: Just tell me whatever you think

1.16 **Participants:** (some): Whispering

1.17 **Interviewer**: What comes in your mind when you think about identity development?

1.18 **Participants** (some): Whispering,

1.19 **Interviewer**: Anything?

1.20 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.21 **Interviewer**: Ok if someone asks you, who are you? What does it mean?

1.22 **Participants** (F): The way I understand identity is the way people are, your shadow, '*gore*' your roles, who you are, the personalities, something like that, the way I understand it.

1.23 **Interviewer**: Mmmm, somebody else

1.24 **Participants** (some): Whispers...

1.25 **Interviewer**: If I ask you, what is your identity, how would you answer me?

1.26 **Participants** (some): Whispers…

1.27 **Interviewer**: Don't be shy, I know some of you want to say something, just say it. Remember there is no right or wrong answer… and this is not an exam... so just speak about your own point of views.

1.28 **Participants** (some): Whispers…

1.29 **Interviewer**: Ok, what makes you different from the other person? What makes you different from her or from him? Or what makes you different from all the other people here?

1.30 **Participant** (F): The thing….

1.31 **Interviewer**: Please a bit loud so that we can hear

1.32 **Participant** (F): Come again

1.33 **Interviewer**: What makes you different from the rest of the people in the group?

1.34 **Participant** (F): The thing that makes me different between this boy it was the gender, yeah

1.35 **Interviewer**: Mmm, the gender, and what makes you different from her?

1.36 **Participant** (F): Mmm, culture, the talents

1.37 **Interviewer**: Okay, I don't hear you please speak loudly

1.38 **Participants** (some): Talking over each other

1.39 **Interviewer**: Just speak up don't worry

1.40 **Participant** (F): The talents that I have

1.41 **Interviewer**: The talents that you have makes you different from the other person? ok

1.42 **Participant** (F): The way I think

1.43 **Interviewer**: The way you think…mmm

1.44 **Interviewer**: Yes, you wanted to say something

1.45 **Participant** (F): No, (giggles), how people behave in their roles

1.46 **Interviewer**: She says that how each one behaves in their roles makes them different. Mmm, and… yes, go on

1.47 **Participant** (F): The religion

1.48 **Interviewer**: The religion…

1.49 **Participant** (F): Background, my, culture, my religion, my interests, my roles,

1.50 **Interviewer**: Did you all follow, she said that what makes her different is the background, culture, different roles, the attitude from how each behaves is different from one another.

1.51 **Interviewer**: What else comes to your mind when you think about yourself, different from the other person?

1.52 **Participant** (F): Sense of humour,

1.53 **Interviewer**: Sorry… sense of humour and?

1.54 **Participant** (F): And knowledge

1.55 **Interviewer**: And knowledge

1.56 **Interviewer**: Ok, we have spoken a lot about…. So, do you think what you have said could be part of your identity?

1.57 **Participant** (F): Repeat again?

1.58 **Interviewer**: What you have just said, can that be part of your identity

1.59 **Participants** (all): Yes

1.60 **Interviewer**: Ok, then, mmm what you have said will be linked to the next question, which is mmm, what factors in your life, have contributed or impacted on who you are today?

1.61 **Interviewer**: As you said, the type of person you are, your knowledge, attitude, culture, background, and all those qualities that you have mentioned. So, what factors have contributed or impacted on who you are today and on how you define yourself today?

1.62 **Participant** (F): Whispers... to have *concentrative* in other people

1.63 **Interviewer**: Mmm, what has made you or has enabled you to be who you are…

1.64 **Participant** (F): Respecting each other, how I respect some people…

1.65 **Interviewer**: The respect of others

1.66 **Participant** (F): How I treat other people,

1.67 **Interviewer**: What do you think makes her, to have different values, and different beliefs, and behave differently in the society?

1.68 **Interviewer**: What things makes you different from the rest of the people?

1.69 **Interviewer**: what factors from your environment, from where you live… what is it that makes you polite, rude, motivated and so on…, what makes you to be who you

are today? What are those factors, from your home environment, or school environment?

1.70 **Participant** (F): The way mmm, I behave, with other people, to have…. how people have honesty with me, to share the sensitive issues with others, with other people.

1.71 **Interviewer**: So, what enabled you to be honest?

1.72 **Participant** (F): To tell the people truth

1.73 **Interviewer**: Is it something you value telling the people the truth, or is it something that you learnt from your family or the friends?

1.74 **Participant** (F): Pardon?

1.75 **Interviewer**: how did you acquire the values you have?

1.76 **Participant** (F): Whispers, the way I talk

1.77 **Interviewer**: Okay if I may ask differently, what situations in your life have negatively impacted on who you are?

1.78 **Participants** (all): Whispers, long silence

1.79 **Interviewer**: What are those situations that have… like affected you in a negative way?

1.80 **Participant** (F): Whispers… situations

1.81 **Participant** (F): Come again

1.82 **Interviewer**: We speak of situations, of incidences, of experiences, with people that have made you mmm have impacted or have negatively affected your development

1.83 **Participant** (F): Like there are bad situations that you have experienced by some people… that you may be grow with them… is something like have less trust on them... and how they have treated you in a bad situation like a relative treat you badly or something…

1.84 **Interviewer**: And mmm what other things have positively impacted on who you are today? The fact that people mistrust you has impacted on your development negatively… so what has impacted you positively? For instance, in your relationship with peers or in your relationship at home with the people you live with or in the larger social context?

1.85 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.86 **Interviewer**: What are those things that have helped you to grow... to develop to become who you are as you are seated here today?

1.87 **Participant** (F): Respect, loyalty,

1.88 **Participant** (F): Whispers

1.89 **Interviewer**: Just speak up, like no one is gonna laugh or say what you have said... there is no right or wrong answer

1.90 **Participants** (F): Whispers

1.91 **Interviewer**: Just tell me whatever you think please

1.92 **Participants** (F): Whispers

1.93 **Participants** (F): Whispers

1.94 **Interviewer**: You are very silent

1.95 **Participant** (F): Come again,

1.96 **Interviewer**: So, what factors from your school, from home or community have enabled you to grow and become who you were today?

1.97 **Participants** (all): Whispers, become who you are today

1.98 **Participant** (F): How they treat me how the current situation is at home

1.99 **Interviewer**: Where? is it how your peers treat you at school, or in the family, or in the community at large?

1.100 **Participant** (F): Mmm he or she the way they look at your background at the school and at home

1.101 **Interviewer**: Please respect each other's opinion, no laughing because we are all trying to participate, okay

1.102 **Participant** (all): Yes

1.103 **Interviewer**: Thank you, yes,

1.104 **Participant** (F): Like you have said community, school, and home. In the community they teach me to feel confident and have respect, in school they treat like equally like other children and be... how can I say... at home they teach me to respect each other and be honest, and even not trust everybody that I meet, is what they taught me at home, in community to respect each other, at school to respect my peers, and love them as I love myself.

1.105 **Interviewer**: Did you all follow? somebody else who has something to add?

1.106 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.107 **Interviewer**: So, what conditions from your environment have negatively impacted on who you are today?

1.108 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.109 **Interviewer**: Conditions like

1.110 **Participants** (some): Whispers…

1.111 **Interviewer**: You can speak either about the conditions in your environment or what factors… what is enabling, or disabling in a way that… what in your environment… it can be the current environment, that affects your development?

1.112 **Participant** (F): Whispers, I did not understand your question

1.113 **Interviewer**: When we speak about conditions, we see for example, availability of resources... mmm

1.114 **Participant** (F): Some weakness, something like that

1.115 **Interviewer**: All of that as well, it can be your own strengths, your own weaknesses, which can impact on how, you develop.

1.116 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.117 **Interviewer**: So, like are there people you can speak with at home when you have challenges?

1.118 **Participants** (all): Mmm

1.119 **Interviewer**: Or here at school, what kind of stuff do you speak with them, is it something that helps you to grow or is something that stops you from growing? Or contribute to be who you are today?

1.120 **Participant** (F): Mmmm… myself on my side at home I don't talk with no one. Like I have my spiritual… at church I have my spiritual mother and fathers and sisters, the ones I share my problems with. And keep me growing spiritually and have strength when I have weaknesses, I go to them and talk to them about my problems and give me more power, to face challenges,

1.121 **Interviewer**: So, would you describe yourself as a person who overcomes challenges? Or hardships?

1.122 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.123 **Interviewer**: Would you say that you are a person who overcomes challenges and hardships?

1.124 **Participant** (F): Whispers, overcome, like facing all the problems

1.125 **Interviewer**: Like are you a person who overcomes the difficulties you meet?

1.126 **Participants** (some): Eh

1.127 **Interviewer**: One person

1.128 **Participant** (all): Silence

1.129 **Interviewer**: Guys, we are here to discuss

1.130 **Participants** (all): Laughter

1.131 **Participant** (F): I can face my challenges

1.132 **Interviewer**: She says she can face her challenges, what about the others?

1.133 **Participant** (F): I can face my challenges,

1.134 **Interviewer**: Who finds it difficult to face challenges

1.135 **Participant** (F): For me

1.136 **Interviewer**: Please

1.137 **Participant** (F): Like me, I can't face my own challenges, I wonna speak with someone to help me to build my soul, yeah, I can't face my own challenges, I have a feeling, I can give up, while I am lonely, I feel I can give up.

1.138 **Interviewer**: Are you saying that mmm when you face challenges, then you seek help for you to overcome them.

1.139 **Participant** (F): Yeah... from people that you trust

1.140 **Interviewer**: So, if you are talking about the factors…all of you said you can overcome your challenges except one person, what helps you to overcome your challenges... she said she speaks with people whom she trusts. What about the others? what do you do to overcome your challenges or difficult situations. Yes

1.141 **Participant** (F): I work hard

1.142 **Interviewer**: You work hard... mmm by doing what?

1.143 **Participant** (F): Whispers, silence

1.144 **Interviewer**: Please guys all of you spoke and said that you can overcome challenges… what challenges have you overcome already, or difficult situations... we can just enumerate one after the other, what are those situations, or challenges that you overcame? As young as you are… what kind of problems have you overcome or you managed to solve.

1.145 **Participants** (M): Speaking in low voices,

1.146 **Interviewer**: Speak loud please...

1.147 **Participant** (F): Giggles

1.148 **Interviewer**: Sorry, I thought I said we are going to discuss…mmm you are very shy guys

1.149 **Participant** (some): Whispers

1.150 **Interviewer**: Just speak loudly hey… because we are recording even the low voices can be captured

1.151 **Participant** (some): Whispers

1.152 **Interviewer**: Say, there is no right or wrong answer remember

1.153 **Participant** (some): Speaking in a low voice

1.154 **Participant** (F): She says they will laugh at her

1.155 **Interviewer**: No one will laugh… we said we are respecting what each one is saying

1.156 **Participants** (all): Yeah, yees

1.157 **Participant (F)**: Like family issues,

1.158 **Interviewer**: Like family issues mmm what else... other problems challenges that you have overcome? Could we elaborate on what she has said, family issues for example?

1.159 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.160 **Interviewer**: Please speak loudly

1.161 **Participant** (F): Speaking in a low voice,

1.162 **Interviewer**: Sorry

1.163 **Participant** (F): … Conflicts between me and my friends

1.164 **Interviewer**: What are you saying

1.165 **Participant** (F): Nothing more

1.166 **Interviewer**: Guys, what you are saying is ok, there is no right or wrong answer, so no one is gonna ask you later of what you talked about here neh

1.167 **Participant** (F): How people they treat me

1.168 **Interviewer**: So how they treat her, so that is one of the challenges

1.169 **Participant** (F): The way people tell me about

1.170 **Interviewer**: About?

1.171 **Participants** (F): Speaks in a low voice,

1.172 **Interviewer**: Words that are not true?

1.173 **Participant** (F): The words that are hurting

1.174 **Interviewer**: Mmm

1.175 **Participant** (F): And the words that are bad

1.176 **Interviewer**: And

1.177 **Participant** (F): They treat you badly when your mother has passed away

1.178 **Interviewer**: Mmm

1.179 **Participant** (F): How people gossip about you

1.180 **Interviewer**: Other situations that are difficult

1.181 **Participant** (F): How people judge you

1.182 **Participant** (F): How people judge your background

1.183 **Participant** (F): How people gossip about you

1.184 **Interviewer**: Other situations that are difficult to overcome?

1.185 **Participant** (F): How people judge you

1.186 **Participant** (F): How people judge your background

1.187 **Participant** (F): How people…

1.188 **Interviewer**: Mmm

1.189 **Participant** (all): Silence… whispers

1.190 **Interviewer**: Mmm what helped you to overcome those challenges? how people, judge you, treat you badly, or….

1.191 **Participant** (F): Find someone you trust and speak with and ignoring them

1.192 **Interviewer**: How did ignoring them help you?

1.193 **Participant** (F): Just keep quiet and leave them alone,

1.194 **Interviewer**: So, this factors you have mentioned are from your home environment neh?

1.195 **Participants** (all): Mmmm

1.196 **Interviewer**: So, what about from the school environment? What difficulties do you experience?

1.197 **Participants** (some): Whispers….

1.198 **Participant** (F): How teachers treat you in the class or…

1.199 **Participant** (F): Peer pressure

1.200 **Interviewer**: Say it again

1.201 **Participant** (F): Peer pressure

1.202 **Participant** (F): How your friends treat you

1.203 **Participant** (f): She has said how some teachers treat you to make some learners to laugh at you and make you lose your confidence. And low self-esteem

1.204 **Interviewer**: It makes you to have low self-esteem, yes

1.205 **Interviewer:** Mmm

1.206 **Participant** (F): Lose confidence in yourself

1.207 **Interviewer**: So, do you agree that how your peers and teachers treat you makes you lose confidence in yourself?

1.208 **Participant** (F): Maybe they shout at you in front of the learners and other learners will laugh at you

1.209 **Interviewer:** Okay…mmm

1.210 **Participant** (F): You don't want to come school because how teachers treat you

1.211 **Interviewer**: So how teachers treat you makes you feel that you do wonna come to school anymore… who feels like that?

1.212 **Participant** (F): Or other learners treat you in class

1.213 **Participant** (all): Silence

1.214 **Interviewer**: What about the others? ok. So, you are saying that how you are treated by the teachers and the challenges you face at school influence what you think about yourself neh?

1.215 **Participant** (all): Yes, ma'am

1.216 **Interviewer**: How does it influence how you think about yourself?

1.217 **Participant** (all): Silence

1.218 **Interviewer**: Someone said make you lose yourself confidence, self-esteem

1.219 **Participant** (F): It gives stress

1.220 **Participant** (F): You start losing weight

1.221 **Participant** (F): Cause you to have depression,

1.222 **Participant** (F): Academic will be affected

1.223 **Interviewer**: Mmm did we hear what she said

1.224 **Interviewer**: What do you think about what she has said?

1.225 **Interviewer**: What individual factors have enabled you to overcome those challenges? If you did, if you didn't you can also say… what helps to over the challenges and the difficulties you are facing or to solve the problem you are facing?

1.226 **Participant** (F): Speaks in a low voice…. Advice you get from your parents

1.227 **Interviewer**: Advice you get from your parents….

1.228 **Participant** (F): Whispers… tell the leaders in my classroom

1.229 **Interviewer**: What she does when faced with challenges is that she tells the leaders in her classroom…

1.230 **Participant** (F): To convert him or her

1.231 **Interviewer**: Did you hear?

1.232 **Participant** (F): To ignore them

1.233 **Interviewer**: So generally, here, what do you do at school when you are faced with problems amongst yourselves, or with one another, or teachers, how do you solve that?

1.234 **Participant** (F): Speak with those I trust

1.235 **Interviewer**: Are those people always available... do you always find someone you can speak with?

1.236 **Participants** (all): Yes, but is difficult sometimes

1.237 **Interviewer**: Do you think what you have gone through says something about you as a person? What kind of person you are?

1.238 **Participant** (F): I am shy

1.239 **Participant** (F): I am talkative,

1.240 **Interviewer**: Do the challenges the problems you face either at home, at school or in your community, influence your personal growth? The first question you were talking about who you are. Do you still remember?

1.241 **Participant** (F): Mmmm

1.242 **Interviewer**: Do the problems you face influence who you are, like your identity, the person who you become?

1.243 **Participants** (F): They do

1.244 **Interviewer**: How

1.245 **Participant** (F): It makes you to lose hope

1.246 **Participant** (F): It makes you strong

1.247 **Interviewer**: Mmm some challenges make you strong

1.248 **Participant** (F): (Inaudible)…teach you how to learn people how they treat you….and less trust in them

1.249 **Interviewer**: So are you saying that it makes you to have less trust in people

1.250 **Participant** (F): Yes

1.251 **Participant** (F): Maybe you tell people your secret and they go to tell someone, how they spread the word over the school

1.252 **Interviewer**: Something else you want to add

1.253 **Participants** (all): Silence

1.254 **Interviewer**: So, this was our focus group 1 and thank you for participation and we end here for today.

Wave I-Focus Group 2 – School 1

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2020/03/17
Duration of focus group / interview	46 minutes 22 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	M	14	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	M	21	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
7.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 5 Male participants
- 4 Female participants

2.1. **Interviewer**: So good afternoon guys

2.2. **Participants** (all): Good Afternoon

2.3. **Interviewer**: I am Miss Catherine Shirima, I am currently registered at the University of the Free state, doing my PhD in Psychology. So, I'm conducting out research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development, in adolescents, like people of your age, living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context. Identity formation, if we ask ourselves, involves an active questioning about one's values believes and roles. So that's what comes in our mind when we think about identity: your values, your beliefs and your roles, in the society where you live in. Whereas, resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships. When you go through problems, difficulties; that capacity to overcome those challenges.

2.4. In our discussion this afternoon, I want you to talk about your views and experiences on how you see your identity formation and what you think about your resilience development. Okay.

2.5. **Participants** (all): Yes, ma'am

2.6. **Interviewer**: Okay, in our discussion also we have to put up some rules, so that the discussion can run smoothly. The first one is that you must know that everything we are going to talk about here is confidential, and what you say stays in this room. Please you are not to discuss with the others what your friends have talked about in this room. Okay

2.7. **Participant** (M): Yes, ma'am

2.8. **Interviewer**: So, we are called to respect each one's opinion so when somebody is talking we listen, there is no laughing at the other persons' opinion. Okay.

2.9. **Participants** (all): Yes, ma'am

2.10. **Interviewer**: And remember that there is no right or wrong answer. So, everything you say will be accepted and the other can only add their own ideas or add to what you say. So, you can share your personal experiences not what you have heard from others, or what happened to your cousin or to your sister or brother. Only your own experiences. However, if you feel uncomfortable in discussing specific questions you may refrain from answering them. You are reminded that your participation is voluntary, and you may pull out at any point of the research without any consequences.

The session will be audio recorded so that I can capture the information and would be able to transcribe it for the research. And if you feel really uncomfortable, not willing to continue, you may pull out, but if you feel comfortable and you want to participate in the research as you had agreed on by signing the consent forms then you can fill in the biographic questionnaires what you have in front of you. Okay

2.11. **Participants** (all): Yes

2.12. **Interviewer**: When you are done you can tell me, and we can start

2.13. **Participants** (all): Yeah, we are done

2.14. **Interviewe**r: Okay, so mmm the first question I would ask you is just you to tell me about yourselves, who are you? How do you describe yourself?

2.15. **Participant** (M): Mmm I would like to start; mm my name is * From my seeing of view, I am a shy person, but it comes to real things, I put my effort in them, sometimes I feel like I am very special, yeah, I can do something. Thank you.

2.16. **Interviewer**: The others

2.17. **Participant** (M): I will start by introducing myself, my name is * A learner in * Secondary School, doing grade *. I am just an ordinary person, who likes people a lot. A person who doesn't want to be messed up with things that do not dwell in a confidential matter. I am a dignified person; I respect people a lot and I expect respect from those whom I respect. I am just an ordinary person thank you.

2.18. **Interviewer**: Thank you someone else?

2.19. **Participant** (F): Firstly, let me introduce my name, *clears throat*, my name is * my surname is* I live in * I would like to tell you about myself, I am a shy person but, I don't like people who disrespect me coz I respect everyone. Thank you, ma'am.

2.20. **Participant** (F): Mmm I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about myself, my name is * Doing grade * at * Secondary school. I am a shy person, but I would like to participate in everything. Thank you.

2.21. **Participant** (M): My name is * And my surname is * I am doing grade * in * secondary and I am a talkative person. Thank you.

2.22. **Participant** (M): My name is * doing grade * at * secondary school and eish I am shy person hey.

2.23. **Interviewe**r: So, what makes you different from others?

2.24. **Participant** (M): I think it is experience... in everything you see… some hee… a different person people can see things beautiful, others can see bad, and because of your mind. How you think and how you see things. Thank you

2.25. **Interviewer**: How does your experience makes you different form him or her…how does your experience…

2.26. **Participant** (M): My experience makes me different form the other person because in life we want to live in a formula that the other person does not live on. It is because in life you do not live in one formula. We live in our different ways... so, I would like to live a different life of... I don't want to try to fit where I do not belong. But sometimes other people like to be better than others. So, we don't think the same or experience the same... we don't see people the same. Others can see somebody as junk or something, but I can see the persons is so special and different. Thank you

2.27. **Participant** (M): Adding from what he just said, regarding the question of experience, I think it depends on where you come from and how you were raised. The belief in yourself and the point of view on how you see things, how you experience things. I think experience may explain a lot of things but under one circumstance. Thank you, ma'am,

2.28. **Interviewe**r: You are welcome. Mmm next person. Somebody else with different ideas

2.29. **Participant** (all): Silence

2.30. **Interviewer**: So, mm what would you say about your identity? (Disruption)

2.31. **Interviewe**r: So, what would you say about identity…

2.32. **Interviewer**: What do you know following what you have just said. When you think about your identity as an adolescent today what would you say?

2.33. **Participant** (M): From my point of view, I think when you talk about an identity, we are referring to the self, person in himself or herself. When you grow up, for example when you grow up you start experiencing a lot of changes, a lot of transition, under the situation whereby you start seeing things differently, and you start putting yourself in a position whereby sometimes you won't understand or sometimes you have to accept yourself the way you are. I think all in all when you talk about identity we are talking about self-being.

2.34. **Interviewer**: Okay, what else, who agrees with what he has said, or what do you have to add

2.35. **Participant** (M): I agree because identity it is who you are, it is what you are, your physical appearance and your emotional appearance. Sometimes in life you feel your changing emotions, even if you are always happy, when you come to the stage of adolescence, you start to change, you start to feel like you are angry for others, you start to feel like you are alone in the world and selfish and other things. Thank you

2.36. **Interviewer**: So, if we follow up from what you have said, mmm what things or what factors have contributed to who you are today?

2.37. **Participant** (M): I think it is self-awareness. Seeing my strengths and my weaknesses and building up on them thank you.

2.38. **Interviewer**: Somebody else, what has contributed to who you are today?

2.39. **Participant** (M): Adding on what he has said, I think if ever we could really realise, what we have been talking about, believing in oneself, if I heard him, which things you believe you can do, which things you believe you cannot, what things can you accept to leave the things you cannot change and accept to live with.

2.40. **Interviewer**: So, what has…which things have affected on what you believe or on how you see things today?

2.41. **Participant** (M): Sometimes we do interact with people of which we refer to as the community

2.42. **Interviewer**: Okay

2.43. **Participant** (M): Such things can imply a negative knowledge unto you because you will start being judged, you start to be imposed to the stages whereby peers will start to control you whereby you start hanging over with wrong people at the right time losing a track of time, that is where you will have to sit down to actually lay your points and find the way forward, then you will start, to realise that the real you in you and you can live with or without anyone's help.

2.44. **Interviewer**: what about the community you live in and peers

2.45. **Participant** (M). So, I think factors which may contribute into bringing down emotionally or maybe at some point an institution whereby you start finding yourself in a difficult position is when you interact with different people with different beliefs.

2.46. **Participant** (M): Yes, and I would like to add from his opinion. Sometimes what contributes to emotional failure or effects in changing your life, it is because of family matters. Sometimes your family can put pressure in your life. Like maybe your father or mother are fighting all the time, which affects you as a child. Thank you.

2.47. **Interviewer**: Mm so you are already talking about things that negatively affect who you are today.

2.48. **Participant** (all): Yes ma' am

2.49. **Interviewer**: Somebody else, what other things impact or affect your identity development negatively? This side, there,

2.50. **Participant** (M): Things that affect, you to change negatively ma'am sometimes are community that you are living in. Crowded with people, they put pressure on you

2.51. **Interviewer**: A bit loud

2.52. **Participant** (M): Things that make you change are when you are living in a different community, yah, things like crime.

2.53. **Interviewer:** Someone else, so you mentioned crime can impact on how you feel about yourself today

2.54. **Participants** (all): Yeah

2.55. **Interviewer**: Someone else

2.56. **Participant** (all): Silence

2.57. **Interviewer**: So, what has positively impacted on who you are today? The person you are, how you define yourself,

2.58. **Participant** (M): For me it is because I believe in role models, I have role models my own role models. I look up to him whatever he does that is good I try to keep up with him or her. Thank.

2.59. **Interviewer**: what about the girls?

2.60. **Participant** (M): So, adding on what she has said, I think it's not only about role models but only if you know what you want in life as an individual. Only if you know your weaknesses and your strength. On where you wonna pick up when there is less, on where you wonna lay a little low when there is an overdoing... what I am trying to say is that is when you start to face challenges, you have to apply some knowledge, of believing in yourself like, losing, but improving into a better standard. I believe that as we grow up we are now on positive factors that may contribute into your life as an

individual. Only if you can stand up and take things, things that cannot, things that you think are impossible, change them into possible. I think there will be a way forward on how to improve your standard of living. Education is one of those. And only if you can think and make time management for yourself from things that may bring a difference into your life.

2.61. **Interviewer**: So actually, you have been talking about general factors from your school, home and community. What if we speak from our own personal lives. What are those things that have helped you to be who we are today?

2.62. **Participant** (M): I think, sometimes it is where you come from as an individual. When you look at others and you start comparing, you start making similarities, on where you need to improve, where you need to meet the standard of the world, when you interact as friends, now we are talking about school, when you are at school we interact as friends we start talking, we start bringing in new strategies that you may apply in our lives for tomorrow. I think that is where you get the encouragement of life on how we need to pull up, how we need to live together, how we need... and so on and so on.

2.63. **Participant** (M): Mmm I would like to add too. I think it is because when you look at your background at home, mm if your family is poor, you will like to pick yourself to see that I want to change the situation. And want to be the person that your parents want you to be. Thank you.

2.64. **Interviewer**: Somebody else… ladies?

2.65. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.66. **Interviewer**: So, what does it mean for you to be resilient if we go to the next question. Now we are moving to resilience. What does it mean for you to be resilient or to be a strong or tough person?

2.67. **Participant** (M): If only ma'am can I ask what does the word resilience mean?

2.68. **Interviewer**: It is just what I have explained, resilience means to be strong or tough, be able to overcome challenges and difficult situations in your life.

2.69. **Participant** (M): Sometimes we meet people, now I am answering the question, sometimes we meet people in life, people of which we look up to as motivational speakers, people whom we sat down and talk with about things that we experience, I think that's where the encouragement start to fit in on how to be strong. The motivational, the motive that you get from an individual, like sometimes I will be

suffering of something and needing help, so I will start consulting for example one of my teachers here in school, we start sitting down sharing some views, at the time I am feeling much lesser but from the different view from the other person, he or she can see that, it is only that there not that bad than to an individual as one on how you do ...right. I don't know whether you understand

2.70. **Interviewer:** I do. So, if you were to describe yourself to somebody else, telling them how resilient you are, what would you say about yourself to show them that you are a person who can overcome challenges… what would you say about yourself?

2.71. **Participant** (M): I will start by confidentially as I am, the dignity I have and the passion I have to do things yes.

2.72. **Interviewer**: Somebody else

2.73. **Participant** (M): For me I would like to say, because I am a Christian, I would like to say that if you put God first everything is possible because, we as Christians, we read Bibles, and the Bible says we are more than conquerors. So, I believe that we are conquering with God, and I will tell him that if we put God first everything is possible. Thank you

2.74. **Interviewer**: So, would you describe yourself as a person who overcomes hardships or challenges?

2.75. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.76. **Interviewer**: So, would you describe yourself as somebody who has ever overcome any challenge or any hardship?

2.77. **Participant** (M): Yeah, I would say that because, we as teenagers, we get into relationships, like romantic relationships, we get to love someone, but he comes, to a time that you get hurt that is a challenge to your life that you feel like you are not being loved. So, if you get through that kind of challenge as a teenager not more than a challenge of the adult because, because you are a teenager, you must face a little challenge like that. So, I was saying I am a strong person because I have seen, and I have experienced how we connect in relationships. Thank you.

2.78. **Interviewer:** Somebody else. Do you think you are strong or weak, do you think you can overcome hardships or challenges, have you ever overcome any challenges in your life?

2.79. **Participant** (M): I think I am strong because I have experienced good friends and bad friends like those friends who do not like you to go on with your life and those ones who like you to go on with your life.

2.80. **Participant** (M): I think one of the hardships that I did meet in my life is repeating my grade 11 on the year 2018. When I started to have an infant whereas I am still in school, that is when I started to realise, because I didn't bang school at the time, I didn't feel discouraged, but at the same time when I was schooling, I was working at the same time in town, in car wash during the weekends. So, the reason why I repeated, I did not put much of the time to my books because all I was thinking about was my unborn baby who was on the way. Because sometimes in life we are not equal. I was raised by a single parent, and I am still raised by a single parent, that is why I had to encourage myself that no matter what, when the baby is going to be brought to this earth, she must have something to eat, she must have something to wear and at the same time when her mother was doing grade 11 with me. We heading to grade 12. She left me on grade 11 and I didn't regret because I knew that what were the effect, what were the result. So, I did stay in 2019 in my grade 11and I repeated it twice. Until now I got to my grade 12 in this year 2020 completing final study. I think that's where I started to realise how strong I am. How passionate and confidential I am to deal with difficulties in life. That's why when I got the forms of this research, I went through them, read them, I started to realise that this is time to take of the burden off my shoulders and share with others. Thank you, ma'am,

2.81. **Interviewer**: Thank you. Who else has something to share?

2.82. **Participant** (F): I don't think I am strong enough to handle pain because at 2019 I was leaving school for suffering with my feet. My feet were so pain and I was leaving school. I don't think I am strong enough to handle pain... when I remember coming back to * secondary school, I was very nervous that my feet will come back again. But there is no such a thing.

2.83. **Interviewer**: Thank you

2.84. **Participant** (M): As the guy said about the relationships, the most painful thing is about the family relationship. At home we face different challenges, our parents are fighting and that causes a lot of pain in our heart as child or as kids…as teenagers.

2.85. **Interviewer**: Mmm

2.86. **Participant** (F): I think I am a strong person... I have family matter. I always fight with my aunt… but she is not older than me, I think we are peers we always fight and live in the same house for a week without talking to each other.

2.87. **Interviewer**: So, from the challenges that you have mentioned, what things or factors have helped to overcome the everyday difficulties or situations or problems?

2.88. **Participant** (M): When I overcome my difficulties, the one that I have mentioned, I used to sit alone, I used to sit alone and listen to faithful songs each and every day. Songs that have message that motivate. Then I started to realise that not only me, but a lot of people have faced so much difficulties and I cannot give up now or tomorrow because some people pass through all the challenges but still making it to life. So, I used to go to church each and every Sunday. I used to read my Bible each and every Sunday, got motivational quotes from the Bible, which tells that in life whether you like it or not there are difficulties to be faced with. So, I stayed with that positive believe that wherever you are, wherever you go there will be difficulties in life and you will have to stand for them if you want to live…

2.89. **Participant** (M): Mmm for my challenges, mmmm I conquered my challenges, because I said to myself, whether she likes me or not, coz she was my girlfriend I know that, but whether she liked me or not I know that there are people who love me. Like my family and some people who think I am special in their life, so if she feels that I am not special in her life, then I don't know

2.90. **Interviewer**: So, what helped you to overcome those challenge? What from your environment helped you to overcome those challenge?

2.91. **Participant** (M): It is from where I come from, my family, me and my family we have a strong bond. My family supports me in every step I take, so they showed love in my life, so I really thank them for that. Thank you.

2.92. **Interviewer**: And the others what helped you

2.93. **Participant** (F): My tanie change every day, as much I do so when (inaudible)…. I hear that and being healed…

2.94. **Interviewer**: So apart from the things, factors from the environment that have helped you to overcome hardships, what is it from yourself, you as a person, helped you to overcome the hardships you went through?

2.95. **Participant** (M): I think it's all knowing about what you want, it's all about knowing what you want, and what do you want to achieve as an individual in life. That gives you the motive part of living and overcoming such obstacles in life.

2.96. **Participant** (M): For me it is because from my point of view, from my life, I am not a quitter, I don't give up easily, I try to strengthen myself, and I say to myself that there is somebody out there who loves me so I will keep on searching until I get that person. thank you.

2.97. **Interviewer:** Thank you. Somebody else, what do you think guys, those who have not said anything since we started the session. What is it in you as a person helps you to overcome or makes it difficult to overcome challenges?

2.98. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.99. **Interviewer:** Okay, what is it from your environment that makes it difficult for you to overcome challenges, hardships?

2.100. **Participant** (M): Sometimes we are living with people who are really judgemental. People who do not like to accept changes. Now we are talking about the environment.

2.101. **Interviewer**: Mmm

2.102. **Participant** (M): people who do like to accept changes in somebody's life. It is in you whether you want it or not, it is in your beliefs, it is in your imagination, whether you want to live a fruitful life or not. No matter what it is, no matter the environment wants. I think we are living for each other, we are living to bring back to the community, but then, if ever we grow up in situation whereby we find out, that the environment that we are living in is not the environment that we should bring back to, we need to live with the positive aspect of life forward, moving forward with your life, as an individual job. I am not saying the only thinking about yourself, but only thing about your life because your life matters the most to you.

2.103. **Interviewer**: okay, somebody else?

2.104. **Participant** (M): Adding to the environment, I think as he said, it is the people who you live with, who you associate with. Sometimes people tell you mmm discouraging words that may bring you down. If you want to conquer challenge, if they say discouraging words... then your spirit will go down. Yeah, thank you

2.105. **Interviewer:** Okay, someone wants to add something?

2.106. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.107. **Interviewer**: So, what do you do as a person when faced with difficult situations? What do you do? What do you often do when you meet challenges, problems in your life?

2.108. **Participant** (M): For me I ask help. Thank you That's all.

2.109. **Interviewer**: The others

2.110. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.111. **Interviewer:** What do you do when you find yourself in problems that are difficult to overcome,

2.112. **Participant** (F): I pray,

2.113. **Interviewer**: Pray yes,

2.114. **Participant** (M): I ask help from my family because, they help me to overcome the difficulties.

2.115. **Participant** (F): I talk to others so that they can give me an advice

2.116. **Interviewer:** Mmm,

2.117. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.118. **Interviewer**: It's ok, you can speak, even if it is not correct English, the language does not matter in this setting.

2.119. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.120. **Participant** (M): I think as a person who does not believe on sharing things with other people, you need sometimes to be alone. Taking conclusion that, even their life and … together… but only to find out, in comparison as they are, they are just lying in conclusive ma'am. Just sit down thinking of the way forward. You need to sit down, I just sit down and accept that if things do not want to play part in my life, they do not want. I don't like forcing things. If you want and you want to stay in my life you can stay if you want to go, there is always a door open for you to move out and open for those who want to come in. finish and klaar.

2.121. **Interviewer**: So mmm, how do the challenges you guys have mentioned, most of you said you face challenges and difficulties here and there, how did those difficulties, challenges, hardships, how do they affect the way you define yourself today. Like affect your identity who you are today.

2.122. **Participant** (M): I think I am not opposing what the question is saying

2.123. **Interviewer**: Mmm

2.124. **Participant** (M): But I don't think that, only if you live like I said earlier on, you live, with the belief on yourself, whether it is a discouragement, whether it is a negativity, whether it is something to bring you down, and believe that you are nothing, but then inside, I never thought of that. Because each and every mistake or each and every obstacle, or challenge that I face in life, is a part of encouragement to lead forward.

2.125. **Interviewer**: So, what does that say about you as a person?

2.126. **Participant** (M): As a person, it says that I am living a normal life, with normal circumstances and heading towards the destiny

2.127. **Interviewer**: Others?

2.128. **Participant** (M): The question that you have asked previously about the effects in your life about challenges, for me the effect is that I will never love someone the way I used to before. So, it changed me. So today I tell myself that I will trust no one, I will love them all but I will trust no one.

2.129. **Interviewer**: Others, somebody else who wants to add something

2.130. **Participant** (M): Adding from what he said I think it's all about learning, from the mistakes that you did. Learning from what you have experienced in life. So, I think that learning is one of the biggest steps that as an adolescent, as a teenager we need to pay attention to, so that, life can turn to be an easier part in life.

2.131. **Interviewer:** How do those challenges affect your studies, your relationship with peers and your relationship with your families? You are all invited to say something. How did those challenges affect your relationship with your peers, family members, or your studies and other areas of your life?

2.132. **Participant** (M): When it comes to studies we are going to look at this factor called coping. You won't cope well. There is no well concentration. When it comes to peers, you start to feel like you are useless towards some people, towards your friend, you start to get angry at yourself. And feel like you are the only one who is existing. Feel like you are the only one facing obstacles. Not realising that life is all about challenges.

2.133. **Interviewer**: Somebody else? The ladies are very quiet

2.134. **Participants** (all): Silence

2.135. **Interviewer**: You want to say something

2.136. **Participants** (all): Silence, yawning...

2.137. **Interviewer**: Ok guys thank you very much for your participation, I appreciate your input. This was our focus group number two of 9 people, 5 boys and 4 girls.

Wave II-Focus Group 1 School 1

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2020/09/18
Duration of focus group / interview	49 minutes 20 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Race**	**Ethnic group**	**Home Language**	**Adolescent /In between / grown up**	**Doing currently?**
1.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
3.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 1 Male participant
- 8 Female participants

3.1. **Interviewer:** Good morning everyone!

3.2. **Participant:** Good morning!

3.3. **Interviewer:** Am Miss Catherine Shirima and am currently registered as PhD student in Psychology at the University of free state. Am conducting research to investing the longitudinal trajectory of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in the disadvantaged communities in South African context**.** Identity formation involves an active questioning about one's values, believes and role in our society. That will be our topic today. We will be discussing about identity today. So, when you think about identity, you see your values, your beliefs and your role in the society. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships or challenges. So, today in our discussion we are going to talk about your views and your own personal experiences. Not about your neighbours, cousins or sisters but, your personal experiences on how you see your identity formation. How you see yourself when compared to last year. You will be talking about your identity formation, and what you think about your resilience. Do you think that you are becoming more resilience when you look back? Do you think that sometimes, it is hard for you to overcome challenges? These will be the things we will be discussing about now in our focus group. Just know that whatever you are going to share here is confidential. It should not be shared outside this room. Am also asking each one of you to show respect to what the other person is saying. When the other person is speaking we listen. Then you can contribute your ideas as they come to your mind when you listen to others. Remember, there is no right or wrong answers. Okay, you can talk about what comes to your mind and is relevant to the topic of discussion. So kindly, just speak about your personal experiences. If you do not feel comfortable to discuss certain specific question you can reframe from it, it is ok. Don't feel obliged to discuss all the questions we will be talking about. If you feel this question is too personal or intrusive, you can refrain from it. Remember, your participation is voluntarily. If you still feel that you want to leave it is ok. There will be no consequences.

3.4. **Participant (all):** Yes

3.5. **Interviewer**: OK, thank you. And if you feel that before we start you don't want to be in this discussion, just excuse yourself and leave. There will no problem. I will be recording this session. Am recording just to be able to capture what you say. So, that

after here I can be able to process the information. If you are comfortable we can start with questions. I think, it does not take long so if you are ready, we will start with our discussion. The first question, that I want to ask you and I really ask you to participate…let us not dose off or leave for a few people, but all of you can just say what you think about the different topics. One after the other, not all of you at once. Ok, so you will tell me what you think about the different questions that I will ask you.

The first one is what is identity? If somebody asks you to talk about your identity what will you say? How do you describe yourself? Anyone who is ready, can say something.

3.6. **Participants: silence**

3.7. **Interviewer:** In other words, who are you? What do you think about yourself?

3.8. **Participants (M)**: My name is * All what I know about myself is that Am fighter and don't give up easily and very ambitious and don't let anyone step on my way.

3.9. **Interviewer:** Thank you! Anyone else who want to say something?

3.10. **Silence**

3.11. **Interviewer:** How do you describe yourself? What makes you different from the other person?

3.12. **Silence**

3.13. Interviewer: come on guys, don't be shy?

3.14. **Silence**

3.15. **Participants (F)**: Ok, my name is* while teachers are teaching is fine, why I say that it is because, some challenges in life I overcome because of the encouragement I get from my parent, not both my parents because am raised by single parent my mother. Yes, I still have some challenges, some are not easy manage. I will not mention them here. Yeah Education is tough.

3.16. **Interviewer:** So, she spoke about how she was able to overcome challenges in her life, be able to survive. But where do you talk about you as person? At the age where you are today as an adolescent? How do you describe yourself? If you are talking to someone else about yourself, how will you describe yourself as adolescent today at your age? If you are talking to somebody else, what will you say about yourself?

3.17. **Participant (M)**: My name is * if I have to describe myself, I will reflect myself as vegetable. The vegetable that reflect my life is like a potato, the potato is hard outside but so soft inside. I can manage to overcome difficulties if I want. My inner self can be characterized as a soft inner part of the potato. But, am so hard outside. I can pursue many challenges.

3.18. **silence**

3.19. **Interviewer:** What do you think about yourself? How do you view yourself? What makes you different from others?

3.20. **Silence**

3.21. **Interviewer:** Remember, we are talking about identity neh.

3.22. Silence

3.23. **Interviewer:** in general terms, what do you know about identity development?

3.24. Silence

3.25. **Interviewer:** If you are talking about yourself, your personality, what is unique about you?

3.26. **Participant (M):** As I said previously, I just l love my inner life, I don't copy others peoples` life. I do things in my own way. That is, it.

3.27. **Interviewer:** Ok!

3.28. **Participant (M):** And I would like to add where he has left!

3.29. **Interviewer:** Ok!

3.30. **Participant (M)**: I don't want try to fit were I am not able to. There are some characters that I don't like. So, I want to create my own character, my own personality, that is my confidence and that I my character. So that I can join other people and make them happy.

3.31. **Interviewer:** Ok, somebody else?

3.32. **Participant (M)**: I don't need to impress other people.

3.33. **Interviewer:** You are talking about the sense of yourself, personality, and how you connect with other people, your peers…

3.34. **Participant (M)**: I don't have so many friends out there. I meet a lot of people here at school. When I go out I meet a lot of people too. That where I connect myself, we start by introducing ourselves. So, we start from there other things follow.

3.35. **Interviewer:** Others are very quiet**.** Just say something about yourself? This is not an exam, there is no right or wrong answers. Ok! Just talk, speak whatever comes to your mind.

3.36. Silence

3.37. **Interviewer:** How do you describe yourself? What do you tell others about yourself?

3.38. Silence

3.39. **Interviewer:** What makes you different from the rest of the people?

3.40. **Participant (F)**: My name is* and what I would say about what makes me different from others is that I think am myself… I think I live in my own world in some of things I do. One thing that I know that connect me with others easily because am friendly. I like to know more about other people. As I have said these are things that make me look different from others**.** Yeah. I like to know more about people.

3.41. Silence

3.42. **Interviewer:** Your views, somebody else? What do think about what she has just said?

3.43. Silence

3.44. **Interviewer:** Ok, let's go to next question. Please! Participate ok? Is that fine? Please there is no wrong answer here, just give what you think. Are you afraid of one another?

3.45. **Participant (M)**: Can we speak in our language?

3.46. **Interviewer:** That is a bit hard. You can speak in English even if the English is not correct I will understand. So, don't worry so much about the language, and whether you are going to say things correctly or not. This is not an English class. Ok! So, just speak up. If I don't understand I will ask you to say it again and explain. Ok!

3.47. **Participant (all):** Fine

3.48. **Interviewer:** So, you wanted to say something from the first point. Ok, then we move to the second point which is about the things or factors that have contributed to who you are today. Some of you have been speaking about that. For instance, being friendly, easily connecting with people, being capable or able to overcome challenges, they don't give up easily, some have given the analogy of being like potatoes and so on. When we look at all that and those who did not say anything, I know, I suppose that you wanted to say something but maybe you didn't have the courage to do that. So, think about the factors or the things that have influenced on who you are today.

What situations either from school, home or community have negatively influenced the image you have about your self today? Like who you are today. So, we start with what has affected you negatively. Remember to highlight the situations, conditions either from the school, community or at home that has influenced you negatively.

3.49. **Participant (M)**: For me, I think me since childhood home situations, I grow up where I have to hustle, to find my way through. To work, to do everything, dirty works. But I think that I have overcome that situations.

3.50. **Interviewer:** How did that affect how you think about yourself, yourself image, your personality?

3.51. **Participant (M)**: I think am broken, I have not yet fixed, because sometime I feel moody when I talk to people, sometimes I feel happy. Even if somebody has not said a something wrong, I can become angry him or her just because of the things that I have experienced as a boy. The things I have experienced when I was growing up. They were hard. They made my mind set to think that hardship is mine. sometime people say that am crazy. It not that am crazy, it is because, I want to live my life anticlockwise. Because, I have experienced that the way people live is not the kind of life I want to live. I want to live and create my own life. As I have said. Thank you.

3.52. **Interviewer:** Somebody else?

3.53. **Participant (M)**: My situation affected me negatively in my life, I lost my mother when I was still three years old. So, I was raised by my siblings in a smallanyana house. So that made me feel like am so different from others people. That feeling is makes me to be far from other because sometime you see other people with their mothers and you feel heart broken. So that situation make think and made me to start smoking. So, ended up smoking, just because of way I was raised. Just like today I am smoking just to escape the feeling and what is going on at home.

3.54. **Interviewer:** So, sometimes you smoke?

3.55. **Participant (M)**: Yes! (or yahaaa)

3.56. **Interviewer:** Just to deal with the feelings?

3.57. **Participant (M)**: Yes, just to deal with feelings!

3.58. **Interviewer:** Ok!

3.59. **Participant (F)**: I would like to say something. Mine is different, when I was eight years old grade 2 my father died, after that my life became very difficult. Thing were

never the same, my mother I was staying with uncles, my siblings, my mother, and my granny. I think the way my uncle treated me was harsh. I feel weak sometimes, I feel discourage to face people. Seeing my cousins with their fathers, it feels like, I wish my father was here to buy me what I want in life and give me want I want in life. My mother was never employed till now.

3.60. **Interviewer:** Thank you! Others? What situations have affected who you are today?

3.61. **Participant (F)**: my mother… she used to treat me … and my father. She used to treat father … My mother and father were divorced when I was still young. I could not imagine that. I have to come … Life was hard for me. After the separation of parents, I stayed with my cousins. My parents divorced when I was 2 years. I could not imagine that

3.62. **Interviewer:** Thank you for your sharing. So, we are talking about the situations which have negatively affected who you are today. So, if we speak about those situations in your life that have positively impacted on who you are, what would you say? What things have positively impacted on who you are? Positive things/situations.

3.63. **Participant (M)**: The conditions that have affected me positively in life is that I repeated grade 8 three times when I was in the school. After that time, I decided to sit down and try to learn from my mistakes. Because, mistakes are not just mistakes, it becomes a lesson when learn from it and leave it. So today I have changed from what I was when I was in that time at school.

3.64. **Interviewer:** Ok! Thank you somebody else, who wants to share about positive things or situations which have impacted on who you are today?

3.65. **Silence**

3.66. **Interviewer:** So, what factors from your environment, have changed how you think about yourself. You are talking about things/situations from school, the community have contributed to who you are today? Remember, from the beginning we said factors from the schools, home and community at large. What are those things that have contributed to who you are today?

3.67. **Participant (M)**: On my case, when I leave here from here at school I put … So, for the first time I put …It was so hateful, I wanted to quit but said to myself that winners never quit the quitters never win. So, I kept on pushing to where I am today.

3.68. **Interviewer:** Ok! let move on to our second main point which is about resilience, so what do you think about resilience. What does it mean for you to be resilience?

3.69. **Participant (M)**: For me is to be ambitious not allowing any obstacles stand on your way. To overcome all the problems.

3.70. **Interviewer:** Somebody else? Remember there are no right or wrong answers neh! It is not an exam. Do you describe yourself as a person who overcome challenges or hardships? Do you think you can overcome challenges?

3.71. **Participant (All):** Yes

3.72. **Interviewer:** Most of you have said yes. How? What in the past enabled you to overcome challenges, difficulties and all sorts of problems? Either from school, home or from the community. Remember, some things can affect you negatively or positively from home, school or community. So speak about the situations or things that have affected your ability to overcome challenges.

3.73. **Participant (M)**: I think from the community is the availability of drugs. In the community, then if you are stressed you feeling down, so weak, so broken. So, you something to lift you up. So, you start to smoke different types drugs like cocaine and other things. So that you cannot feel the pain you feeling before, So, you can to run away feeling you are feeling before or to think too much about things you have experience or you have seen. If you have seen someone being stabbed or killed in front of you. Those things stay in your mind. Every time you think, it hurts you from inside. Then, you start to smoke, because in the community everyone is smoking drugs are available. So, if you see drugs, you start feeling the desire to smoke.

3.74. **Interviewer:** Thank you! Any comment? Are those the challenges that most of you experience? The availability of drugs in the community?

3.75. **Participant (all):** It is a challenge

3.76. **Interviewer:** Anyone who wants to say something else? How do you manage to stay clean when the availability drugs in the community is very high? How do you manage to not to use them?

3.77. **Participant (M)**: For myself, I grew up without a father, only with a single mother working and far away from home. So, said to myself that when I look back at my background, when I see my siblings are suffering. I want to change the situation; I

want to make sure that they go to bed with stomach full. I want to pursue that the challenge facing me.

3.78. **Interviewer:** ok! What about others, how do you manage these challenges? Remember that there is no right or wrong answer! Whatever you say may help others. Ok?

3.79. Silence

3.80. **Interviewer:** Your views or ideas are valuable!

3.81. Silence

3.82. **Interviewer:** What he has said is that what having siblings helped him. So, he felt it is his duty to take care of them, to make sure they have food, so they don't get involved in taking drugs. What about others? How do you manage to overcome other challenges? You can mention the challenge and you say how you manage to overcome it? I think they are more challenges in the communities, at home or school other than availability of drugs. Is that right?

3.83. **Participant (all):** Yes!

3.84. **Interviewer:** Let's talk about that!

3.85. Silence

3.86. **Interviewer:** What helped you to overcome these situations?

3.87. **Participant (M)**: I overcome the peer pressure! After I discovered that am suffering from a depression, I went to see a social worker, so I had some time, and he said some good thing to me that made me overcome the peer pressure.

3.88. **Interviewer:** So, you managed to get help? Others, say something, don't be shy?

3.89. **Participant (F)**: Ok, I was not aware that am suffering from peer pressure. I started smoking weed and result of that as the time went by I felt myself, I asked myself questions why should I smoke because I don't sometime feel ok with it. And then I will go to my sister, my elder sister. She never said anything, she never judged me. She understood everything of what am going through because she was also going through the same situation. That how I overcome the peer pressure and other difficulties.

3.90. **Interviewer:** If you think about the challenges and everything, what did not help to overcome them? What about other things from school, friends, family, home and community at large that did not help you overcome these challenges? Or discouraged

you more and made you go down more? What are those things? Speak about anything that was discouraging not helpful to you.

3.91. **Participant (M)**: My friends, when am trying to move on from depression, they were trying to remind me things that I have forgotten.

3.92. **Interviewer:** So, you had good friends who tried to help to remember things that you forget.

3.93. **Participant (M)**: Yes. Ma'am!

3.94. **Interviewer:** Ok, what about others? This side? Ok when you think about those difficult situations or the problems that you went through, the problems that you faced. When it happens that you don't manage to overcome them. Does that influence on how you think about yourself? Or how you relate with other people?

3.95. **Participant (M)**: That means, I have to think about my roots. There is so much life if I do not overcome challenges. Because if I cannot overcome my challenges, if cannot forgive myself, to forgive for the things I have done, how can also forgive other people? I will not.

3.96. **Interviewer:** Somebody else? When you think about yourself as you are sitting here, what factors in your personal life, enables you to overcome challenges? He said, he went to look for assistance from a social worker. And as for her, she spoke to her older sister. Now, apart from seeking help from outside, what is it within you that as helped you to overcome some of the challenges. Either your attitudes, your views, your values. What is it in your personal life helps you to overcome challenges?

3.97. **Participant (M)**: My own believes makes me overcome some of the problems because when you believe anything you want to do you will try again till you succeed or make it. When you believe in something that makes me overcome problems.

3.98. **Participant (M)**: to overcome my problem, I don't give up easily, I always tell myself that I have to keep on pushing

3.99. **Participant (F)**: When am faced with problems, I have my inner believe that I will make it. As a personal, I just tell myself whatever happens depend on me. I have to keep moving on, without having much stress

3.100. **Interviewer:** Ok! Generally, if I may repeat what do you do when you are faced with problems? And does what does that say about yourself? The way you solve problems and overcome challenges. What do you do? Do you ask for assistance or you just keep

it to yourself? What do you do? If it is at school, home or in the community. What do you do?

3.101. **Participant (M)**: I don't like share my problems with other people. I solve my own problems in my own way. I don't seek help from other people.

3.102. **Participant (M)**: There is something that I share with other people but some of things I solve it for myself. When the situation is changing, sometimes when you are in depression you cannot be able share other people. You don't want to speak to others. You want to be alone, be far from other people. So, you isolate yourself from other people. So that you can free others people influence.

3.103. **Interviewer:** Ok, how do those situations affect you? Like your studies, your relationships with others, your peers, your family as you trying to build up your future.

3.104. **Participant (M)**: For my studies, something that affect me is that when I try to learn, then I remember things that happened in the past. Then I cannot leave those past easily, so it effects my learning and performance.

3.105. **Interviewer:** Ok, somebody else?

3.106. **Participant (F)**: I never like to mix up private life and school. If they do, who will change the situation. My sister hates me too much and I feel like that is it my last home to my mother. But, I can discuss with my sister.

3.107. **Interviewer:** Ok. Anyone else? Ok, anyone who wants to say something before we end? If you still have some ideas just speak up?

3.108. Silence

3.109. **Interviewer:** I just say thank you for your participations. This is the second phase for our data collection. Next time I hope you participate in the same group. We are left with one-time next year. Thank you for participating again and I hope when we meet in the coming year you will be all present and still be willing take part in this focus group. Remember this is confidential. We end here for today. Thank you very much.

Wave II-Focus Group 2 – School 1

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2020/09/18
Duration of focus group / interview	44 minutes 47 Seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Race**	**Ethnic group**	**Home Language**	**Adolescent / In between / grown up**	**Doing currently?**
1.	M	14	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	M	21	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
7.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 5 Male participants
- 4 Female participants

4.1. **Interviewer:** Good morning everyone!

4.2. **Participants** (all): Good morning.

4.3. **Interviewer:** Am Miss Catherine Shirima, am currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of Free State. I am conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development. That is what we are going to discuss in this focus group. How your identity is formed and how, your resilience develops. We will focus on the adolescents from disadvantaged communities in a South African context. Which is similar to our context here. Identity formation involves questioning oneself about values, beliefs, and roles in the society. When you think about your identity, how it forms, what makes you different from the other person. So, you think of values, beliefs and roles that matter to you. What are those values, what are those belief systems and what is your role in the society at your age?... you can think about careers and around what you want to do. How do you define yourself now? Resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships. This is the focus of our discussion. In our discussion. I want you speak about your views and experiences on how you see your identity formation and what you think about your resilient development. If they are any questions, you don't understand, it is ok, remember that whatever ideas or views you have, are very important and particular to each person. And there is no right or wrong answer. You are not in grammar in class. Just express yourself and we will understand what you say. If you don't understand something ask for clarification. It that ok? Information shared will be kept confidential. Know that what we talk about here remains in this room. Please, don't go outside and say so and so, mentioned about these and that. Then the person become a laughing stock, here at school and they end up dropping from school. We don't want that to happen. So, let's keep everything that we talk about here very confidential. And respect what the other person has said. I want to say this we have to respect person's opinion and there is no right or wrong answer. Each one of you is invited to share about his or her personal experiences. However, if you feel uncomfortable in discussing specific questions, you may refrain from answering them. Is that ok? Your reminded that your participation is voluntary, you all accepted to participate without coercion. At this point of research, you may pull out without any consequences. The session will be audio recorded, if you feel uncomfortable about

recording or in continuing in this focus group you can pull out without any consequences. If you are willing to continue you can fill the form that I will pass. That is a questionnaire just to have your details. I hope everyone is done. Ok the first question I want to ask you is about identity. When we talk about identity. What comes to your mind? What is identity?

4.4. **Participant (M)**: Identity means is what identifies me that is my name and surname.

4.5. **Interviewer:** He has just said identity is what identifies us, and it is our names and surnames. It is also part of identity. But they are many things that really define us. What other characteristics you think makes you different from others? That are very particular to you? When you are talking about the sense of self, your personality and how you relate to others.

4.6. **Participant (M)**: For me is about behaviours

4.7. **Interviewer:** Speak, louder don't be shy?

4.8. **Participant (M)**: Is all about how I behave in front of other people/

4.9. **Interviewer:** The others, what do you think? What is you are identify?

4.10. **Participant (F):** What makes me different from others is that I am a hard worker and I believe in myself.

4.11. **Interviewer:** Ok! Anyone else? That is how she sees herself. She is a hard worker and she beliefs in herself. How do you feel about yourself and about things?

4.12. Silence

4.13. Am just breaking down what is identity. Just say what comes to your mind.

4.14. **Participant (M):** I think identity is about sexuality and how you feel who you are!

4.15. **Interviewer:** You are talking about yourself.? If you talking about your sexuality, what is that? If we talk about who you are. How do define that? What does that mean?

4.16. **Participant M:** It is about my experience, talent, ability and intuitiveness.

4.17. **Interviewer:** Others! How do you describe yourself to others based on what you are saying.

4.18. **Participant** (**F):** Am not a bully, am kind person and respectful person that like respect others and care about others.

4.19. **Interviewer:** She is a kind and respectful person.

4.20. **Silence**

4.21. **Interviewer:** If I rephrase it, what situations in your life have positively impacted on who you are today?

4.22. **Participant (M)**: What makes me shy is that am scared to face other people**.**

4.23. **Interviewer:** You are scared to face other people!

4.24. **Participant (F):** I am a nice person kind and I respect people a lot but I don't like non-sense. At home they don't treat us equally.

4.25. **Interviewer:** Thank you! Anyone else?

4.26. **Participant (F): I a**m a mother; they are expecting too much. When I try …they want to bully us. Telling us…she likes to choose a boyfriend for us. And likes to eat my little sister grant, by buying herself grocery and cloth.

4.27. **Interviewer:** So, that has impacted you negatively?

4.28. **Participant (F):** Yes!

4.29. **Interviewer:** Anyone else? When you look at community at large and the society, the surrounding, what is it in your surrounding that has changed the way you see yourself?

4.30. **Participant (F)**: In our community, there are people who don't understand other people and they like to bully too much and rob shops. They smoke nyaupes (drugs) and put us in danger. So, other people like to dodge schools. Others are suffering find jobs to help their families. So, they do something that they will regret later.

4.31. **Participant (M):** In school there are other children who are more dangerous than others. The situation is there is a lot of suffering and then when they are in class time they don't participate well.

4.32. **Participant (F):** In the community there, children who are smoking drugs to escape how things are at their homes.

4.33. **Interviewer:** How do those situations you have just mention now affect your identity?

4.34. **Participant (M):** When children are treated like at home I feel bad inside me.

4.35. **Interviewer:** How about you, from what you have just spoken about your environment, your family, and school, how does that affect your identity, your values and what you consider important? How does that affect you?

4.36. **Participant (M):** Am living around people who like take a lot alcohol, so that put me under pressure to use drugs, or drink alcohol.

4.37. **Interviewer:** OK! We can move to another point which is resilience. So, it is interesting to know what does resilience mean to you. Resilience just implies how

strong you are, how tough you are, your ability to overcome hardships, challenges. That is what we call resilience. So, would you describe yourself as a person who can overcome challenges and hardships? When you look back and at the present life, are they are any challenges or difficulties from school, community, from home that are or were very difficult but, you managed to overcome them?

4.38. **Participant (M):** I don't know how to describe it but me I am person that I can face situations or challenges as they come. I listen people and also home situations. I listen all, I know I can't live the situations like that I have find solutions even if it is small.

4.39. **Interviewer:** OK! What about the others? Do you think you are strong, you are resilient?

4.40. **Participant (F):** I think am strong because in the year 2018 I was pregnant at home when I was living with one of my sisters. Today still a day for me. I had drop out of school so that I can manage to baby sit my baby. And it was very hard for me, but I tried so hard find some who will manage to help me with baby so that I can go back to school.

4.41. **Participant (F):** I think am strong enough to continue with my school life. Last year I was very sick for long time, so I dropped out of school. I came back. Other people were thinking that I will not pass the exams while am sick. It was paining for me to sit at home, while others are coming to school. So, I think still I am I able to handle pain and continue with my studies.

4.42. **Interviewer:** Ok! Yes! Go ahead

4.43. **Participant (F):** Am strong because I kept in me that I have to lead by myself and never let anybody come at my back and force me to do thing.

4.44. **Interviewer:** Ok! So, you are resilient given the challenges you face, and you managed to go through. When you talk about you being resilient, what do you think enabled you to be resilient? What helped you to overcome hardships or challenges?

4.45. **Participant (M):** What really helped, I was busy with church activities and the church I attend it makes to know that I have to practice what I pray for. When a situation comes, I have to pray hard so as to overcome.

4.46. **Participant (M):** What has made me to be is resilient is mother advances and from my families. They give counsel when I need them.

4.47. **Interviewer:** So, you have somebody to speak with when you go to church and school. What about the others?

4.48. **Participant (M)**: Something that has helped me is the support from my aunt. She helps me and advise me like to listen to what Bible says and when I choose my subjects

4.49. **Interviewer:** When you look at school, are there any challenges that you go through or outside there? Most of you have shared situations from your families. What about school? What about the community at large? What are the challenges or difficulties that you face? Just to explain, how do you manage to overcome the difficult situations faced within your environment?

4.50. **Participant (M):** I manage to overcome challenges at school, once my friend advises me buy expensive cell phone which my mother cannot afford it. So, when I look at the features of the phone is I say to myself such expensive too much to my mother. I told him I cannot make it and I can stay without it. So, I managed to overcome the pressure from a friend.

4.51. **Interviewer:** What about the others?

4.52. **Participant (F):** Here at school they hate us, some other people when you have a baby, they put you outside and talk bad about you they say you are after a grant.

4.53. **Interviewer**: So, they make you feel bad, because you have a baby?

4.54. **Participant (F):** Yes!

4.55. **Interviewer:** What have you done to overcome such situations?

4.56. **Participant (F)**: I remember that some friends when happened, they advise me to that when people talk bad about me, I should just watch them talk and talk.

4.57. **Interviewer:** Thank you! The others? Does it happen that you fail to overcome challenges? Anyone of you here can speak. Either at home, here at school or in the community. Does it happen that you fail to overcome challenges?

4.58. **Participant (M):** Sometimes I fail to overcome the challenges, when that happen I feel bored, and find something that will make me enjoy!

4.59. **Interviewer:** And … Does it influence how you think about yourself or how you relate to other people? If it happens you fail to overcome the challenges, how does it make you feel about yourself? Any ideas? If you overcome everyday challenges, how does it make you feel about yourself?

4.60. **Participant (M):** When I fail to overcome the challenges, I feel as a bad person that I cannot live in those situations.

4.61. **Interviewer:** Do you guys seek help when faced with challenges? Or do you prefer to keep everything to yourself?

4.62. **Participant (F):** whispering'…I prefer to keep everything to myself.

4.63. **Participant (F):** I prefer to share to another person.

4.64. **Interviewer:** And you?

4.65. **Participant (F):** I prefer to keep to myself.

4.66. **Interviewer:** Ok! When it is too much what do you do?

4.67. **Participant (F):** I rather sit down alone and cry! Then the burden will cover over.

4.68. **Interviewer:** You do that because there is no one you can trust?

4.69. **Participant (F):** There is someone I trust but am not comfortable to talk about my situation.

4.70. **Interviewer**: Anyone else? Ok whether you share or you keep to yourself, at the end of the day do you manage to overcome those challenges. Do you feel that whatever you are going through has passed?

4.71. **Participants (All):** Yes, not for all!

4.72. **Interviewer:** for some, yes for others it is not the solution.

4.73. **Participant (M):** I once tried cigarette and alcohol, but I did not overcome it but there something am going through, and I feel uncomfortable to share it to my siblings. And this is also what my mother is going through. It is not easy because I live with her every day.

4.74. **Interviewer:** So, you mom knows about your situations?

4.75. **Participant (M):** No

4.76. **Participant (M):** No one knows it... that is how to deal with it

4.77. **Participant (M):** but she is going through a lot

4.78. **Interviewer:** Ok! So, your mom is going through a lot. Do you think her struggles are contributing to your use of cigarette and alcohol because of stress?

4.79. **Participant (M):** Yes!

4.80. **Interviewer:** OK! Others, how do you cope with difficulties? What do you do to cope with difficulties? Some of said you talk to others; you chat and share and others keep to themselves? What about the rest of the group? Many have not said anything.

4.81. **Participant (F):** I have changed and not keep quiet. If you keep quiet you cannot let pass the problem, so I have to share it.

4.82. **Interviewer:** What is it in you as a person has helped you to go through those situations or has not help you go through those situations. What is working for in whatever situations you are in. From you experience that you have gone through.

4.83. **Participant (M):** About my mother situations, it only her who can solve. I share with her my stress. Tavern is only place that can help me forget this stress.

4.84. **Interviewer:** Tavern?

4.85. **Participant (M):** Tavern is a place that can help me forget and release my stress. That is where I find happiness.

4.86. **Interviewer:** The others what you think? That is his personal situation. What you think? If it were you what could you have done differently?

4.87. **Participant (M):** I feel like it is tough, solve some of challenges. I like to dance. I cannot sleep sometimes. So, I cannot solve some challenges that come over me.

4.88. **Interviewer:** Ok! From the way you solve different situations, what does that say about you as a person, how you define yourself? Ok. If you go one step back, how do those situations or challenges affect your studies and your relationships with your peers or even your families? The challenges you have just mentioned.

4.89. **Participant (M):** Me personally, am comfortable with peers because we help each other. Am comfortable with them because of what we do together.

4.90. **Interviewer:** Ok, and the others? How did the different situations affected you in you are studies or relationships with family?

4.91. **Participant (F):** Here at school, I only think about school. It only affects me when am at home

4.92. **Interviewer:** Ok!

4.93. **Participant (M):** For me it depends how the situations is. When I am around people the people if forget and I focus only on my studies. But for examples when, it is time for examinations I will be sitting alone putting myself under pressure and thinking about the situations at home. Like I will stop writing and thinking a lot.

4.94. **Interviewer:** how does that affect your performance

4.95. **Participant (M):** Yes, it affects

4.96. **Interviewer:** Do these situations affect you the way you see yourself? Does it affect your identity?

4.97. **Participant (M):** It affect myself because I see myself as poor person.

4.98. **Interviewer:** The others?

4.99. **Participant (F):** It affect me because, because I think I am a bad girl in our community.

4.100. **Interviewer:** Others? Do you have something to add. What ideas come to your mind about your experiences regarding identity and resilience?

4.101. **Participant (All):** Silence!

4.102. **Interviewer:** Ok, since there is a long silence, it shows whatever you had prepared to share has been done. And thank you very much for participating in this second-round process of data collection. This is group two and hope next year will be together. Ok, Thank you very much.

Wave III-Focus Group 1 - School 1

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/02/26
Duration of focus group / interview	37 minutes 42 Seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Race**	**Ethnic group**	**Home Language**	**Adolescent / In between / grown up**	**Doing currently?**
1.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
3.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 1 Male participant
- 8 Female participants

5.1. **Interviewer:** Good morning learners! I am Catherine Shirima, currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of Free State. I am carrying out research to investigate the longitudinal trajectory of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context. I think I shared this information with you before, but just to recap that in this session I also briefed you before starting. So, what is identity formation? In our discussion we are going to talk about identity formation and resilience.

So, identity formation involves an active questioning about your values, your beliefs, and your role as an adolescent in the society. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back when you are faced with problems. For examples you have encountered difficulties in your life and you managed to overcome them. This implies that you are a resilient person Ok. So, you when you talk about resilience, we will be talking about problems and challenges you have managed to go through / managed to overcome. Either, at home, school, or in the community at large.

I will give you same simple rules to be observed in focus group. The first, is that everything we are going to share here will be confidential. We are not going to share with anyone outside the group. Please, whatever your friends or colleague speak about here should remain here, don't go out there start telling people you know this is what this person said… This person spoke about this…Please don't do that. Everything said remains here and is confidential. Remember that there is no right or wrong answer. It is your opinion and that is what you think about the statements I am going to ask you. Ok, so there are no wrong answers here. Ok, it is not an exam. We are sharing personal experiences. Is that ok! If you feel uncomfortable to share something or answering a question am going to ask you can also keep quiet. So, your participation is actually voluntary, and you may pull out without any consequences. And this session will be audio recorded. This is just to allow me to capture what you say so that I can analyse the data afterward. You see when you are filling biographical information in questionnaires that you filled like what you did last time. I think all of you have done the filling in. So, I will start ok? Just feel relaxed. It is not a death sentence. Let us just discuss and engage with one another. Is it ok? When you speak try to be loud. The first question that I will ask you is to speak about your identity. You as a teenager or an adolescent now, what do you think about yourself. Feel free to start

5.2. **Participant (F)**: My identity is what am feeling about myself and what am interested in to do. That have made it. Like…

5.3. **Interviewer:** Just take your time and say whatever come to your mind.

5.4. **Participant (F)**: What am interested in. to like on the side of academic, I like to study hard in my studies, in my subjects. Mmm yah.

5.5. **Interviewer:** Ok! So, if I ask you who are you what do think about yourself? She says what she thinks about herself is she will be an academic because she likes to study and works very hard. What about the others? What do you think about yourself? What makes you different from somebody else?

5.6. **Participant (F)**: My attitudes are things that make me different from others. And how I behave when am with them.

5.7. **Interviewer:** Ok! She says her attitude makes her different from other people and how she behaves when she is with others. So, somebody else who can tell us what kind of attitudes you have when you are with your peers. Is it different from when you are with your teachers or at home?

5.8. **Participant (F)**: It is different when am with friends. I like to communicate a lot of things with them. Share my personal life with them. I like do something like will make my friends achieve or make better things when am with them.

5.9. **Interviewer:** Ok! Somebody else?

5.10. **Participant (F)**: what make me different from others is that am heart breaker and don't like people talk much. I don't want someone, who like to gossip when am with them about others friends. Tell about your problems when we share with them. That is all.

5.11. **Interviewe**r**:** Somebody else?

5.12. **Participant (F)**: I don't like sharing my problems with my friends.

5.13. **Interviewer:** so, you don't like sharing your problems with friends? Somebody else?

5.14. **Participant**: I don't like to discriminating each other.

5.15. **Interviewer (M):** So, you don't like discriminating others? how do you describe yourself to other people. When you are with your friends what do you tell them about yourself?

5.16. **Participant (F)**: What I like and what I dislike of them is that what am happy (contended with them)

5.17. **Interviewer:** Ok somebody else? Some of you have mentioned that their attitude is different when they are with peers or colleagues here at school or when with parents or caregivers at home and as well as with teachers. You also mentioned that sometimes you don't like sharing what you go through/your difficulties with your peers. So, what do think might have made you to come to such a conclusion? What made you to have such an attitude towards peers or family or teachers?

5.18. **Participant** (**F)**: Just from how they treat me

5.19. **Interviewer:** Ok! What kind of treatments will help you to open to them?

5.20. **Participant (F)**: May be when they shout at me or gossiping about me.

5.21. **Interviewer:** So, you can also talk about your goals as part of your identity.

5.22. **Participant (M)**: If will pass my matric with good marks, I would to continue with my studies in the university and take a course get a professional so that I can help me the homeless child to have a home. They need a home and love, food.

5.23. **Interviewer:** Ok! This is our personal experiences ok! There are no right or wrong answers. Let us not be funny when other people are talking. He has shared about his goals that is going for further studies, joining university. He has a goal in life to help the poor children in his family and he wants to attain and achieve their goals. What about the others?

5.24. **Participant (F)**: My goal is to accomplish my matric and go to university and to my course to be a social worker. What makes me want to be a social worker? I want to help orphans' children with bursaries and other many things that children need like food in their homes, things that they need in school like uniforms, to pay school fees. That is why I want to be a social worker.

5.25. **Interviewer:** So, what about in the community

5.26. **Participant (F)**: In the community they are some families that need help, that are suffering. So, I want to help them housing, many things that they need.

5.27. **Interviewer:** Ok that applies to your community around you. People who are suffering, who can't afford taking their children for further studies and also who don't have good housing! Ok, so somebody else who want to add on that idea? What do think can affect your dreams and goals? What things or situations or problems can make you not to achieve your goals and dreams? What can block you?

5.28. **Participant (M)**: when I am dropping out of school. Not listening to my parents and teachers when they guide me

5.29. **Interviewer:** Ok what is happening now in the community may be, like in the area where you live or at home from your family or at school? Are there things that or people who can help you to achieve those dreams? Or is it a problem for you? If it is a problem, what is it?

5.30. **Participant (F)**: There is a problem that will make me not achieve my goals. I got friends who are not good.

5.31. **Participant (M)**: a peer pressure

5.32. **Participant (M)**: Negative influence!

5.33. **Interviewer:** Others? If we talk about positive situations in your life that help you to achieve your dreams. What are those positive situations?

5.34. **Participant (F)**: The support from family and others encourages me complete my matric when they pass their matric.

5.35. **Interviewer:** You have said you receive encouragement from others have passed their matric

5.36. **Participant (F)**: That is what make me work hard in school

5.37. **Interviewer:** From school?

5.38. **Participant (F)**: Yes!

5.39. **Interviewer:** Other can continue!

5.40. **Participant (F)**: My family keep on motivating me finish my matric.

5.41. **Participant (F)**: the support I get from family

5.42. **Interviewer:** Ok! Support from your family?

5.43. **Silence**

5.44. **Participant (M)**: Yes, so that I can help build my family in future.

5.45. **Interviewer:** Ok!

5.46. **Participant (F)**: A big support that I get from my family.

5.47. **Interviewer:** Support from family! What factors or things have contributed to who you are today?

5.48. **Participant (F)**: It is because I believe in myself.

5.49. **Participant (M)**: Am respecting others.

5.50. **Interviewer:** Ok! How did you learn to be respectful?

5.51. **Participant (M):** At home

5.52. **Interviewer:** Ok!

5.53. **Participant (M)**: Because of reputations

5.54. **Interviewer:** Ok! So, your reputations matter as person?

5.55. **Participant (M):** Yes!

5.56. **Interviewer:** Ok! Somebody else who wants to add something?

5.57. **Participant (F)**: To accept the situation the way it is

5.58. **Interviewer:** Ok!

5.59. **Participant (F)**: having confidence

5.60. **Interviewer:** Ok! Some of you are so quiet!

5.61. **Participant (M)**: Go to another question?

5.62. **Interviewer:** Remember we have been speaking about these things all along, so it just a matter of talking about what has changed so far since we met last time. How different do you feel about yourself? Do you think there is something that has changed about the way you think about life? Or what you want to achieve in life?

5.63. **Participant (M)**: Am only respect by Mr. ***. I don't respect people who don't respect me I respect people who respect me. I can be disturbing (disturb) if I want to, and I do trust in myself. So, if you come and share to me I will also appreciate. I prefer someone who respect me. Because I do respect others. That is a kind of person I am.

5.64. **Interviewer:** Ok! Thank you. So, he just spoke about himself, described himself to us. What about the others? How did you manage to achieve those values that you have just mentioned?

5.65. **Participant (F)**: I work so hard.

5.66. **Interviewer:** Ok! So, you say you achieved those values because you worked so hard to achieve them

5.67. **Participant (F)**: Yes!

5.68. **Interviewer:** Ok! And?

5.69. **Participant (M)**: Also, if you get more support

5.70. **Interviewer:** Ok! When you get more support.

5.71. **Participant (M)**: First of all, you need to believe in yourself, trust in yourself and have confidence.

5.72. **Participant (F)**: Have faith in myself.

5.73. **Interviewer:** So, you have mentioned and spoken about yourself a bit and you also mentioned the factors that influence or contributed to who you are today. Okay, now, we are moving to resilience. I have said in my introduction that resilience is about bouncing back or being able to overcome challenges or difficulties. So, when you say that you are resilient or if I say this boy/girl is resilient, what does it mean to you?

5.74. **Participant (M)**: Ability to overcome challenges.

5.75. **Interviewer:** Ok! What does it mean to say you are resilient? If resilient is the ability to overcome challenges.

5.76. **Participant (F)**: How strong you are.

5.77. **Interviewer:** Ok! Strong, tough…

5.78. **Participant (All):** Confident, patient.

5.79. **Interviewer:** After knowing that resilience means how strong you are or how tough you are. Your ability to overcome challenges and difficulties in life. Would you describe yourself as person who overcome challenges and hardship?

5.80. **Participant (M)** Yes, I can!

5.81. **Interviewer:** So, you are? Some of you are resilient and some of you are not? Is that what you are saying?

5.82. **Silence**

5.83. **Interviewer:** So, would you say or describe yourself as resilient, people who overcome challenges?

5.84. **Silence**

5.85. **Interviewer:** If you say yes, what things from your surroundings have influenced your ability to become resilient, the ability to overcome challenges? Speak about examples from your family, or school or community at large that helped you to be resilient, also, from yourself. What enables you to be a resilient person?

5.86. **Participant M**: The challenges!

5.87. **Interviewer:** Ok!

5.88. **Participant (F)**: The support I get.

5.89. **Interviewer:** Ok! So, you have spoken about challenges, what kind of challenges that have helped you to be resilient? Who wants to share something about the challenges or things that you have been through, and have made you to be resilient?

5.90. **Participant (M)**: Like what I said ma'am! Believing in yourself, trying to trust in yourself, having self-confidence. When I have problems am able share to my friends and then find ways to solve it. But I look at what kind of problems to share. Some I do share and some not because maybe they are private and confidential. That is what makes me resilient.

5.91. **Interviewer:** Others who would you like to share something?

5.92. **Participant (M)**: I do have problems, but I believe that not everything needs to shared. even if I have so many problems I don't tell teachers because I don't trust them not because not respectful but, that is my feeling.

5.93. **Participant (F)**: I have a challenge when I was becoming a mother. I was very stressful because I don't have parents. So, this situation is stressing me because am not working and still a learner. Sometimes I was thinking I will be a mother when I finish my matric and working. I wanted my daughter to live a better life than mine. But is not so…

5.94. **Interviewer:** Ok! Anything else?

5.95. **Participant (M)**: I don't have many challenges in my studies, but one subject is stressing me a lot. Actually, it is the teacher who is stressing me, the English teacher. He doesn't know how to teach English; he only teaches verbs only all the time. He just stresses me. I can I face my studies in the university, how will I speak English while I know only verbs. That is what is stresses me.

5.96. **Interviewer:** Ok! It is your academic stress?

5.97. **Participant (All)**: Laughing…

5.98. **Participant (M)**: My classmate, like him because they make funny of him.

5.99. **Interviewer:** Ok! You can speak about your personal experiences of challenges or difficulties from school environment or home/from your neighbourhoods. Do the things you have spoken about influence on how you think about yourself? Or how you relate with other people. So, how do you adapt to difficulties? Or what enabled you to overcome it these challenges you have mentioned? What helped you not be discouraged?

5.100. **Participant (F)**: The strong support I get from friends and family members.

5.101. **Interviewer:** Support you get from friend and family.

5.102. **Participant (F)**: My strong believes on myself.

5.103. **Interviewer:** Believing in yourself.

5.104. **Interviewer:** Ok! When you have such problems, do you find help?

5.105. **Participant (All):** Yes!

5.106. **Participant (F)**: Yes, from my teachers and other parents.

5.107. **Interviewer:** Ok!

5.108. **Participant (M)**: No, I don't! because I don't trust the teachers.

5.109. **Interviewer:** Ok! Some of you get help differently. Ok so I will say that you have spoken about different types of issues and how you tried to resolve them and how the challenges affected your life. Therefore, if there nothing to add I will end here.

5.110. **Silence**

5.111. **Interviewer:** I thank you for your contribution

5.112. **Participant** (**All**): Thank you ma'am!

5.113. **Interviewer**: Ok, bye bye.

Wave III-Focus Group 2 – School 1

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/02/26
Duration of focus group / interview	39 minutes 7 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Race**	**Ethnic group**	**Home Language**	**Adolescent / In between / grown up**	**Doing currently?**
1.	M	14	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	M	21	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
7.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 5 Male participants
- 4 Female participants

6.1. **Interviewer:** So good afternoon everyone, mmm I'll just introduce myself once more. I know I have done it already, but I will do it again, I'm Miss Catherine Shirima and I'm currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. So, I'm conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context. These we spoke about already in the previous mmm focus group interviews. So, we are going to discuss about identity formation which involves active questioning about your values, beliefs and the roles in the society, okay. And also, we will talk about resilience, which means aaaa your capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships or challenges, okay. So, in our discussion, I invite you to speak about your own views and experiences and how you see your identity formation, and what to think about your resilience development. Mmmm I'll again say the rules that the information that we're going to share in this group should be kept confidential. Aaaaa, nothing should come out of this room, everything that we speak stays here, so we are also called to respect each one's opinion. So, if somebody is speaking, there is no laughing and also, aaaa we give them a chance to finish what they are saying, and then we can carry on if you want to say something. And also, there is no right or wrong answer. It's about your experiences. What you say is not aaa weighed either as being wrong or being right, okay. So, each one of you can share your personal experiences, but if you feel uncomfortable discussing a specific question or subject, you can also refrain from answering them. Your participation is voluntary as you have agreed to take part in this focus group. And mmmmm you can pull out at any point without any consequences. And this session will be audio recorded. Mmmmm and if you're willing you can fill in the demographical questionnaires that I've given you and then we can start. Okay, I will start with our first question, and mmmm just feel free to share what comes to your mind. Okay. And mmm just a reminder that your participation will really be appreciated. And just say what you think mmmm according to your own experiences. So, what I want you to talk about now is just in relation to your identity, maybe like now you've made mmmm yaaa you have thought about your about goals, about kind of aaaaa decisions you will take about your life, so talking about your identity, you look at those things. So, I'll just ask you to talk about yourselves. What do you think about yourself? Like who are

you? And what do you want to do in your life when speaking about your identity? Mmmm so what is identity?

6.2. **Participant (M):** Aaaaaaa about myself, right now I don't know about my goals even though I'm in grade 12, I don't know which carreer to choose from. There are so many and if I can think about them, some are so hard, and some people when they come to me they tell me that it is not hard to pursue some things so that makes me so hard to think that I can overcome, so I don't know, I really don't …

6.3. **Interviewer:** Do you feel confused when it comes to choosing careers ?

6.4. **Participant (M):** Yaa I feel confused, but though, I'm a harsh person. I like to go through harsh harsh things first to get there. So, I was thinking about being a soldier maybe that's yaaa how I have to overcome myself. So, yaa that's all.

6.5. **Interviewer:** Somebody else?

6.6. **Participant (M):** About myself aaaa truly speaking I'm disappointed, I don't know what to choose, e mm I'm aaaa --- I don't know what I have to choose. --- because every time I think about my goals I feel negative about these goals.

6.7. **Interviewer:** Come again, you don't have what?

6.8. **Participant (M)** continues: I don't know what to choose --- because I feel negative about what I choose.

6.9. **Interviewer:** Are there people that you can ask about careers, what to do, who can help you?

6.10. **Participant (M)** continues: There is no one.

6.11. **Participant (M)** Can I add, I want to add from---, from what I think, I think people are more questions there are not answers. So, it's better that I pursue it myself find where I fit. So sometimes I feel like I don't I don't fit to some things that people are doing. I feel like I'm anticlockwise. I do my things in my own way. The way I see them, so about about asking people, I don't think is a good idea.

6.12. **Interviewer:** Okay,

6.13. **Participant (F):** --- opinions, yes choosing a career can be difficult, and to me It is difficult because you just grow up and wish to be someone else. Maybe waking up and wishing to be a doctor, but you don't know that what are the chances of being a doctor? What subjects to choose? Maybe sometimes will say I wanna be a doctor but looking at your subjects from grade 10 to 12 they don't match. Some doesn't match

because our parents don’t have money to get us better teachers and staff and from my side I will just say I really doesn’t know what to choose and of course I will I just wish to be a lawyer. But now as I’m growing up I can see that there are many careers to choose, so why choose to be lawyer? I’m just in the world of confusion, l wish I could change the fact that going to school or university, colleges and stuff. I just wish to wake up and go to work.

6.14. **Interviewer:** So, you want to skip that stage of going to varsity, just after high school you wake up one morning and you're having clients in your office. Okay, interesting--- What about the others, what do you think, what goals do you have?

6.15. **Participant (F):** When I was doing grade 10 I choose to be a police because it is it was the subject that I like too much. That's why I accept being a police

6.16. **Interviewer:** She just said that she had to choose, mmmm she'd love to be a police lady, because mmmmm is something that she loves too. Mmmmm I don’t know if the others have something to say about themselves, you can talk about anything that defines your identity apart from careers.

6.17. **Participant (M):** about my career I want to get more money but sometimes I fill like (have that money) because I don’t know what I want to be in life. I wanted to be fame famous, but I feel like I don’t have goals to be famous because I will produce on my own I don’t know what I want, I wanted to a doctor

6.18. **Interviewer:** You just said that you love to be famous but seems to be he's confused about what to do in his life, he says that he doesn't have goals and he doesn't know what to do. Therefore, he thinks that he will not be able to achieve his dreams mmmmm.

6.19. **Participant (M):** About my everlasting dream, truly speaking my dreams is to be a motivational speaker. I like to motivate people because I know what I come from I know where I come from, the hard hardships that I've faced in life. I think it's best to share things with other people. Maybe other people cannot overcome but you have overcome them, so give it give them a hint --- so they can overcome them. So, most of all I don't believe in education truly speaking, I believe in talent, I believe in skills, the skill that you have that God has given. So, I believe education is about meeting other people, getting excited, viewing other things and getting experience. So, if our government also ---as country, if they would realize that our talents are being squashed

down because they say education as a key to success, I believe that. Ones – dream is more than that, they can overcome anything without education or with education.

6.20. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else? What do you say about mmmm the experiences of your colleague. How many of you feel the same, like in a state of confusion and don't know what to do or what to choose? What about the rest of the group, what do you think you'll do to overcome the confusion, what resources are available to you, either at school, or at home or in the community that can help you to overcome the confusion that you are experiencing?

6.21. **Participant (M):** To me I think is about your home ---, your background at home, when you see your background at home you see your mother suffering so you can to get to school so you can have a better future because she didn't have them, so I think that encourages her to do that, even though my mind, my mind set didn't tell you that. But you have to do, to make your own mother proud because he send you to school so in return she must get the fruits.

6.22. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone who wants to add something? Please guys, speak, don't be scared. Guys.

6.23. **Participant (M):** ---once I come to overcome these difficulties, and thinking of my goals, I think I must go and ask from another people.

6.24. **Interviewer:** mmmhh, asking help. So, if you look at what has been said now or and what you would have wanted to say but maybe you did not say it because you're too shy… Mmmmm what factors or things in your life that have contributed to how you see things today? Like who you are today, what are the other factors? They can be from home, from school, or just from around your community? What has contributed to who you are today? Like positively.

6.25. **Participant (M):** what contribute seriously is my mother. My mother is always encouraging me. I have to know whatever and want I to achieve? So I have to be serious about school things and...

6.26. **Interviewer:** Those factors or situations that touched on your identity, personality and impacted on how you see yourself today. Either in a positive way or in a negative way, okay.

6.27. **Participant (F):** The community I live in and my home, they contributed to who I am today negatively --- excluding school. My home situation there and again that situation

gives me gives me goal and about my community also it is a disadvantaged community, so yeah sometimes you don't have things easy to --- but in other side I will say do something to change that negativity, that's all.

6.28. **Interviewer:** Okay, so she just said that there are other factors from her home, the situations that have contributed to who she is, and also from her community but she thinks that she is called to do something to change that situations. Somebody else.

6.29. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa for me I think It's at home, so my dad not being there for me, growing up to be who I am today. My mother suffering, hustling for jobs, that all comes --- seeing her hurt, people calling her names, yaaa, so that made thought to myself that I have to change the situation, yaaa, take her to her golden ages, give her what she deserves. She has fought for me, yaaa. And I think, on the community, availability of drugs, yaaa that impacted so much in my life--- So my dad not being there made a lot, you know there is peer pressure so I end up I ended up doing some things I regret in life. so, if I wasn't strong enough --- if I wasn't so far enough as I said I wouldn't be here. So, I would like to thank God, yaaa.

6.30. **Interviewer:** Thank you. Come on guys, if I may ask aaaaa what is resilience, do you think you're a resilient person? Do you think you're somebody who can overcome challenges or who has overcome challenges? What challenges have you overcome so far or stressful situations?

6.31. **Participant (F):** From my side I can overcome challenges in life, first it was not easy for me because of my mom staying far away from me, my sister, my father, it was not easy... But I made I made sure of that I'm gonna make it in my life with with them or without them …and I had dreams. I just wanna work, I don't want to go to school so that I can put something on the table

6.32. **Interviewer:** … experience, somebody else. It's okay.

6.33. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa about stressors something that stresses me so hard is that when we are kid and tortured aaa so I had no power, yet I was saying that my stressors are that when women are being killed murdered in such a way that it is very horrible. So, I don't what what discourages me is that I don't have the power or the strength to change the situation or fight, I don't know if women --- they beat them, they violet them. But I will like to say that we are not the same. There are some men outside who

want to fight the situation, just like me, I want to fight the situation, make change --- so I don't know if I can, but I will try hard.

6.34. **Interviewer:** Okay, anybody else who wants to talk about your resilience, and what makes you think that you are strong or not strong.

6.35. **Participant (M):** What makes me strong is that if I have altered in such drugs, bad society, knowing people, living all the bad things changing to better self. I think I'm the strongest person, because other people, my friends, I can see from my other friends that they have not changed, they are worse right now, they cannot get out of there, but if I got out that means it is possible for him to come out, but it is because they are not resilient, they are not strong enough to get but I got out, so I am strong.

6.36. **Interviewer:** Where did you get the strength to overcome such challenges?

6.37. **Participant (F):** I get my strength from when I share my opinions with other people, I feel more strong. I don't mind sharing with other people that makes me strong.

6.38. **Participant (M):** what makes me strong is only my mother's motivations. My mother – motivate me. Maybe is giving me positive minds so she is the only one, she is the only person who can trust

6.39. **Interviewer:** Somebody else. What makes you so resilient, so strong, so tough that you're able to overcome the challenges you mentioned. It can either be from home, from … siblings or at school or even the environment in our community. Are there things from your community or school or at home that have helped you to overcome challenges? Some have mentioned their parents, for example their mothers encouraged them so much, the others have mentioned talking aaa speaking about what they are going through aaaaa with somebody they trust. What about the others?

6.40. **Participant (M):** For me I don't think is a good idea from my own opinion sharing my thoughts with other people because you will never know.

6.41. **Interviewer:** You don't think is a good idea?

6.42. **Participant (M)** continues: I don't think is a good idea sharing my problems with other people because you never know when she is …there's a quote that says, "love them all but trust no one". So, I believe in that quote because somebody can lie to you in your face and you can trust her or him with your whole life.

6.43. **Interviewer:** Then you're saying that it is not really good to share with other people, is it because of bad experience?

6.44. **Participant (M):** Yaaa what I have what I have experience is that people can lie in your face, telling you that you can trust them, then you can trust them your whole life, your whole heart, but you don't know when they go out there face other people, what they say about you. They can lie in your face, what if they turn their backs on you. What will you say?

6.45. **Interviewer:** Do you think those situations that you have gone through have changed the way you see yourself, or the kinds of dreams you have about future? Did they change the way you define yourself?

6.46. **Participant (M):** For me yes, they did so much, the made an impact. so now I look at myself in a different way, in a positive way, beautiful way. I can embrace myself and other people, I can come up with my own persona, talk with other people, get excited. But before, it was not like that, every day if you wake you go hustle for food, hustle for shelter, hustle for everything. So now I think my life is perfect. It's just me and my goals, dreams and talents.

6.47. **Interviewer:** Okay, thank you.

6.48. **Participant (M):** For me I can see I haven't changed because I see myself like a person who don't know nothing. Only know what what to achieve when I see myself like I don't have to come to school, I'm not able to to be here. So, my mother she always tell me to come to school, she motivates me to come … to come to here but for my side I don't see the necessity.

6.49. **Interviewer:** Mmmmm what makes you think like that, is it the subjects that you're taking that are hard or you're not passing or is it other situations that you prefer to keep to yourself?

6.50. **Participant (M)** continues: What makes me to change that is because whatever want to achieve us not base based on school my my career … I don't know what I have to say, yaaa career is not based on school. I want to be famous, yaaa to be famous is not actually …to be famous, I think you don't have to come to school first, you can just go study what you want to do and do it.

6.51. **Interviewer:** Okay, what do you think guys?

6.52. **Participant (F):** Mmmmm my surroundings … I'm still that same person, I don't see the point to change for something else or for somebody so I'm still that girl who lives in her own world, yaaa who sees the world differently.

6.53. **Interviewer:** Okay, what about the others? How have the situations that you have gone through changed the way you see yourself? In general, what we have spoken about today.

6.54. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa for me, I have a message to all the young people in the whole world that they must not give up in life because winners never quit, and quitters never win. So, if you quit in life you don't know what gods God holds for you in the future, if you fall down now, what about in the future you will be weak, so if you stand up now, then be strong enough to stand for yourself the future and never fight in the south nor east, but fight everywhere because you'll never know where the better might come from. So always be strong. And never be surprised if the challenges come your way because you already strong.

6.55. **Interviewer:** Okay, … we will end here, mmm thank you for your participation mmm I appreciate all that you have shared. Just know that it will be kept confidential. Okay!

Wave I-Focus Group 1 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/02/27
Duration of focus group / interview	56 minutes 57seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	8
Name of informed consent hard copies	8

Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Race**	**Ethnic group**	**Home Language**	**Adolescent / In between / grown up**	**Doing currently?**
1.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	M	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	8						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 2 Male participants
- 6 Female participants

7.1. **Interviewer:** Good morning, everyone. I am Miss Catherine Shirima. And I'm currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I'm conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents, people of your age, living in disadvantaged communities in South African context. So, what is identity? So, identity formation involves the active questioning about your own values, about your beliefs, about your role in the community, and in the society, okay. And resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships, like challenges that you've gone through. So, if you were able to overcome those challenges, you're considered a resilient person. Then in our discussion, I want you to talk about your views and experiences on how you see your identity formation, and what to think about your resilient development. Okay,

7.2. **Participants (all):** mmm

7.3. **Interviewer:** just those two aspects, how you see your identity formation, and what you think about your resilience development. So, we have a few simple rules that you will observe in our focus group. The first one is that information shared will be kept confidential. No one is going to talk about what we have spoken about here in the group. Do not go after the group say oh, you know, so and so, said these and these. that is not allowed. So, what we speak about here, remains here, and we are not going out to start mocking others, okay? We respect what the other person says. So, what you say stays in this room. We are called to respect each one's opinion. If somebody says something, there is no laughing about it. Okay? We respect what we are saying. And there is no right or wrong answer. What you say is your own experience. It's not right or wrong. Because it's not an exam, it's just your experience. And so, your participation is voluntary, and you can pull out without any consequences, the session will be audio recorded and if you you're comfortable and willing to continue yeah, you can fill in the biographic questionnaire.

7.4. **Interviewer:** So okay, so the first question I want to ask you is… and I want you to really participate. So just tell me whatever you think. Just speak about your own ideas please. So if somebody asks you a question like… what is identity what would you say?

7.5. **Participant (F):** identity on myself is somebody's feelings and how you want to develop on some like when you want to develop your studies and you're on self-esteems.

7.6. **Interviewer:** okay.

7.7. **Interviewer:** the others, what do you think? who are you? And what do you think about yourself? about the world around you and the characteristics that define you?... so, what can you say about that? Just speak if you have something, you don't have to raise your hand, okay.

7.8. **Participant (F)**: in who are you it depends on what you want to do life and what he wishes to do for your country I have for your family you are living with

7.9. **Interviewer:** what makes you different from the other people here? you are different isn't it? So, what makes you different? don't be shy…

7.10. **Participant (F):** difference is that they are coming from a different family and we don't know each other better than other people that are living with and we are much different from each man, she doesn't look like me and I don't look like her

7.11. **Interviewer:** what else makes you different from the rest of the group? Yes

7.12. **Participant (M):** something that makes us different from each other is like our culture some of us are Basuthu, Sestswana people and Xosa so something like that makes us different form each other. And in our dreams, some of us want to be a doctor and others want to be teachers and something like that, that is why we are different from each other.

7.13. **Interviewer:** thank you. Somebody else?

7.14. **Interviewer:** how would you describe yourself to others? What would you tell them about yourself?

7.15. **Participant (M):** I tell other on how I feel about my achievement at school and my dreams of becoming an artist. so many people when I tell them that I want to become an artist they just take like a joke and that thing makes me feel bad about my achievements. So, I stopped telling people about what I want to become. So now ah…

7.16. **Interviewer:** Thank you. Yes...

7.17. **Participant (F):** I wanted to become a doctor but several of my friends in mislead me to study Maths Lit so that I can finish my studies. And so, I feel bad because I'm studying and I want to be a doctor. I told them that I did Math Lit because I am not

good at Maths. So, I want to ask you that if I'm doing Maths lit, can I still achieve my my dreams?

7.18. **Interviewer:** You're talking about careers neh. It's also part of your identity. With regard to your question is it okay we can talk after the focus group? I can explain to you. Is that fine? yeah okay thank you, but you can just talk about your interest and other things, but I can give you some career guidance afterwards okay?

7.19. **Interviewer:** what do you think guys, something else that you want to share about yourselves?

7.20. **Silence**

7.21. **Interviewer:** Okay, then we can move to the next question. So, what factors, like things or situations in your life, in your personal life, that have contributed… contribute means influence on who you are today? what things… like people… some of you have spoken about their career choices, or about the what defines them, about their personality, or the characteristics that define them. So, what contributed to you having those ideas?

7.22. **Participant (F):** Ma'am it is not easy to choose a subject, when you are getting to grade 10. according to your question ma'am, when choosing a career, you can choose a career since from primary school, but when you are in high school, you will suffer from getting support from your friends, and your family. So, my career can be wanting to be a pilot, for example. And when I go to school, the subject that I choose is not related what I want to do. So, it's so difficult to understand and to know that your dreams will not come true in the future. While you may have decided to do the one side project, and one other hand you wanted to be a pilot, like you do Tourism and Maths lit, you can't be a doctor or pilot, you have to study pure maths and physics. So those are the most difficult subjects for South African children. And So far, I understand that in life, you don't have to choose things just because of choosing things. You have choose knowing what you're getting yourself into and what will be the consequences of what you're doing. And you have to get a support from your teachers, if you don't understand something you have to be free to ask anybody who knows better than you do. It doesn't mean that if you don't understand you're stupid or something, No. It means that you are to better that person and there are those people that influences us to be like them that wishes us to be like them. At the end we don't

want to be like them because of the own subjects and the support that we didn't get enough. So, it happens that it was not our intention to be doing those subjects when we wanted to do something else.

7.23. **Interviewer:** okay.

7.24. **Interviewer:** So, what she's saying is that sometimes you guys have dreams, but you don't achieve them, because of lack of support, either from school or from home and lack of role models. And at the same time, the challenge is about making the right subject choice. So, what makes it hard for you to have the right subjects, for example, to take pure maths and physics, What difficulties do you experience?

7.25. **Participant (F):** difficulty that we have is that we don't have, we don't get much time to practice, pure Maths I have done it last year, it requires a person to be focused and to forget about everything else. Ma'am, you can tell yourself that I want do this stuff, and I whatever it is, I'm going to do it. But when it happens, that maybe at home, you don't even get in enough space to study, the situation at home is bad and you don't get the support from the teachers. On other hand you have trusted a person or even the teachers to help you with your studies. You Just don't get enough from them. It happens that when you are telling yourself that I want to do this, yeah, sure, you can. But on the other way disappointed because we have to get support. And in pure maths you're going to make more things that are going to cost you.

7.26. **Interviewer:** ok

7.27. **Participant (F):** sometime you have a list of things because I wanted to do Maths this and that but I was having a low self-esteem because I would say but we when I get wrong, that will other people say, you wanted to do this but you can't. I think if you want to achieve something you must have a high self-esteem so that you can achieve your goals.

7.28. **Interviewer:** anyone else? other challenges that you are facing that may not be helping you to achieve your goals. It can be challenges from home or school, or personal, on individual level, okay. You can just speak about those things that are impacting on your identity. Okay. Some other things impact on you negatively or positively. Okay. Just talk about any. Yes.

7.29. **silence**

7.30. **Interviewer:** So how do the things that you've mentioned…the situations and challenges changed the way you see yourself today?

7.31. **Participant (F):** yes, ma'am they have changed from the way it was terms of being focused especially in my in my dreams, my marks have dropped because I have low self-esteem.

7.32. **Interviewer**: speak louder please

7.33. **Participant F:** yes ma'am, I was saying be because of my mom's my mom had difficulties now and then, why because I don't have much time to study and when I study most people judge me and tell me how special do I think I am so they make it for the person to give up easily because when your peer tell you to give up on something or to judge you even though it was not your intention to give up. But at end you will be like no man she is right by telling me that I am so focused on I'm focused on my future goals and not having more for more fun like other children but at the same time you end up wasting time spending your time outside when we look at your books…

7.34. **Interviewer:** thanks…somebody else

7.35. **Silence**

7.36. **Interviewer**: what about the boys?

7.37. **Participant (F):** I choose my career I don't care about other people as long as I have my mother's support.

7.38. **Interviewer:** thank you, somebody else. Yes,

7.39. **Participant (M):** about myself becoming an artist, most of the time I want to research how they've done most of the pals say that I'm wasting my data and I can do something else with that data and using my data on something else, forgetting about my dreams and what I want to become.

7.40. **Participants (F):** I don't think it is really necessary to listen to other people's judgement.

7.41. **Interviewer**: say it again.

7.42. **Participant (F):** I don't think it's really necessary to listen to other people's judgement

7.43. **Interviewer:** you don't think that it's necessary to listen to what other people say… like when they discourage you

7.44. **Interviewer:** We can move to the next question if we are done with identity. So, our other question is to talk about resilience neh and I explained resilience is just your capacity to overcome challenges or difficulties. Okay? Yes. So, it's how you describe yourself to be resilient to be strong and tough. I can imagine that once in a while you've had to go through challenges and you managed to overcome them. So I just want you to tell me personally from your own experiences… so what does it mean for you to be resilient? Or to be tough or to be strong what does that mean for you?

7.45. **Participant (F):** Can you please repeat your question?

7.46. **Interviewer:** What does it mean for you to be resilient or strong or tough?

7.47. **Participant (M):** For me, just like she said, it is not necessary to outside on what people are talking about just focus on what you want to do in life so for be strong

7.48. **Interviewer:** somebody else

7.49. **silence**

7.50. **Interviewer:** if you're talking to somebody about you being resilient, what would you say?

7.51. **Silence**

7.52. **Interviewer:** Would you describe yourself as a person who overcomes challenges? do you think you're a person who has overcome challenges or hardships? … what challenges you've overcome so far. What makes you think you're resilient? okay

7.53. **silence**

7.54. **Participant:** mmm I have to avoid to go to party because….

7.55. **Interviewer:** some are very quiet. Since we started some of you have not said anything.

7.56. **Interviewer:** What did you say?

7.57. **Participant (M):** talk about other challenges. Yes.

7.58. **Participant (M):** Great challenges. It's like one of my best friends. Where I come from is now actually in terms of becoming an artist. But when it comes to singing and acting I am better than him. He even told me that man you are better than me but, your achievement is not good. But he doesn't work with me now. I just waiting for two years so that I can become eighteen years. I'm already looking into it. The other thing that why he says the right thing, because I'm better than him. So, I just told him that one day, I make my achievement by my own means. So that thing makes be strong

about myself. And knowing that, I don't lose hope, on what I want to be, or want to do, and keep pushing myself and until I reach my own dreams

7.59. **Interviewer:** What other difficulties are you facing? may be some on a personal level or difficulties you're facing at home or even at school that give you stress.

7.60. **Participant (F):** ma'am can I talk about what makes me strong? What makes me strong is that I believe so much in me and I think in my everyday commitments and my wishes will come true. I will say, since I have so many challenges in life, they gave me faith and I believe that it will happen no matter what happens, no matter what the situation is and the challenges and my situation is so tough and I never thought that I would rise from them. And some of them I still tough and I don't know what to do about them. And can we please not discuss this here and. To at least talk about it after the session.

7.61. I**nterviewer:** No problem.

7.62. **Interviewer:** Somebody else. As I say, you should feel free on what you want to say here in the group, okay? And if you feel that it's too personal, then it's okay. You don't have to share. You can only share what you feel free to talk about. Other difficult situations or problems that some of you are facing, either from home or school.

7.63. **Participant M:** I don't the difficult thing that I'm facing at school. Many of my friends at school, their dream is becoming some doctors and teachers. I'm the only one and feeling comfortable becoming an artist. So that thing making it difficult to make it difficult for me to achieve my dreams. So, I started making decisions like saying that I quit what I want to become, so I follow the rules. And that is not right. Because we are not the same. We are not good at the same things. So, I think we are different. Last two years ago. That's two years just dropped my dream of becoming a actor. I just saw that I'm not perfect at doing a thing or drama things. And so, I just say, maybe I can't do that because that is not something I love to do, and it just didn't happen. And so, I saw myself going to * to do the things that I love. So that I love so many people. I was the only one who loved to reflect on myself and. I lost everything. So, I come back and my friend, the one who actually had the dream of becoming artist, start laughing at me. To think I will not do I will not make it. Because I'm so afraid to do more than I think I can. So, for now that those things of being afraid is not my thing I am going to do what I do best.

7.64. **Interviewer:** ok. Thank you

7.65. **Participant (F):** There are so many challenges I have one of my family and one. But we start at. Times like this, especially after what we have to make…. They don't have any hope in me that I know I will be scared of. Especially that person that there was a baby, he is nothing. And my family, and his family and not getting along with each other. So, they thought that I would be miserable, my life will be so messy and I will never have any dream of coming back to school and study and achieve what I want to achieve. No like there are so many challenges that have gotten life especially from the person that I have thought, maybe they will understand me and know how I feel. They've disappointed me a lot. And the other thing that's changed my life is that I have baby. And it was not my intention at all. I've got so much strength and so much hope before I got a baby and having a baby. I told myself that it's not going to stop me even what I want to do. And I will still continue that to study what I want as long as I have support from my mother to look after my baby when I'm Out. And come to school. So, anything my dad…when I was pregnant with this time and knowing that the father of my baby is somebody who is nothing, it is somebody who doesn't study, he knows nothing about better life. So, it happened and they have lost hope. That's why now when I need to do something about my life, I have to do it on my own. It's a selfish thing. So, what I've learned from that is that I won't do any mistake again. I will always do anything that will disappoint my dad again. I want him in the end to focus things in. I want him to do that. I will achieve everything that I want.

7.66. **Interviewer:** so, what enabled you guys to overcome the challenges or the problems, the difficulties you are facing? Either from home, some of you mentioned things like teenage pregnancy, or having responsibilities at home after school, like doing house chores… where do you get your support from?

7.67. **Participant (F):** for teenage pregnancy you can get support from the clinic. these ladies that have been there all 2017 and 18 who was at * clinic. They have always told me and encouraging me in things that I want to do and not to give up so easily. So, I told myself and believe in myself that everything that they are telling me is true. And am grateful for everything they did. So, the support for teenage pregnancy and for myself they can only get it from the clinic because nowadays the parents they don't want to see her baby being pregnant when she's at School. The parents want the best

for their baby. And at the end, the baby will be disappointed if her parents. It's because of falling pregnant at school and sometimes ma'am it is not their intention to fall pregnant. And things of getting pregnant. It's about things that you have told yourself or believe in yourself that I'm not going to do this, but at the end you will be in this situation and not know what to do or where to go. While your parents on the other hand have insulted you using bad words... So, at the time you will be so miserable, so messy up and do not know where to go other than the clinic and social workers.

7.68. **Interviewer:** So, you received support from the clinic and from social workers…

7.69. **Participant (F):** yes

7.70. **Interviewer:** what about the others, where do you get your support from? Or you lack support. Or what is it that helps you to overcome hardships. She said it very well that she doesn't have support. Her attitude is not to take everything that people tell her at heart, so she minds her own business. That is another way of looking at things and overcoming challenges, having that attitude of self-confidence. What else helps you to overcome challenges? She said she talks to people, she is confidence. What about the others? What works for you?

7.71. **silence.**

7.72. **Participant (F):** ma'am. other they can maybe keep themselves busy to overcome their problems and that helps them so much. Maybe keep themselves busy, maybe playing football, go outside and have peace there and think about it. And other the challenges they have been though they have tried to commit suicide and they thought it is the right thing to do. We have good hope. We are, but we don't have much to say. But because of the end of the day or any of that situation, you find yourself doing something better than committing suicide.

7.73. **Interviewer:** So, what does that say about you as a person? Does it impact on how you see yourself? How you define yourself?

7.74. **Participant (F):** ma'am I will say, what about me? It encouraged me to do to do better and be and be somebody, to motivation so that I can help them or. Yeah, help them to. go through their issues and forget. Help them to forget about their situation.

7.75. **Interviewer:** Somebody else who has something to add. Anything else?

7.76. **Interviewer:** Any last ideas from you? Something to offer.

7.77. **Participant (M):** Me. My past really impacted My brain in terms of becoming an artist? So just like my mother told me that the first day. It is the one that is the first that is the hardest step that we take in life. So, I tend to tell myself that I'm going to do better than they think. Anyone, any one thing that I'm going to be better than my mother I think that I'm starting from last year I told myself that when I got the opportunity of reaching my opportunities. I'm not going to play it or do something, I am just gonna do it.

7.78. **Interviewer:** Thank you. Yes.

7.79. **Participant (F):** Okay. Yeah. It's been hard to keep something good in your mind.

7.80. **Interviewer:** to keep yourself busy.

7.81. **Participant (F):** Yeah.

7.82. **Interviewer:** Somebody else. Yes.

7.83. **Participant (F):** From what she said, I have tried many times to commit suicide because people were provoking me about my worries, about my past. Many things that had happened to my life. And every time something bad happened to my life. But I can't see people. I can only see it with you. But there's someone at home that I share some of my things with her. She's my sister. And I think that keeping something to herself is not okay because you might end up getting sick. Thinking of killing yourself like I have done. I've tried suicide many times, and then I think I'm going to 2012. I tried committing suicide. I end up in hospital. I drank a paraffin because have been mocking me about my voice, That I have a deep voice, like a man's voice. But I didn't I didn't think, well, because I and I took a bottle of paraffin and I drank it. So, I end up in the hospital. Many people probably think how bad I am.

7.84. **Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you. Someone else.

7.85. **Silence**

7.86. **Interviewer:** So, they're actually touching on your identity neh. How you see yourself. Like she spoke about self-esteem and self-confidence.

7.87. **Participant (F):** Yes ma'am.

7.88. **Participant (F):** I think it's ok not tell someone. Because if you tell someone she will want to tell all people and they will tell other.

7.89. **Participant (M):** about being an artist, too much….

7.90. **Interviewer:** just take your time

7.91. **Participant (F):** well I think when you tell someone something that is a private matter, you have to tell someone that you trust more than anyone else. I can't just get up and tell everybody in the school or in the school at this point that what. Happened in my life. What about that person? I can't tell you anything. I have to make sure that this person that I'm telling my things, I trust him or her. What I hear.

7.92. **Interviewer:** And the people your life that you trust…

7.93. **Participant (F):** yes

7.94. **Interviewer:** So, you're saying nowadays you cannot trust a person. Okay. That's her experience. We've got different experiences. And it's okay to share your experiences.

7.95. **Participant (F):** for me I don't think I have any difficulties especially from my family. Cause they always help me with everything like what I want to be or what I want do

7.96. **Interviewer:** It's okay if there's nothing more to say.

7.97. **Participant (F):** but people who keep a secret is not good because you would end up having depression. Because you will always be alone. Because you will never share your secret with someone because you never trust him or her. If you want to tell someone about your problem you have think first and say if you have to tell him or her. And you don't trust each other. when you tell someone your problems, when you go out to tell someone, you. He knew what I'm together. And I think its not good. You have to look for someone that you trust

7.98. **Interviewer:** thank you, the issue of trust is coming up a lot. So, in our communities, families and schools, we need to find people we trust. And some of you say they are available, some say they're not. So, you prefer to keep things to yourself. Some of you have mentioned using services like a social worker, when they struggle to find someone they can trust. But I'm not sure if there is something else from you guys. How do you feel? Did you speak about everything you wanted to say?

7.99. **Participant (F):** ma'am like if you don't trust anyone in your family, you can just share the things with your mom because she's your mom, she won't tell anyone.

7.100. **Interviewer:** You still want to say something? Are you okay? Can we end this session? Is that fine with everybody?

7.101. **Participant (all)**: mmm

7.102. **Interviewer:** We end for today. We will meet again maybe in September. We will see. Normally it's after six months, but we'll see how the lockdown will go. And the

situations with managing the corona virus. Okay. So, I appreciate your sharing and thank you very much. I will see you again sometime in the same group. Ok

7.103. **Participants (all): yes**

Wave I-Focus Group 2 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/02/27
Duration of focus group / interview	54 minutes 42 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 1 Male participant
- 8 Female participants

8.1. **Interviewer:** I am Catherine Shirima. I am currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I am conducting research to investigate the trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents. We are going to discuss about identity and resilience. Identity formation actually is just about questioning about your values, your beliefs, your roles in the society. Whereas resilience is the capacity to bounce back when you are faced with hardships or difficulties or challenges. So, in our discussion, I want you to talk about your views and experiences in how you see your identity formation. How it is developing and what you think about your resilience. So we have simple rules that will help us to be able to follow through the discussion. Because this is a discussion about your own views. So, the first one is that the information you are going to share will be kept confidential. What you say in the room stays in the room. Everything you speak about stays in this room. Me neither, I am not going to talk to people about your things. So, we are also called to respect each other's' opinion, so there is no right or wrong answer. What the person speaks about, it is their own experience. There is no right or wrong answer. If you don't feel comfortable discussing or answering something, you can refrain from answering. There are no consequences for not answering a question. If you don't feel free to say something it is okay. You are reminded that your participation is voluntary. Isn't it that you volunteered to participate in the discussion on your own. There are no consequences if you decide to pull out. So, the session will be recorded so that it enables me to capture the information afterwards for analysis. If you are comfortable and willing to continue, you may please fill in the biographic questionnaires, the ones I just handed in. Okay guys, so we can start with our focus group discussion, remember to feel free to share and talk about your experiences. So, if I ask you what is identity, what do you think? What comes in your mind when you think about identity.

8.2. **Participant (F):** Identity is your name and your surname, your career your date of birth

8.3. **Interviewer**: What about the others apart from your name and your surname. What else describes or characterises you as a person?

8.4. **Participants (F)**: Identity is all about your information. About who you are. What you like and don't like. It is all about your career choices. About what you want to

become in life or what you don't want to become. About your beliefs, the talents you have

8.5. **Interviewer:** Somebody else, you wanted to say something more? What do you think?

8.6. **Participant (F):** Identity by my knowledge is something about yourself or our knowledge about the careers. Sometimes, what you choose by your choice

8.7. **Interviewer:** The others... If you think about identity…like how do you describe yourself to others? What would you say? You have something to say? Guys do you have something to say?

8.8. **Silence**

8.9. **Interviewer:** Okay, what makes you difference from one another? What makes you different from the other person in this group?

8.10. **Silence**

8.11. **Participant (F):** It is all about the experience that I learnt from the other people. Like for example, in some I learnt so many things that you need to believe in yourself, don't doubt yourself and don't listen to other people, what other people say about your identity. Let me make an example about Clement, Clement is homosexual, when he exposed himself during that school trip. He wasn't ready to talk about himself that he is gay, so when he tell his parents and the teachers, they didn't believe him. He was gay and the social media wrote about him all those nonsense. He wanted to kill himself because other people don't want to accept him just the way he is. Just because he is gay, his parents, his mother didn't believe him. His grandmother didn't believe him at all. And the only person that he believed in him was his father. His father was the one. His father encouraged him to never listen to other people's opinions. If he is gay, he accepts himself. There was the other learner Kenny, He was also gay but he didn't want to share his identity. He only told Clement about his identity. So that is how I learnt everything in Skeem Sam. Because Skeem Sam taught me everything about how to believe in yourself. About the careers. Even myself, I even doubted myself. I wanted to be a soldier. I moved to the other career, I wanted to be a police. I wanted to be a social worker. I even doubted myself. Just because the other previous school at * Primary School, the other learners were teasing me about I am fat, I am ugly. They were even teasing me because the only person I was closest to was my grandmother. I told my granny about everything. And she said to me *, you must

believe in yourself, do not listen to other people's opinions, A person is a person. A person can talk every day. Even you are…I don't know how to put it this way. In the other school there was this teacher a vice principal, her full name is *. She was the one who believed in me. She was the one who didn't criticise me. The other teachers believed in me, they told me that, * my child you must be strong, this is how life is, this is how life goes, the people criticise you. Even at home my brother likes teasing me a lot, even when he is angry, he is drunk. He likes teasing me a lot, that I like the food that I am going to be a fat girl. Even when I run, the people are laughing at me. Because I even see myself, I even…I even lost my confidence at all. I didn't even believe in myself. I didn't even know that even today I am in grade 9. Because the teacher in the previous school *, Was the one who believed in me and advised that this is the life it is. My brother listens to other people's opinions. He likes…, he smokes and he even underestimates my mother. I learnt something about the situation at my home. I learnt something about my mother that don't listen to everyone's opinions. Just believe in yourself, and just have self-esteem, just have confidence and don't listen to other people, what they say. A person is a person and a person will always talk even though I use to listen to the radio about, In Sunday, I used to listen to the Motsweding FM, it encourages lot of people about don't be so scared even when the person is….

8.12. **Participant (F):** What I learnt a lot in this country that we live is that a person is a person. And a person can talk anytime. And I learnt…I overcame many challenges in my life. I overcame many many things in my life. When I was in grade 4, I almost died, because I was sick, I was very very particularly sick. And I almost died. If it wasn't my mother and my grandmother, I would be dead right now. I would be six feet underground. So I have learnt a lot is that don't judge the book my its cover, don't judge the people because the people makes mistakes. So even last year, at the teachers day. There was the other teacher, Mr *, encouraged me that it is okay to make mistakes and that mistakes, you will learn from them. Don't listen to other people's opinions. And my grandmother used to tell me that don't lose the confidence and my grandmother believes in me. There is a thing that I like, is that I like to run. But when I run, the people likes teasing me and criticising me saying that I am fat and I can't run in athletics. Last year, there was the other person who criticises me, who teases

me saying that I cant run because I am fat, when I run, I am going to fall down. So I did have a self-esteem, a lot of self-esteem. That day I did not listen to everyone' opinions, I did run. There was the other day, when I was in Grade 8b, they used to criticise me a lot about my head, they used used to criticises me and tease me saying, I am fat, my head is so and so and so forth. Because when they criticises me I feel like I did lost my confidence. When I go home, I did sit down and keep quiet and I thought many twice that why many people, why people hate me so much, just because I am fat, just because I am short, just because I am smart, just because the other teachers likes me a lot. I did think about all those things, I did tell my grandmother, because me and my grandmother we are close. We are very very close. When I see my grandmother, I see her as my mother, we are very very close. Even though…when we are close, I did tell my grandmother a lot of thing. When I was in the previous school, in grade 6 or grade 7. There was the other kids that they did touch my waist and when they did touch my waist I ran to the vice principal and the principal. I told them that there are other learners who assaulted me. And those kids used to tease me a lot. And even when I see myself, I underestimate myself and I asked myself so many questions why me. Even though I pray even I ask the God why me, why me. Just because I am fat, just because I am fat, just because I am smart, just because I am short. Even though they used to call me fatty boom boom and when they call me fatty boom boom, the other kids laugh at me and even though I start crying, I start crying and crying a lot. That is how I learnt everything and I even overcame the other challenges.

8.13. **Interviewer**: Okay, we will talk about challenges later. Okay thank you, Let's continue with identity and when it comes to challenges you will still share about your challenges. Okay

8.14. **Participants (F):** Okay, My Identity, I am *, I am a female, I live with my mother, my step father, because my other father died. I live with my step father. I live with my two siblings, my brother and my little sister and my grandmother.

8.15. **Interviewer:** Okay thank you. What about the others?

8.16. **Participant (F):** I like athletics, I like running a lot, I like running a lot, the skipping rope. I don't like soccer at all. I don't like netball, I like to debate. I like the debating

8.17. **Interviewer:** Okay, Thank you. It is not necessary to mention your names since I am recording. You can just talk about yourselves without mentioning your names. Okay. So, how do you describe yourselves to others, what do you think?

8.18. **Participant (F):** I am different from other learners, when I do something, I used my brain, I think and think and think. That is when I find a solution. I like my parents a lot, my grandmother and my siblings. But sometimes, when I am home, I used to get stubborn and even my grandmother used to call me that…can I please speak Setswana?

8.19. **Interviewer:** The others can also share a bit, just about yourself, your dreams, your careers….

8.20. **Participant (F):** What I like about my life is that I am different to others, cause I have self-confidence and I don't listen to what other people have to say about me or about what they say behind me. I also have dreams about being a social worker, because what I experienced is that many people are being abused by their mothers and their families. I also have one of my friend that was abused by her uncle. I wanted to help her but I didn't get the chance to help her because I am still young, I don't know what I am going to do and what I am going to share or who I am going to share with. What I like is that I don't listen to people because I have self-esteem. Even people tease me about my head, saying I have big head, I am not even offended to what they say. I think even being a career; I think being a social worker will serve many children out there, so many women out there because they are suffering from abuse

8.21. **Interviewer**: Somebody else.

8.22. **Silence**

8.23. **Interviewer**: Yes, what do you think about yourself? So, what has contributed to who you are today?

8.24. **Silence**

8.25. **Interviewer**: What things have influenced the personality that you have developed?

8.26. **Silence**

8.27. **Interviewer**: You can talk about things about yourself as a person that help you or define who you are or even situations maybe from home or school that have affected how you see yourself.

8.28. **Silence**

8.29. **Interviewer**: Like what she was sharing, she shared a lot about many situations like bullying and how it affected her, but she had a lot of people at home that encouraged her. But these things do affect you, so the others if you want to contribute on what your colleague just said. But from your own experiences.

8.30. **Silence**

8.31. **Interviewer**: Just say anything, it is your experience. No one is going to judge you. There is no right or wrong answer isn't it?

8.32. **Silence**

8.33. **Participant (M):** When I grow up, I want to be a business man and in that, I want to be a good player in South Africa.

8.34. **Interviewer**: Thank you, he spoke about his careers

8.35. **Participant (F)**: Okay my name is *I want to be Agricultural Economist. Because I have struggled a lot. My mom struggled a lot about different things in life. So I want to change our situation at home.

8.36. **Interviewer**: Okay, thank you. So, anything from home or from school that contributed to who you are. How you see yourself, what you think about yourself. Anything?

8.37. **Participant (F):** What I see about myself is that, what I think about myself, I think that I am brave because I didn't listen to what people say about me, because there are some kids, when you tease them, they commit suicide and end up dying for no reason, for useless reasons. So, I think I chosen this career because I am brave.

8.38. **Interviewer**: Remember we are recording…

8.39. **Participants (All):** whispering in Setswana

8.40. **Interviewer**: So, what do you think about you being resilient and what does that mean for you? Would you describe yourselves as resilient people or a resilient person? A person who is able to overcome challenges, difficulties or problems.

8.41. **Silence**

8.42. **Interviewer**: Are there challenges you have already overcome in your life? Or problems, difficulties, obstacles? Or what are you exposed to or what things are you exposed to maybe from home or school or just in your surrounding. What are you exposed to, what challenges are you facing?

8.43. **Participant (F)**: I think the abuse. I overcame many challenges, many things. At home, my mother used to tell me that when the person is bullying you, don't just keep quiet or keep it as a secret, just talk, just be free. Don't keep quiet because you are going to live in fear. You are going to be scared of people, you are going to be scared of many things. When the person is touching you, you are just jumping. So, when I was in grade 5, grade 6, there was the other girl who was called *. She was my best friend. I trusted her and she started bullying me and I kept quiet just because I did not know for what reason. And she cut the other learners' school bag and pin all of her doings to me. There was the other teacher who gave me the letter to give to my parents, when I gave my mother the letter, my mother shouted at me, she thought that I wasn't doing well with my studies. When she came to the school and that girl's mother came to the school, even though I told the teacher nothing but the truth, I didn't lie, I told everything about what happened that day. There was the other day when I was sitting with the other boy, when I was sitting there, that other boy touched my bums and my breast. I ran to the teacher and told her that the other boy assaulted me. Even though that day, I wanted to arrest him for sexual assault and that day I even asked myself and when I was praying, I was praying I the secret place at my aunt's room. It was afternoon or maybe in the morning. I even asked God saying God, why me out of all people, just because I am fat, they even call me fatty boom boom. I even asked myself, why me God, why me? out of all people, why me. Why must I be always the one. The other boys when they see me, they see me at the back, when they see my bums, they even call me names. The other boys wanted to date me and I said no. even the older boys. It was an old man, and he called me. I asked him, why did you call me. He asked my direction of my home. I didn't know that he wanted me to be his wife. I gave him the direction of my home. I asked why do you want the direction of my home. He asked where are my parents? I did know this sill come. I told him that my parents are at home. My grandmother is at home. He told me that he loves me and he wanted me to be his wife. I almost insulted him. And I said no. I ran to home and told my grandmother. My grandmother is the only one I can tell my secrets. My grandmother is the only one who can understand me. The other people hate me and the neighbours, there are other kids that gossip about me and when they are gossiping about me, they

look at me and they talk bad things about me. I only told my grandmother because she was only one who can believe me.

8.44. **Interviewer**: So, your grandmother is the only one who is supportive to you? And the others what do you think? What situations have you had to go through that make you think you are resilient?

8.45. **Silence**

8.46. **Interviewer**: Anything, any situation or challenges you faced… it can be at home, at school or your friend.

8.47. **Silence**

8.48. **Interviewer**: Remember there is no right or wrong answer.

8.49. Silence

8.50. **Interviewer**: Guys why are you so quiet?

8.51. **Participant:** we are shy

8.52. **Interviewer**: You guys have challenges either with school work, at home … you can talk about some of your challenges

8.53. **Participants:** Whispering together

8.54. **Participant (F):** I want to be a doctor because many people are dying in the hands of the doctors. I want to be a doctor who is loving, who a person can share with. I want to heal some other people and I want to save many lives out there.

8.55. **Interviewer:** Thank you. She just went back to the first question on careers and identity, which is okay.

8.56. **Participant (M):** When I grow up, I want to be an engineer because many people have been dying because of accidents. So maybe it will be possible for me to programme cars to be safe. Some cars can lose control when they speed. There are other cars that can brake themselves automatically like Mercedes it is the only one, so maybe other cars can be programmed to do the same thing like the Mercedes.

8.57. **Interviewer:** Okay, the others, what challenges are you facing

8.58. **Silence**

8.59. **Interviewer**: The challenges you faced, do they say anything about who you are? Do they influence how you define yourself, how you see yourself?

8.60. **Participants**: what are challenges?

8.61. **Interviewer**: Challenges are difficult situations or issues that were a bit hard for you to go through. ok

8.62. **Participant (M):** I think life is a trial when you grow up. When you fail at school you will be repeated. Others left school because they were repeated. When I grow up, I want to be someone who people like.

8.63. **Interviewer:** Thank you. Somebody else?

8.64. **Participant (F):** Next year on grade 10, I will choose agriculture or consumer. I want to be a fashion designer. One day, I want to be a model, so I can wear my fashion clothes

8.65. **Participants (all):** whispering

8.66. **Interviewer:** Okay

8.67. **Participant (F):** When I was in grade 8, I suffering when doing maths. I didn't know how to use method I found a solution. I asked my teachers to help me because not doing maths may make me fail and not improve my career. So that is why I got help. I know now that I will improve my career.

8.68. **Interviewer:** the challenges she was struggling with allowed her to seek help. So now she believes in herself and knows that she will get the career she wants.

8.69. **Interviewer:** what about the others

8.70. **Participants**: (whispering and giggling)

8.71. **Interviewer**: Thank you very much for your participation

8.72. **Participant (**M)**:** When my mother lost her job in grade 7, I was almost kicked out of the school and that was stressing me a lot. I even dropped when it comes to my education. A lot of things came to my head. I was even scared that I will never be anything because without education you can never be anything. Education is the key to success. So that challenge was massive.

8.73. **Interviewer:** Thank you for sharing. Is there anyone who wants to say anything?

8.74. **Participant (M):** and it was hard to find a solution, because we had to borrow money from other people. After paying school we had to pay the money back.

8.75. **Participant (F):** I struggled a lot, I struggled in maths. The other things are simple and others are difficult. I am scared to even ask my teacher for help. Because the other learners will laugh at me and I see myself as a stupid. My mother would encourage me that when I don't understand something, I should ask the teachers. Don't mind

these kids. These kids are just empty vessels. When it comes to their book, they do not know anything their minds are all over the place

8.76. **Interviewer:** thank you. Anyone else

8.77. **Silence**

8.78. **Interviewer**: Do you think you have said everything you wanted to say.

8.79. **Interviewer**: do you still want to say something

8.80. Thank you, guys, I will see you again.

Wave I-Focus Group 3 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/02/27
Duration of focus group / interview	50 minutes 54 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	10
Name of informed consent hard copies	10

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	M	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	M	22	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
4.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
10.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	10						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 4 Male participants
- 6 Female participants

9.1. **Interviewer:** So guys good morning, I am Miss Catherine Shirima, I'm currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. So, I'm conducting research in Psychology neh. But it is a longitudinal type of research. So, I just want to investigate about the trajectories of identity formation and resilience. So here we're just going to talk about your resilience development and Identity formation. So, identity formation, actually, involves active questioning about your values, beliefs and roles in the society as such. Whereas resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships. Okay. In our discussion, I want you to talk about your views and experiences on how you see your identity formation and what you think about your resilience development. Okay, so we have just a few rules to help us run our discussion smoothly. And one thing that you should all know that everything we are going to talk about here should be kept confidential by myself and also yourselves. Everything we say remains in this room. We are not going to talk about what your friends have spoken with other people outside. Okay. It just remains in this room. And also remember that we are called to respect each other's opinion. So, if somebody is saying something, we are not laughing about that. Okay. Remember there is no right or wrong answer. It's about your personal experiences. Even if the person cannot express themselves well in English. It's okay. I will understand what you want to say. So, don't worry. If you take time to talk or to think about what you want to say, it's fine. You take your time, okay? And just speak about your personal experiences, not about other people's experiences like uncle, aunt or cousin. However, if you feel uncomfortable discussing about any question, you can refrain from answering each of them. So, remember also that your participation is voluntary, isn't it? You all accepted to take part in the focus group on your own. Isn't it that you accepted to participate in this group voluntarily. Okay. But remember that you can also pull out any time without any consequences. This session I'm going to audio recorded so that I can be able to transcribe what you've said. It's just for the research purposes. It's not because I want to share information with another person. Okay. And I'm getting all biographic questionnaires just for me to help you provide practical details. I think you're done already. Because I distributed it. Okay. Thank you. So now we are going to start with the questions. Feel free to speak about your own experiences. Okay. So, I want you to

discuss here is about your identity. What do you know about identity development, especially in teenagers or adolescence? What is identity?

9.2. **Participant (F):** Identity you are talking about yourself.

9.3. **Interviewer:** ok, Talk about yourself.

9.4. **Participant (F):** What you like, like. And what you want to learn or to be involved.

9.5. **Interviewer:** Mm hmm.

9.6. **Interviewer:** So, you are talking about…

9.7. **Participant (F):** identity Yes. To know, more and to know how to explain it. And Express yourself.

9.8. **Interviewer:** Okay. So Yeah. So, what if I ask you? What characterises you? What defines you as a person? Because when you're talking about identity, you also talk about your characteristics as a person. Everything about you? What defines you? What makes you different from other people?

9.9. **Participant (F):** What makes you different from other people?

9.10. **Interviewer:** Yeah,

9.11. **Participant (F):** I like to I like to play with other children in school, and I don't like to make joke with other people. And I wanted to be someone who care about people in life.

9.12. **Interviewer:** the others, Yes.

9.13. **Participant (F):** I like to read And I'm kind. And I want to care about people not to make jokes or maybe to just …

9.14. **Participant (F):** about identity, identity I talk too much. Care about other children. I don't like to keep quiet.

9.15. **Participant (F):** I … instead of laughing at them

9.16. **Interviewer:** But what about the others

9.17. Silence

9.18. **Interviewer:** Okay.

9.19. **Participant (F):** you can repeat again ma'am

9.20. **Interviewer:** ok, mmm How would you describe yourself to other people. This includes the way you do things or the way you see things. Yes.

9.21. **Participant (F):** I describe myself. As I am kind, very supportive and my personality

9.22. **Interviewer:** Okay. Okay.

9.23. **Participant (F):** I am. Don't… I don't like noise too much. And I… When someone told me their stories I am not sharing them with another friend.

9.24. **Interviewer:** Those who haven't said anything, do you want to say something?

9.25. **Participant (F):** I am kind, I talk too much and I don't like to laugh with other people that are not. And I'd like to correct it to make it right. And I like to share my story with others but if you are not my friend because I don't know what to say to the other one. And I like peace

9.26. **Interviewer:** Okay. So, what do you think? What things contributed to have that type of personality or character traits that you were talking about either from yourself? What enabled you to be a peaceful person. Or to enjoy the things that you're doing. Either from home. It can be from your family. Yes.

9.27. **Participant (F):** My parents encourage me to be respectful to other people

9.28. **Participant (F):** because my mother and my father, shared a lot of stories about apartheid and so about the life, the way it should goes. So, she told me that I, I should be a nice girl in school and not to fight with other people in school. Because when I do that, I will become like they were and they and the other people don't care about their life. So, I need to respect other people.

9.29. **Interviewer:** Mm hmm. Yeah. Feel free to talk. We are not laughing at each other. Let's feel free. Okay. She wants to say something.

9.30. **Participant (F):** My mother taught me good things and not do to the wrong thing. Like, well, when people are talking not to laugh at their stories

9.31. **Participant (F):** Okay. My sister used to encourage me about the boys. She says to me, that was wasting our time in school. If you are in school, will be thinking about him and the way he going to do and then he will give me a baby. And then when I don't have time to be successful.

9.32. **Interviewer:** that's okay.

9.33. **Interviewer:** you speak about situations either from home, even at school, or just from your surroundings. Or about people who are influential that you learn from. Okay. So, these people positively encouraged you. But are there things that also impacted on your identity negatively… things that made you have a negative image of yourself or think negatively about yourself? Or situations

9.34. **Participant (F):** my mother was not encouraging me to be clean and to do well. But when I signed, I was encouraged about myself to be clean and then listen to other people. If I did something wrong, I can make it about myself to make it right. And then they were not telling me about the boys but I encouraged myself to see how the boys are. Sometimes they are good and they can make you and I want to be with someone is coming to then should go and tell the other one go to this one. Love him. But now I know boys are not good

9.35. **Interviewer:** somebody else. Just feel free to talk.

9.36. **Participants (F):** I think my parents are not too crazy about me. Till then, I couldn't help myself. To understand that sometimes you can win in life. Sometimes you lose your life around a small thing that does not come to life like taking alcohol in under age it causes you to get the wrong thing, to do one thing in life, and sometimes to get in trouble because of alcohol

9.37. **Interviewer:** So, she's just speaking about the environment and the neighbourhoods, taverns and all…the challenges of using alcohol and what they can do in their life. Anyone who wants to add something from what she said.

9.38. **Participant (F):** Go on. There was a friend of mine who like to do bad things. So, I told her that I will not listen to her because of my mother told me that not to do bad things if you want to become someone good in life. So sometimes when we when Saturday we go to somewhere with my friend, So she left to say that. I should come with them and do some bad things. So that thing didn't I didn't take it seriously, so I just left them. So, I continued with my life.

9.39. **Interviewer:** Other things either from school, home, from your surroundings that have changed the way you see yourself. Any experiences that you've had. Either from school or home, or family, that have really changed the way you see yourself

9.40. **Participant (F):** that time when I grow I like to mess too much. And I missed it at school and I took and went teaching I do not listen to the teacher, I will only think about my boyfriend when the time is going, I encouraged myself that it is not good to think about boys and I had to tell him that it is over between us and I don't like him. My friend my friend started to talk about you are not good. You are not good anymore. Your career is not going to grow without a boyfriend. Then I said no. My life is important And I want to check it out. Then this time. That is not good with a boyfriend.

So now I can see my life. My life is out of. I have my mother and father in my life. It's good because they can share it with my mom. I can send my everything to my mother. And sometimes in school, if someone have me, I can share someone, the teacher that I trusted

9.41. **Interviewer:** Somebody else.

9.42. **Participant (F):** there was a friend…. I Do not I know how to dance? I told them that when I grow up I want to be a dancer. so, you cannot be a dance and you don't know how to dance. So, when I told her that I can't dance but I am going to be a dancer, so all the time I am thinking that I can't be a dance

9.43. **Interviewer:** Others, what do you have in mind? Hmm.

9.44. **Silence**

9.45. **Interviewer:** What is resilience? And would you describe yourself as a resilient person? Just speak. Just speak up because there's a lot of noise outside.

9.46. **Participant (F):** Last year march I was raped by 6 boys and I told my teachers but they did not take me seriously. And then I go to the police. Police is there. Did you see anyone. In this school? I said yes. He said, no, it can't be six boys raping one girl? How so? Then I went to the hospital for testing they found that it was real, my vagina was ruptured like someone who was having a baby, and they were stitching me. Until now no one believes my story, there is this question, what if they going to kill me, what if and I decided to stay with my aunt to feel safe.

9.47. **Interviewer:** Okay. You're saying that you went for counselling and to the police?

9.48. **Participant (F):** Yes ma'am

9.49. **Interviewer:** Were the police helpful?

9.50. **Participant (F):** They said I must wait until I am 18 years old to go to court.

9.51. **Interviewer:** and you found help with the counselling?

9.52. **Participant (F):** yes

9.53. **Interviewer:** somebody else? please just share whatever you feel free to share and remember whatever we share remains here, ok

9.54. **Participant (all):** mmm

9.55. **Participant (F):** First I said about my parents, my mother and my father. My parents drink a lot and I have my little brother. Sometimes after drinking alcohol, sometimes you get the house. And when you get in the house, sometimes they make noise.

Sometimes he beat my mother. So, I hear stories about it from my mother. When I go to talk about it the way I have to talk to you. they don't listen to me. And sometimes when I want something, they don't give me all my needs. They say I must make money and get it for oneself. Like at school when I am absent minded sometimes I am worried about my father and my mother. My mother is good and I worry what happens when I am out. So, when I'm out and when I talk to my mother and my father, about expensive things. They don't listen to me but. But when I play something like a joke, they can listen to and to. I don't have to worry about doing something that is physically. And they don't show me love like the way they love… they don't love me and, in my heart, when I want to go to my step mother, just like you didn't like me, sometimes I like to stay with my stepmother, but sometimes I like to stay with my biological mother. Sometimes they can help me sometimes they don't… I wish to see my mother and father change, to listen to me, what I want and what I don't want.

9.56. **Interviewer:** ok. Somebody else.

9.57. **Participant (F):** I am stressed about my baby, but sometimes when people see the of they like to do a lot of. Maybe sometimes when I'm still away on something they laugh about me. Sometimes I see that I need to go to. And sometimes I have need but things are too expensive. That aspect seemed to keep growing because some people in Texas and I don't think. They like to judge me but I don't like to judge anyone! So other people don't care about my career, myself. I always wonder why people do not love me. It stresses me because I do not know what is going on, in the end what it will happen in my life

9.58. **Interviewer:** So when you go through such challenges, do you have people either at home or at school or from anywhere else who are supportive? Or you can talk to?

9.59. **Participant (F):** I can talk to my stepmother. like sometimes when there are meeting with parents, my mother does not come to support me its only my stepmother who come and she help me with something I am struggling with. she understands my issue, when it is right or wrong she corrects me, sometimes she helps me. Maybe there she don't have money she can promise me but my mother they cannot do this… they have only excuses, but the side of my sister they can make it better but for me I have to wait.

9.60. **Participant (F):** Like at school, sometimes the children like to laugh at me, I don't understand about the English, like when I say something they laugh at me, they don't want to correct me to say something right. So, I say I will not want help from other learners I will only want from the teacher.

9.61. **Interviewer:** others, do you have something to say? Any experiences and challenges that you faced.

9.62. **Silence**

9.63. **Participant (F):** It just frustrates me because me and my twin we are always fighting at home. And so, my mother doesn't know about this, and my sister... When she is cooking, she doesn't serve me and when my mother asks, she says that no, my sister say that my mother, my brother always say that…. And mother doesn't want to talk about this. So, my twin stopped coming to school, she didn't come at all, I don't know why

9.64. **Interviewer:** So, your mom has been missing for two days?

9.65. **Participant (F)** continuing: and my brother didn't go to, it is two years now. As keep asking that she need to go to school. So, she tells them she just….

9.66. **Interviewer:** Okay. Somebody else? Other challenges that you exposed to at school, at home, from your environment?

9.67. **Silence**

9.68. **Interviewer:** When you don't manage to overcome challenges, when you don't manage to solve other problems that you've had in your life, does that change how you look at yourself or what you think about yourself? And if it does, how does that change how you look at yourself or what you think about yourself?

9.69. **Silence**

9.70. **Interviewer:** What helped you to overcome the challenges that you went through?

9.71. **silence**

9.72. **Participant (F):** first challenge is to finish school then after to look for a job to help my mother and my father and other learners that are poor because I know about life. sometimes other learners they don't have something then I can help. Maybe the other learners they don't have food at their home then I can help and also me I can help myself with other things that I don't have and that I want.

9.73. **Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you, do you want to say something?

9.74. **Participant (F):** I have someone to talk to about my challenges. My cousin used to tell me that I was strong enough to pass this thing to avoid playing, finishing school to be a psychologist.

9.75. **Interviewer:** she has somebody to speak with. It's her cousin who encourages her and give her good counsel. The others. What form of support do you you have? Or you don't have support at all.

9.76. **Silence**

9.77. **Interviewer:** Yes, we are about to finish. So how do those challenges that you've mentioned affect how you think about yourself, how you think about your future and the kind of dreams you want to achieve?

9.78. **Interviewer:** Yes., It's ok just speak, I understand

9.79. **Participant (F):** about my challenges, I was thinking about killing myself then I told my Life orientation teachers what I was thinking, she said to me that I am doing well at school, you want fail, many people face a lot of challenges could hear it and it honestly, I didn't know what I was thinking. She told me people face lots of challenges. This is your first challenge, think about your future, so she told me that I am gonna be strong enough and I am gonna be a psychologist.

9.80. **Interviewer:** The others? So, for her, she says, her challenges enabled her to open up to one teacher, and this teacher encouraged her to be confident that she would make it, career wise. What about the others?

9.81. **Participant (F):** last year I was wanted to quit school because of, I don't know, English and only know Setswana. So, I want to quit because when I'm talking people laugh about my language Setswana and English, and in my dream, I want to be a lawyer. So, I ask myself, I would be lawyer why because I don't know English, and what I will help other people when I don't know English and Setswana. So now my stepmother said, you must go to school to finish school one day you will know it and you will find someone to help you understand English. I also ask myself that my mother why not to tell me the true story about her, maybe she did a mistake somewhere, because I don't understand English, I can understand other language. I don't know but there are people when they see me they say my father is China because of eyes. Sometimes they say you are not Mtswana, you don't know your language. I

will go to school, to finish school. Maybe I will be a lawyer or not, but I will find to be what I will be when I go, a teacher maybe or something else…

9.82. **Interviewer:** Okay. Somebody else.

9.83. Silence

9.84. **Interviewer:** so guys. Anyone wants to say something before we end? Anything to add?

9.85. **Participant (F)** continues: Like now? I was not in class, but when I am going to do exposition, some learners start laughing at my… so he told me that you are going to be successful because you are strong and you are talking too much. I talk too much but I don't understand English and Setswana. She said you must be strong even without your language

9.86. **Interviewer:** So, you must be confident about yourself?

9.87. **Participant (F):** yeah, I told her that I am not shy, I can talk to someone, and he asked what you don't know and I said yes. Yes, I said yes, but I can talk even if I don't, know him or I know him, but I can talk.

9.88. **Interviewer:** Okay. So, you're not like complexed about you not knowing English. You can overcome that if you're talking to people outside. Okay. Is that what you're saying?

9.89. **Participant (F):** mmm

9.90. **Interviewer:** Are you saying that you're not very much worried about the fact that you cannot speak English well? It does not really affect who you are.

9.91. **Participant (F)**: I was worried about it.

9.92. **Interviewer:** and now as well?

9.93. **Participant (F):** yes

9.94. **Interviewer:** And. Okay, you're worried about that. So, it affects the way you see yourself.

9.95. **Participant (F):** Yeah.

9.96. **Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you.

9.97. **Interviewer:** Somebody else? Do you have something to say before we end? Anything. Hmm. Anything you still want to say?

9.98. **Silence**

9.99. **Participant (F)**: When words come to tongue I talk…

9.100. **Interviewer:** Okay. So, what she's saying is that. She'll speak whatever comes to her mind. She's not scared to express herself. Okay

9.101. **Participant (F):** They don't care some learners are worried about my language, I don't care as song long as I speak.

9.102. **Interviewer:** So for her, really what matters is to say what is in her mind, not what other learners are saying or laughing at her. So that doesn't really matter for her? Yes. Somebody else. Have you said everything you wanted to share? Hmm.

9.103. **silence**

9.104. **Interviewer:** Everything. Is it okay? We end here.

9.105. **Participant (F):** That time I was not there, I did not like to challenge in English but now I can

9.106. **Interviewer:** Make things okay. So, you feel that you're more confident now that you can even challenge other people and engage in English than before. Okay.

9.107. **Participant (F):** But before I was not so confident about yourself. And I don't talk too much because some words I don't understand it.

9.108. **Interviewer:** Okay. So that's how you're trying to overcome your challenge.

9.109. **Participant (F):** I like Travelling to see other learners that are talking English sometimes. Sometimes I like the way they talk and these things. hear them talk in English but why me I am not good in English. But I like to talk, … If she loved me, she can correct my words. If she doesn't love me, she can laugh at it.

9.110. Silence

9.111. **Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you.

9.112. **Silence**

9.113. **Interviewer:** Well, I guess the long silence means that we are done for today. Okay. So, I just want to thank you all for your participation and for coming to this focus group. And I'll see you again. Okay.

9.114. **Participants (all):** yes ma'am

Wave I-Focus Group 4 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/03/06
Duration of focus group / interview	1hr 09 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	10
Name of informed consent hard copies	10

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	M	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	M	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	20	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
8.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
10.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
Total	10						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 5 Male participants
- 5 Female participants

10.1. **Interviewer:** So I will just start by introducing myself (neh) [participants agree and laugh) okay mmmmmm and I will also explain again what we gonna discuss (participants agree) so good morning everyone (participants respond to the greeting) am Miss Catherine Shirima am currently registered as a Phd student in Psychology at the University of Free State. I am conducting this research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents who live in disadvantaged communities in South Africa. So, longitudinal just means that mmmmmm we will have to do the focus groups aaammmm in several times not only once aaa at least three times, okay, (participants agree) and … so our discussion will be on identity formation and resilience development, so what is identity? So identity actually involves your active questioning about your values, beliefs and roles okay, and mmm resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with aaaaa hardships your capacity to overcome challenges and difficulties that mmmm you meet in your life or you have met already. So, in our discussion I want you to talk about your own views and experiences and how you see your identity formation and development and also what you think about your resilience like what you think about you as a person and aaaaa whether or not aaaaaa you are somebody who can overcome challenges and what challenges that you have overcomes so far. (silence) so just know that the information you are going to share here will be kept confidential. So, everything that you are going to talk in this room remains in this room. You are not allowed to go out to talk about what your friends or colleagues have spoken about here, okay. (participants agree) lets respect what each one is saying and let's keep it confidential and the opinion of each one of you matters so if somebody is speaking we let them talk and when they are done speaking then we can continue either by adding to what they have said or just speaking what was in our mind, okay. and remember there is no right or wrong answer. It's about your experience, it's not an exam, it's not about who is giving the right answer, who has given the wrong answer. No, whatever you speak will be accepted, okay, so each one of you can share aaaa your personal experiences but if you feel uncomfortable in discussing maybe a specific question aaaaa you can refrain from it. mmmmm you are reminded that your participation is voluntary aaaa but you are going to take part in this focus out of your own will neh! (participants agree) and aaa anyway you can pull out at any point and

without any consequences. So, the session will be audio recorded and mmmm if you feel comfortable after filling in the biographic questionnaires then we can begin. Are you done? ….. okay thank you very much so we can start……. so please mmmm participate actively and mmmm let's not laugh when someone is speaking mmmmm. I know some are shy but just say what you have to say don't mind bout mmmm speaking perfect English this is not an English class, okay just express yourself as best as you can. okay using your own words, okay. So

10.2. **Interviewer:** What is identity?

10.3. **Interviewer:** Aaaaaaa just speak there is no need of saying your own name for confidential sake

10.4. **Participant (M**): What I can say about identity is is where you come from ---- where mmmmm the situation will be blue mmm the influences will be heavy (not clear)…

10.5. **Interviewer:** okay thank you

10.6. **Participant (F):** and the way you think about your self

10.7. **Interviewer:** the way you think about yourself, okay (agrees)

10.8. **Participant (M):** when you believe in something (interviewer: please say a bit louder) when you believe in something. (Interviewer: when you believe in something)

10.9. **Participant (M):** identity is what you think about and what you think you will experience in future (interviewer: okay) and the experience that you experience and what you believe that in many years to come …you have hope

10.10. **Participant (M):** identity may be finding your weakness or you strength may be even finding better ways to solve your problems …or dealing with yourself finding thinks that you will like and favour about yourself. Thank you.

10.11. **Interviewer:** Somebody else.

10.12. **Participant (F):** Okay mmm identity is like more about yourself is about how you should know about yourself nationality yourself where you come from mmmmm like everything that is happening your life is your identity

10.13. **Participant (M):** it can mean identity about yourself your background where you come from. (interviewer: okay)

10.14. **Interviewer:** so, what do you think about yourselves? How would you describe yourselves?

10.15. **Participant (M):** Mmmmm what I can say about myself is that mmmm the experiences I have been through and the challenges were tough for me since primary and there this organization I joined 2 years back and I have seen changes a lot and those challenges aaaa I still want to go back but the organization I joined helps to aaaaaa get strength not to go back. (interviewer: agrees, thank you)

10.16. **Participant (F):** Nna what I think about myself actual I consider myself as a happy, jovial and bright girl because mmmm from what I have experienced from home is what I think am a bright girl because what I have experienced at home is really tough for me because aaaaa and it has to me gore no matter the challenges no matter how tough the situation may be I can solve it myself and I will be able to solve it and make it and make it a happy end for my sake because am school girl am still schooling so because I don't wanna see myself facing those challenges again because they were tough and I couldn't focus at school so I have decided to happy to be a happy girl a jovial girl

10.17. **Interviewer:** okay she has spoken about her challenges what she has gone through that's what defines her as a person, a brave person. What about the others, you can also talk about how you see things, what you feel about things and what you think about yourself?

10.18. **Participant (M):** Me myself I think am a shy person when I come through challenges I normally don't ask for help I like solving them by myself and sometimes I find it I find it hard because … because I normally think I might I might go and ask for help about the situation am going through for me I always I always love being around people and I always love being with people so al all about people and dealing with solution in a different way like helping others any help they ask, talking to somebody because am always shy, always thinking, thinking about not finding right help from the right person. Thank you, ma'am.

10.19. **Interviewer:** we are just talking about identity and what defines us as adolescents. what you think about the different values that we hold, what you think about the different views that we have and also the question of our careers and goals, that is what we have been talking about since you are late. so, your colleagues just spoke about their different experiences. So you are most welcome to join and participate

10.20. **Participant (M):** What can I say is that I have experienced a lot of things in my life since my previous primary school because of that while I was there was a lot of challenges that I was experiencing and this end up taking my identity my strength and what I experienced is that when we are at primary school we know our choices and we know that what we want in life but when we arrive in secondary school thinks start to change when thinks start to change we start to have friends and these friends that we are taking that is our friends started to mess us and by that we started losing our ability and this makes thinks difficult for us as a student is that experience that many of the students that are in school are taking the way that the friends are taking are not taking the way that I will reach my goal and this makes things difficult for them when they are finishing their matric because of they do they do what is not right for them - this make them feel shy and make them lose their conf.. confidentiality about what they want in life and this again make all school learner to not know what they know - and what they didn't know and this thing is not good for all of us because we have the ability and different abilities but when we are in grade 9 were are going to grade 10 there are a lot of challenges that we experience after passing grade 9 because of when we pass grade 9 next year we are going to grade 10 we are supposed to choose the subjects, choose the subjects we say no I will do this subject because of my friends is doing this subject this is not good because each one has ability and we know what we want in life so this end up making feel weak, lose your dignity and your strength this this is not good for us as children because of we are the future of tomorrow we are the once who is supposed to take the nation far away while the the colleague of this school and the the head of this nation are gone we are the ones who are supposed to change the world to make it better make us like I don't know what I could say but this not good for us as children.

10.21. **Interviewer:** okay so mmmm you what you have just explained is about mmmm peer pressure. You say that most adolescents mmm in this school tend to generally do things because others are doing them not because they are convinced that this is really what they want, even if they are convinced they are not able to follow their dream or to achieve their goals. They rather copy what others are doing or tell them to do, as they feel pressured to do what your friends are doing.

10.22. **Participant (M):** Continuation of the participant: what is is indifferent because we have belief that I can do this subject is that you belief inside even you friend doesn't know that belief but you as the one you can know that I can do this subject but because of friends that you are going with in school when you are doing this subject they will say they will underestimate you saying no you can't do this subject but you as you know I can challenge this subject and I can make it in this subject.

10.23. **Interviewer:** okay thank you, you wanted to say something.

10.24. **Participant (M):** I just wanted to say correctly because the question was what do you think about yourself?

10.25. **Interviewer:** it's okay what he was sharing is also fine…. Okay.

10.26. **Silence**

10.27. **Interviewer:** Somebody else, anything… how do you describe yourself to others? What makes you different from the other person? what goals do you have, what life style do you want to adopt when you grow up, things like that, okay.

10.28. **Participants (all):** yes ma'am

10.29. **Participant (F):** Aaaaaaa talking about myself one thing I have noticed about myself is just that am weak person when something difficult comes my way it wants me to do something stupid not thinking gore the situation always thinking about killing myself I know myself that am very weak weak person. I cannot tell everybody about my situation, coz I know they will judge me. So I know that I am a very very weak person, with everything that come my way, I think of killing myself. Even situation at home, it is not good, but I try to cope. Because they say, your friend did pass but you failed, when will you finish school, but still years, I thought I will drop from school. But I never listen to them. The lesson to have is something I don't know what it is but it hurts me, because I end up thinking that I am very stupid. I should drop out of school and do something else would be the better way for me. But then my aunt said just believe in yourself and I am here for you. But I don't tell her a lot, I feel like I will give her a hard time, anytime anytime coz I cut myself, drinking pills, trying to smoke, many many things

10.30. **Interviewer:** thank you for sharing, somebody else?

10.31. **silence**

10.32. **Interviewer:** don't be shy let's keep the discussion going let avoid long silences

10.33. **Participant (M):** What aaaaa what I can tell aaa people about myself is that am a very shy boy and I know when I want something to be done I will do it myself and at the right time so mmmm most of the things I do mmm just I do it with aaaaa I don't have that self-esteem so aaaaaa most most of the time I think aaa low of myself and that's not good for me and the thinks I want to do comes from the self-esteem so what I want to be is that I want aa to be a aaaa musician to be DJ actually and to be a DJ its aaa well do you understand when you are a DJ most of the people will be aaa the audience I mean you be having audience and if you don't have audience self-esteem self-courage you won't make it so what I like about myself is that being a DJ for me is that I will have aaaa low self-esteem before and now I can I have managed to improve it and music helped me to aaa think think aaaa straight and aaaa see things differently

10.34. **Interviewer:** okay, somebody else?

10.35. **Participant (M):** and with my goals and careers am still searching asking information and with my friends and family and siblings I am differnt because with me I like to travel and I like to go out and I like to see things and I like to talk too much and I like to do jokes and I find it so struggle with them they don't like to go out they don't like to maybe go and just go somewhere chill as friends and maybe go to the library or some events around our community and I with me I like to do a lot of new things I like to I like to me I like to watch things not things I know are going to wrong me and with my friends I don't think I may find it to be combined because I am different from them a lot of things as I have said I like to --- a lot and I like to be around people and do a lot of things with them and with the life style I want to live I want to live a good and happy life style I want to find, I want to be a happy person normally more than more than my siblings are in my family and lift up the situation that we are in now and better be alive also by the time I am up there and am excelling in life so I just hope that I will find the right and the help that I need to do my searching and …thank you mom.

10.36. **Interviewer:** okay

10.37. **Participant (F):** With my career what I want to be like I wanna be a teacher that was always in my dream always in my dream the career choice that I want I wanna choose in life not only because of I feel like doing it not because of my friends this is teaching is is is your passion or may be them saying teaching is how or may be okay mmmm

teaching is your passion not because of that but because I have seen teachers many teachers taking taking care of their school learners not because they are parents and that's how they should do it and the only thing that made me choose this teaching career is because it has always been my passion because I feel like it is my passion and I can feel it on teaching is my passion and I know that I can change situation maybe change situations at schools like helping other learners may be like slow learners helping them and just yeah.

10.38. **Interviewer:** okay, you can carry on from there,… say something

10.39. **Participant (M):** and with my friends something that I forgot is that I differ with their the way the lifestyle they are living now because many of them they are smoking many of them they are they are doing things which are not suitable for them and I am different because I by the time they were they starting to smoke I started to I started to tell myself from them and I stood up by the time they were taking wrong wrong wrong were taking wrong decision for them and now because even though we still we still sit down and talk and discuss whatever we talking about I still feel like I don't fit where they are and at what they are doing with what with what they are doing they are enjoying am not am not feeling well with what they are doing because am not that person and I did not choose to go I did not want to choose that life because I see the consequences of that life and I see a lot because with them and with a lot of people when I talk and they see something like maybe topic about something they say I tend to be so much right I want to to to correct everything and I want to show them am doing things situations… I want to I want them to know that am saying is right is wrong at that time and always find it that may be am trying to be a separate person am trying always to be right not wrong or am always trying trying to trying to may be trying to put them down because with what I think is not what they do how they see it and with how in not with how I think about them so I differ a lot from my friends and I differ a lot from other person because what I what I by how I myself it differ it differs a lot from what they decided to be and that sometimes make me see that choosing and standing and learning while you still with that particular people in that particular situation than before it won't help you, even though you cannot always be the right person but always find the right right way to help them all even help yourself but

somewhere somehow and things by that time when they come will forget will have forgotten because it happens at a particular time, yes mom

10.40. **Interviewer:** okay, thank you. Somebody else, just relax and feel free. Release all the tension that you are feeling and express yourself, just, in your own words

10.41. **Participant (M):** There is only one thing that all of us here we here in school we are here because of we want to learn we want to learn so that our background where we come from we can change it so lot of lot of candidates who end up dropping from school is because of some of them can say that we are drop from school because of something else but in my in my experience I say that lot of students may be lot of boys or girls who are dropping out from school is not of because they like is because of the only one thing they needed is that as people says that many teachers cannot take us treat us well because of some children you will talk to them, when you talk to them you will never digest what you says the way others take it so that they needed someone in school around school who can tell him that no, the way the teachers says to me is it never sound good to me, so this made me feel weak and I lose my strength am not become so…like before. So, some of them they drop from school because they needed guidance from teachers, they needed someone who will tell who will tell him no is not good just keep on trying. So what I experienced again is that as children and as man student here when come from home we say we are coming to school but when we enter here we forget our back ground, I would say no, this is my friend we come from different home and I know my background he know his background but when I enter in school I forget my background, what he is doing I can see and what am doing is not right, may be is learning and I'm not learning I'm keep keep on playing and making jokes and that is not good for me because at the end of the day my mother will be disappointed from what I'm doing from school because of each and every time he's going to work and I'm coming to school, what is is in his or her mind is that I'm coming here to learn so that if she is passed away or she go away I can live a better life, that life I will I will never I will never be someone else who was not happy to life so so that I can may be leave live that I was wasting my time coming because of most of that time that I I I waste I did more than 7 hours my time I'm always in school and I will do that till I drop out from school may be in grade 11 that is the waste of my time because of, if I was, if my mother was not seeing that it's better position to bring

me at school I will not be here so all of us as we are here, we are here to change our background because our background we come from different background so that we can change it and we can make our family better or proud from what we must learn here from school. So as I'm, my career was to be a lawyer while in grade 7 but by the time I come from primary when I coming to high school, when I when I when I was in primary I was excelling much than here because of when I'm out there there were teachers there who were giving me encourage encouragement in what you have to do you have to do this, to do this, to do this to do this things so that you can achieve what you want so when we enter here things started to change because of I met lot of friends, lot of teachers, and lot of challenges, these challenges makes feel like when am here at school different from them, so but what I have in my mind is not the same as they have in mind because there is a certain goal they want to achieve because of am always working around playing with them doing bad things together so I can't restart well because of what they are doing I also do, so if I try to change there are some challenges I experience also they will start to underestimating me saying you think you are better than us because you are doing something that is good for you and that you see is good for you so if you start to change is hard for you to change because of there is no someone you can tell him about your problems and challenges that you face here in school.

10.42. **Interviewer:** Okay, thank you, mmmm you want to say something mmmm… I think most of you have spoken about the how you define yourselves as at this stage of your life? You've also spoke about the goals that you want to achieve in your life. So, when you look at everything that you've mmmm mentioned, what is it in mmmmm your life that has contributed to who you are today? What is it in your life that has contributed to that? What is it that has kept your dreams alive?

10.43. **Participant (M):** What kept me going on and not quitting with schooling mom is because of the of the background that I come from and what happens around me in my community and it it is how I was before and who I am now? Because things like that kept me that when when I was growing up, I was not I was I was not as I was not aware as I am now than in primarily because or back then because I was still in the younger age and I was still I was still blindfolded and I was still going the learning through day and night going with just a day not knowing what must I do or what must

I take what step must I take from there and from and what kept me going because of the growing up, growing up comes with lot of with lot of difficulties. You you start to see that growing up is not as for fun. But it comes with lot responsibilities. And you have to ensure that with you what wanted to be at a person with what you wanted with how you wanted to be with how you saw yourself at a younger age what why, without wanting to be born with how you saw yourself at a young age you must make sure that you are conviction and not let anything or anyone stay in my way. What kept me growing is because of how I grew and how I saw things happening around me and how I started to develop things around me, is because from home from home when I was growing, things were really fine, things were really, things were really easy and things were really it was it was just a good life and things started to change at a particular time where now I came to be adult, where now I'm moving from a kid to being a teenager and I had to put myself aside from lot of things such as my home situations like what happens by serving the community. Because when I when I looked at what was happens around me, because when I look at what was happening at home and what was happening in my community I started to say with the life that my community is living and with my life at my community and with the life at our home we are living, I'm going to be different. I'm not I'm not going to follow the part of the other people that follow me such as such as being negative, always not staying positive, following peer pressure, doing things that other people are doing because you just want to fit in a particular group. And I stood because of my background. When I look at my background I just said to myself, you know with how my brothers and sisters and my siblings are living, I'm not going to be that person and with my friend I'm not going to be that particular person. I'm going to be different and I'm going I'm going to change the situation that I'm in and I'm going to stand firm and make sure that I reach that better life and I reach my goal and I follow and I stand firm make sure that it is not only going to come so easily to me and I must look and look out for that, I make sure I achieve and I also make sure that I participated on my school work and be respectful and also trying to understand others with what they are going through and put yourself in other people's personal because in order to in order to stick firm keep going. You have to first look around yourself. Stay down and ask yourself some questions. Find yourself make sure that with whatever that you want to

accomplish in life it start with where you are and look around because the situation that you are going through is an example of what you have to go through in order to resolve whatever that you want to be.

10.44. **Interviewer:** Okay, somebody else aaa wants to share about negative things or factors that influenced how you think about yourself, the kinds of career that you have chosen or yaaa anything, it can be either from home or here at school and it can/has influenced you either positively or negatively, okay.

10.45. **silence**

10.46. **Participant (M):** Is there no other question mom?

10.47. **Interviewer:** Okay, then we can talk about resilience, mmmm so mmmmm what does it mean for you to be resilient? Resiliency is your capacity to overcome challenges, your ability to overcome hardships, stressful situations, okay. So, you can just share what you really feel free to share in this group. Would you describe yourself as a person who has overcome challenges or hardships, what makes you think you are resilient. Yes.

10.48. **Participant (F):** What makes me think that I am resilient is that is because of the situations that I'm facing the challenges, because this challenges were very very tough for me challenges and and I didn't even know what am going to do and how am I going to hold myself to go through these challenges. What I did is that I used to get myself in the mirror and say to myself that I'm a brilliant girl. And whatever challenges that come my way, I'm going to whatever challenges come in my way I'm going I'm going to win them over because they were nothing compared to what to what to to to to what I add to myself to what I've been telling myself because I've been advising myself, you know, every day every morning, if before I go to sleep I will have been advising myself, no matter how tough the situation can be, it will never define me. And I think that is how I managed to come, I managed to be over the challenges that I have been through. I wasn't able to I couldn't talk to anyone. And there was no one I could talk to even my friends I could talk to them because I didn't because I was I was very shy of how are they going to take me, how, what if they are going to judge, what if, I was starting to have questions of what if what if what if? So, that is how I started advising myself. Looking into myself, and just saying that encouraging words, encouraging

words so that I'm able to to face whatever challenges or situation that that is coming my way.

10.49. **Interviewer:** Okay, somebody else.

10.50. **Participant (M):** With the challenges that I've I've faced that I can what I want to talk about is that about my challenges in school. I remember when I came to school to do high school here do my grade 8 for the first day I was doing well and as time went on I started to may be adopt the life of high school of how high school it is. I remember when I feel my grade 8, I was so disappointed and I was so embarrassed and I was I was I felt so empty that even when my brothers and my sisters or my cousins were talking, comforting me, telling me things will be okay things will come around. And I was just thinking day by day practice, doing like I was so ignorant today always push them away. And I always I always tried to be doing things when I also tried doing things alone. Try to solve things alone and that was the challenge I was facing on myself because by that time I was I was so ignorant to them push them away by the time I needed them by the time things could have been more easier by the time I could have been more confident and be more okay because they were there for me and I was pushed them away because as time goes by I started to adapt and I started to freely freely freely around them because by that time I think I was going through adolescence stage and contended contended a lot of shyness, lot of a lot of shyness, lot of gray a lot of negative thoughts, by that time, and that was a challenge that I was facing by that time and coming to high school changed me a lot because that's where you see that it's not it doesn't only it doesn't only happens with today but with tomorrow, there are things that I do have to be prepared for. And you must make sure with everything that comes your way must always be positive, the channel that comes you must always have a solution for them and must always be talk but deal with them in a right way. Don't always drop up don't always take the wrong ways and started to maybe if you fail to to to resolve that situation or that challenges and point fingers to other people with those challenges and with those challenges is what is going to is what is going to tell you and being example tomorrow that once had them, you once failed and you once build again. Thank you.

10.51. **Interviewer**: okay, thank you, mmmmm you mentioned some challenges that you met (neh), so do you think mmm those challenges change the way you see yourself? Or

the way you define yourself, if they change the kind of goals, the kind of careers that you would have wanted to achieve. Did they affect your identity? So, did you manage to overcome the challenges you went through? What does that say about you as a person?

10.52. **Participant (F):** mmmm the challenges faced mmmmm the affected me on my studies because when I when I was in grade 10, I think it was on 2019 then I failed l I started thinking a lot about of of these situations and challenges that I didn't even think they were affecting my my books, my studies because I couldn't read even when we were writing exams I couldn't read books you know, because I used to think a lot of them, I think, then I failed grade 10 because of

10.53. **Interviewer:** Okay, somebody else.

10.54. **Participant (M):** they affected me most of the time because of these challenges made me fail my grade 10 in 2019, and this was the first time I fail in my life because I never failed before by that time I failed my grade 10, I repeat my grade 10. I started to think about myself and ask myself exactly who I am, and where I come from and after that I stand with my own two foot then I say where I want to go I will matter what situation I will face. I've never let myself down.

10.55. **Interviewer:** Thank you guys, you can also speak about what helped you to overcome those challenges.

10.56. **Participant (M):** what helped me to overcome this challenges is that I started to plan about my life I started to think that I want to change my behaviour the way I was behaving this challenge that comes on my way I have to give them ignorant so that I can so that I can leave like like I don't see this challenges if they do not affect me but if they come directly I will try to to overcome them. After to overcome them then I will be ignorant again then I will focus on my studies and my home works so that I can see progress.

10.57. **Participant (M):** Aaaaaa mom what I can say is that what I experienced did not benefit me they just aaaaaa wanted aa to destroyed everything that I had. They wanted to destroy my life but aaaa the movement I joined the formula movement helped aaaa to think things aaaa the right way and see aaaa myself as a better person. So yaaaaa.

10.58. **Interviewer:** Okay, thank you, somebody else. (silence) you have all spoken about yourselves like how you managed to overcome the challenges. Some relied on the

strength within you, anything from environment, like from home or school, or community that helped to overcome challenges.

10.59. **Participant (M):** I received support.

10.60. **Interviewer:** Support from?

10.61. **Participant (M):** from relatives and siblings.

10.62. **Interviewer:** Support from relatives and siblings

10.63. **Participant (M):** And those who you always sharing problems with re the ones who was trying to help me to solve the challenges --- those who was always believing me I was sharing what is happening in my life maybe they try to help me to overcome the challenges that I face in my life. Give me support

10.64. **Interviewer:** Support from environment, siblings and relatives. What about the others, what form of support do you have.

10.65. **Participant (M):** I did have some support from my neigh my neighbourhood people because some some of them I did not even know them it is just maybe it is just because they, it is how people see you every day and see how you live and how you have hold it yourself from other peoples because a lot of people will say , will will ask me and call me out at the street may be if am just passing by just to say hey, wait there and they will ask me about my school work, what am doing in life, how, what I want to accomplish in life they will start to say I must just stand there and focus and that's how I found support from home because lots of them are from my neighbourhood area and they do they do always support me even they don't that much. I'm feeling so at least I have people around my area who stand by me and give me advices and tell me to stand firm and focus. to need to stamp them in focus even if something comes up, maybe cooler around and even if something comes up at school or around they can can be can be the one I can go to talk to even they can help me with other things.

10.66. **Interviewer:** Okay thank you. Somebody who still has something to say, is it okay to the end here for today? Okay, thank you very much for your participation and we'll meet again sometime in the year when the right time has come, okay. We end here for today (interceptions and laughing) And I still want to thank you for your participation.

Wave II-Focus Group 1 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/08/18
Duration of focus group / interview	53 minutes 34 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	8
Name of informed consent hard copies	8

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	M	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	8						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 2 Male participants
- 6 Female participants

11.1. **Interviewer**: Good afternoon, everyone. Am Miss Catherine Shirima I'm currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. So that is where I'm studying. Mmm am conducting this research to investigate trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents, like people of your age group, who are living in advantage communities in the South African context. So, in our discussion, we will be talking about identity formation. Identity involves an active questioning about your values (neh), your beliefs, roles in the society. And we'll also discuss about resilience which is the capacity to bounce back when you're faced with hardships, challenges, okay. In our discussion as well, I really want you to talk about your own experiences, your own views and how you see identity formation and what you think about resilience development. We have a few rules in this group, first of all know that the information you are going to share will be kept confidential. None of you is allowed to go to talk about what your friends have shared in this group, we agree on that (yes ma'am). So, what you say stays in this room. So, we are also called to respect each other's opinion. If somebody is speaking, we let them talk, let's not start laughing or giggling and saying ooo she's lying and things like that, are not allowed in this group. And there is no right or wrong answer, you're talking about your experiences (yes ma'am). Each one shares about his or her personal experiences. However, if you feel uncomfortable in discussing any specific question, you can also refrain from it if you feel it is too personal, you can also refrain from it, okay (yes ma'am). You're also reminded that your participation is voluntary. If you feel that you don't want to be part of this group, you can pull out. So, there'll be no consequences if you decide no aaa I think I want to get out of this thing… and I will record for future reference and it will enable me to capture what you're talking about. So, if you're really comfortable, and you're willing to continue, you may fill in the biographical questionnaires. Yaa all of you have filled in the biographical questionnaires so we can start. Whoever is ready… whoever feels like speaking just raise your hand and I will give you the opportunity to speak one after the other. So, the first question that I will ask you is for you to tell us aaa about whatever you think about identity, what do you know about identity?

11.2. **Participant (F):** identity is all about you who you are and what do you like and what you don't like and about about your personal life.

11.3. **Interviewer**: (agrees) somebody else, (silence) when you say who you are…, what does that mean? How do you define yourself? If somebody asked to talk about yourself, what would you say? What would you say if you want to talk about yourself, when you're talking about yourself what do you talk say about yourself?

11.4. **Participant (M):** aaaaa am a very talkative person, I'm an extrovert and I have always had the passion of dancing and acting so one day I dream of becoming any actor.

11.5. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else who wants to tell us about themselves?

11.6. **Participant (F):** aaaa my name is * like aaa original aaaa am a talkative person, I love watching movie because my dream is to become a TV presenter

11.7. **Interviewer:** Okay, that's interesting, anyone else who wants to tell us about their identity?

11.8. **Participant (M):** Okay, my name is *, as you all know me and I'm also a talkative person but one thing I like is becoming a basketball player because like one thing that I like one thing that I love about basketball is like it gives me peace and love like when I play basketball, I feel free so like I want to be like Michael B Jordan, yes.

11.9. **Interviewer**: Okay,

11.10. **Participant (F):** one thing I like I like about myself is that, one thing that I like myself is that I'm not a patient girl. I am a I am a person who loves smiling I am person who loves I am a person who loves cooking I love cooking I love baking I love many things so I love helping I love I love kids like to smokies like toddlers, I like helping kids because I don I don't want to see any kids I don't want to see any kinds suffering. It breaks my heart deep down it breaks my heart. I want to be aaaa a doctor… aaaa one thing is that I have I doubt I doubt this career because it because the subject maths is very very difficult is very very difficult, like Physics I can do it but maths I hate mates to tell the truth I hate maths, I am a I am different person.

11.11. **Interviewer:** Yes, another person who wants to tell us about who they are?

11.12. **Participant (F):** mmm as for me to describe myself mmmm am that person who likes to adults, but not judging them mmmm am that person who likes to hear others' problem but not laughing at them because we go through many challenges in life that we didn't expect mmm as for me am that kind girl who likes who don't likes people who just speaks and not thinking about how will that how will how will that worth stay in others. So mmm as for I want to see myself as a fashion designer. And I also

want to be a business woman and also a fashion designer I want to have my own boutique mmm designing mmm designing he bright dresses and sell them in my own boutique. Mmmm I like this because I want to see myself fulfilling my mother's wishes because she couldn't fulfill mmm am the am also a noble girl mmmm I like sleeping alone, listening to me I likes spending a lot of a lot of time alone.

11.13. **Interviewer:** thank you very much.

11.14. **Participant (F):** Okay. My name is * I live in *, okay when I grow up I wanna be a social worker because I like helping people and I wanna I want to make my mother proud of me aaaa and I like to play netball sometimes when am bored netball can make me enjoy my day. Thank you.

11.15. **Interviewer:** Okay, thank you guys mmm.

11.16. **Participant (F):** My name is *I live in *, when I grow up I want to work on prison because I like to…

11.17. **Interviewer:** We agree that we're not going to giggle or laugh, let him speak.

11.18. **Participant (F):** continues: I like to work on prison because I like security on prison. Thank you, mom.

11.19. **Interviewer:** So, he says he wants to be security at the prison, okay then, next one, tell me about yourself.

11.20. **Participant (M):** Ye my name is * my dream is to become a lawyer, I don't want to see any people get into the trouble aaaa.

11.21. **Participant (F):** my name is *, am just an ordinary girl but am unique mmmm one thing I like about myself is that I like helping others. I like identify others problems and then give advice(s), so when it comes to careers I'm still confused but I do love teachings and I love social working even though I have my doubts.

11.22. **Interviewer:** Okay just tell mmmm… you have tried to tell about yourself…your identity, who you, where you are at regarding your future… and some of the characteristics that mmmm you think really fit with yourself at this point time. So, I am just wondering what do you think influenced who you are today? What do you think made who you are today?

11.23. **Participant (M):** aaa before we move on to our new house, aaa amy mother really loved music and aaa she she like listening to Michael Jackson and I started listening to him and that's how I got my passion for being a musician and both an actor, aaa

aaaa well while we're still living in our house while we're still living in our old house aaaa I first, she first introduced me to an artist named 2pac, the late, may his soul rest in peace. He made me want to hustle because he came from a poor family and I have the same situation going on at home so I want to change the background of our family and I really think that getting into the music industry will help me and my family and my future family.

11.24. **Interviewer:** Others, what do you think, what factors, maybe from your home or school or just the community, have affected or influenced you, positively or negatively as he said, okay.

11.25. **Participant (F):** I don't know what how to say this but actually but actually my family background is is very very hurtful because because because it I really I really I really grow I really growed up not knowing my father very well my real father very well. My my my real father my real father used to be a drunk but but his soul his soul rest in peace. My father my father used to be a drunk person. My brother is is a my older brother is drunk person. So, I so so so now so now so now my brother so now my brother is at home, he didn't finish school so so my mother so my mother so my mother so my mother really wants me to change the background the background to raise to raise to raise my to raise my family surname up. So, I want to be so what so I want to be a person who likes I want to be a person who helps people with difficult situations difficult problems difficult aaaa different problems so right now am very very deeply confused. I don't I don't what to do, am really really confused my mind is like is like a spinning wheel, I don't know, I am I am doubting I am doubting all the careers, teacher, lawyer social … psychologist, psychological therapist, what I really want to be is psychological therapist but my mother refuses to be a psychological therapist because because she said that is useless work, so I really doubt, I really doubt these careers that am mentioned these careers that I mentioned so so so no so now I am in grade 9 I don't know I don't know what I want to be anymore because I'm very very confused. I'm very very confused so…

11.26. **Interviewer:** mmmm it seems that she is going through a lot, some of the things that mmm … a lot of questions around careers … some of you might have been experiencing similar situations with regard to your careers and with regard to aamm other areas of your life. So, what are those things that have mm really influenced your

personality today, what you described to us? What are those that have influenced the kind of careers that you have chosen, the kind of person that you are as you seated here today. It can also be positive or negative, whoever wants to share can go ahead, and remember it can be from school or just from the community at large.

11.27. **Participant (F):** in the previous school I have a very bad past I was a girl who use I was a girl who used to date a one a a a one boy but at but but after that my heart was broken because I I was dating that boy, my my heart was really really broken I don't know what to do anymore, I I was, that boy was younger than I me. I was I was older than him. So, it was that moment was fun that moment was fun, we use to he use to that moment was fun he use to buy things for me, I use I use to buy things for him but it but it really it really end in broken tears so I so I break up with him. I was I was very very hurt that I was very very hurt that I was very very hurt that moment and I didn't tell my my my grandmother or my mother because I know that my mother is a strict person because when is a very very strict person, I kept I kept that moment a secret in me. I kept that when I was in in yaaa when I was in when I was in grade 5 it all started when I was in grade 5 I use to have a crush on on that person but he didn't he didn't realize he didn't realize that, I was so scared I was so scared to tell him that I have I have crush on him because I because me deeply I know that he will refuse so when I was when I was in grade 6 I use I use to have crush on that boy, may his soul rest in peace. I use to have I that I use to have that that crush on on him he use to have the crush on me so I dined I dined at that time I was read to get in relationship to study it in him, I was I was I was, I dined him that opportunity, I dined him that opportunity because I was so scared that I was so scared that I dined him that opportunity because I was so scared that, I was so scared that I was so that my heart will be broken again. So, when I was in grade 7 I use to have that crush I use have that crush in that boy again in grade 7.

11.28. **Participant (F):** Mmmmm my parents are are people who aaaa who likes to just let me do everything I want mmm they also mmm from the mmmm they are mmmm as I said they people who just like to let me do what I want to do mmm like mm things like wne I want to go when I just want to go mmm to the to the to the tarven they just let me go, they want to they want to let me live the life that I want to live so them them letting me to do the things that I want the neighbours the neighbours likes to to to

group themselves and talk about how my parents let me to do the things that I want mmmmm that akes me very very strong.

11.29. **Interviewer:** Somebody else, okay.

11.30. **Participant (M):** Mom, like I was enjoying my life like I had the best life like you see mom but my life got tricky like when my mother had a critical accident so like now she can't work she can't eish, mom I hate to talk about that situation.

11.31. **Interviewer:** No problem, it's okay.

11.32. **Participant (M):** mmmm where am growing up right now I see a lot of bad people that end up in the street at the ranks because teenagers mostly get confused when they get to the adolescent adolescents stages. So they end up doing drugs they become alcoholics and that mmmm that really pushes me to work more harder on my schoolwork and my hustle life mmm because I was inspired by this guy at the street they call him doctor Mtembu, that guy he was the most known and famous actor they knew at their times and then he got destroyed by alcohol, when I accomplishment my dreams am not gonna let that happen to me or either my family. And the thing that also pushes me is mmm my mother who is unemployed, actually she she got a job few weeks back so that really makes me happy to see that she's working again and now she can provide food on table maybe she is serving a car to build a new house. Yaaa.

11.33. **Participant (M):** mmm talking about my teenage life I had I made a very bad decisions while I started my teenage my teenage stage. I choose bad friends, I almost got addicted to drugs. I wanted to become an alcoholic because I was confused on what I wanted and what I wanted to do on the stage but then my mom told me that while you are teenager you are still a little child and you need to make better decisions and choose friends or not have friends at all because some of them waste time doing the things that don't concern what they should do in the future. Yaaa.

11.34. **Interviewer:** would you describe yourself as a person who overcomes challenges and hardships? Do you think you're a person who can overcome challenges and hardships? So mmm if yes or no what challenges have you overcome and what helped you to overcome those challenges? It can be something within you or it can be people around you, at home, school or just outside school your peers or anyone else.

11.35. **Participant (M):** Mom I faced so many challenges in my life like so I have smoked I started smoking weed last of last year, drinking alcohol. I had I trick life mom so what

came into my mind was my mom when I saw my mom mmmm she once told me that I shouldn't worry about what happen to her so I should move on about life like mom eish. So, what she told me encouraged me better to do better at school better in the streets so mom I started cutting fake friends and all the staff that I all did, smoking weed, drinking alcohol so like now am a changed person. Yeah, am changed.

11.36. **Participant (F):** mmmm in the past years mmmm the past aaaaa in my past I use to party --- I use to have fun mmm I have fun I was going to the events having more fun mmmm stressing my mom and that mmmm I was a mmmmm I joined the group that was called BEER as mmmm meaning mmm it was a (black --- spendersso when we was going somewhere may be is a bash at school we had to tell the spenders. So when it was a bash at school we use too wear somethinh may be ADIDAS, you know, you to --- we call it --- yaaa. We was wearing a expensive ---- like expensive things yaaa we was going to tell someone like the shirt that you are wearing cost how much yaaa we was going to do that and the aaa the reason that I chose that group it was because of peer pressure mmm and then --- stage comes I decided to change myself so I changed mmmm I wear like other people mmmm --- I wear Mr Price right now I don't love pride like before like before yaaa.

11.37. **Interviewer:** so, you can say that your own strength helped you to become who you are now, to overcome those challenges or did other people help you to realise what…?

11.38. **Participant (F):** continues: yes, ma'am sister once told me that mmm once told me that life it's a life is life is difficult ma'am. because always she did always saw that always mmmm I was making my mom to be worried okay mom so mmm one day she did tell me that mmm I should stop doing that because one day when mom passed I will it will be hard for me mom.

11.39. **Interviewer:** so, your sister as source of support for you. …please stop talking.

11.40. **Participant (F):** mmmmm me (neh) at home, me at home there no one with whom I can share my problems with mmmmm mmmm from home we are we lived … at home (neh) mom there are the people who just don't care whether I finish school or not because finishing school is mmmm a random wasted time to them so because they are mmmm the children who just finish school and now they are all at their homes so at home they don't care whether I finish school because mmmm there is some money that they saved for me mmm that money will help me in my future time that's why

now they just don't care whether finish school and work for myself because the… that they have work for they have mmmm it for me so that when actually they are now they they are watching me whether am I going to finish school or not and as for am not going to see myself finishing school because as for me according to me finishing school it doesn't mean you won't have mmmmm better life in future because now you can finish school and may be have grade 10 at the Boxer they can take you… they can take you whether you have grade 10 so finishing school and then going home going to sit at home doing nothing after finishing school not going to work is just a (participants: waste of time) yaaa. So that's why I say I don't see myself going to finish school.

11.41. **Interviewer:** so mmm lets say, are you saying that there is or there are many young people who are not employed but yet they finished school (participants: yes ma'am) and finishing school here means grade 12 (participants: yes ma'am) are there also those who finish university and they are still sitting at home (participants: yes ma'am,) (different comments from the participants).

11.42. **Participant (F):** as for my being aaaa aaaa a tailor I don't think hmmm actually I have to finish school because team don't actually have to finish school because I I know some, my my career is just to to do the clothing. Yeah. Thanks.

11.43. **Interviewer:** thank you, that's interesting, you want to say something. (Comments from the participants)

11.44. **Participant (F):** I like to challenge other people mmm when I was young I like to ride amm a bike and we had a race to ride a bike and when I was still driving my bike I fell down and I go to doctor Van * near Caltex and doctor Van *said my ankles are not fine, you know what is ankles? They just give me they just give me the pills and drink the pills and will be fine and now am fine my nkles are fine.

11.45. **Interviewer:** Okay mmm, at schools do you have mmm any difficulties or challenges that you are experiencing or at home or in the community at large? Some of you mentioned issues yaaaa like alcohol, peer pressure and so on and so forth, do you want to talk about that? I am just asking the challenges you have gone through, those that you have mentioned. Did they affect how you think about yourself? And how did they influence on how you think about yourself?

11.46. **Participant (F):** When I think about myself I think about myself as a what I know about myself is that I'm I'm a girl who likes talking too much am a girl who who talks and repeats the same same but when I repeat the same the same thing people laugh at me so so I feel very sad and very angry and very anxious so so right so right so right so right now so right now I'm still confused about careers because I haven't chosen an career even though I'm we are in term 3 that topic about careers in Life Orientation, so I haven't even choosing the career because I think many carriers but but I think many careers but when I when I see the subject the subjects all the subjects there some subjects that I hate is mathematics so I get angry.

11.47. **Interviewer:** Okay, thank you, somebody else. How have the challenges affected your studies, relationships with peers or family or the types of careers that you would choose.

11.48. **Participant (M):** well I don't really think what I do affects I don't really think my actions affects what I wanna do because my mmm my mother told me that when I grow up I I y mom told me that when I grow up I was addicted to girls, every time I see one I had to go to her and hug her and kiss her talk --- staff and and when I keep growing up I still see that I still like girls but some of my peers they kind of seeing me as an annoying active girl, did I say active girl active boy, they see me as an annoying active and talkative boy. And that action doesn't really change the way I wanna be so somebody can tell me that aaaaa you're annoying, and you know that you will never gonna make it in life. And what I do is just be silent turn around and walk away because this seems like the best option to deal with what this aaa what this the symptoms has to do with what you wanna do in the future so I don't really think that the things that happened around me have affected what I wanna be.

11.49. **Participant (F):** as for me I will me as for me I will never think that I will never never think that I will never I will never that I will date anyone again. After after after my past in the previous school I don't think that it has affected me a lot when it comes to life styles relationship styles after my past I even told myself even told myself in my heart that I will never date anyone any guy again especially when he is older or younger than me.

11.50. **Interviewer:** okay

11.51. **Participant (F):** The challenges that I had in my life affected me to the point that I some think I sometimes think about suicide thoughts bu I don't want to think about that very much I think it doesn't affect my peers because am always smiling with them and my family am always moody at them so I think that is how it affected me and my peers and my family.

11.52. **Interviewer:** so mmm when you have the suicidal thoughts, is it often or is once in a while?

11.53. **Participant (F):** continues: once in a while.

11.54. **Interviewer:** so what helps you to overcome or come out of that?

11.55. **Participant (F):** continues: myself, I just try to to to to make myself feel good think about positive things, yes, things like that.

11.56. **Interviewer:** do you talk to people about that?

11.57. **Participant (F):** continues: No.

11.58. **Participant (F):** mmm as she said about getting old people mmmm me seeing mmm any teenager mmm like seeing a girl who is in grade 9 and dating a person who is a person who has finished school is not is not mmm is not is not a problem because dating old guys sometimes help a lot because they are old and have experienced mmm a lot of things of life mmmm so they can also help you to experience those things like when you go through a lot mmmm you can talk to them and listen and they listen to helps you because they also have experienced those things.

11.59. **Interviewer:** okay, you can just give your opinion (neh)

11.60. **Participant (M):** ma'am what I think about the thinks she said.

11.61. **Interviewer:** mmm about your own experience.

11.62. **Participant (M):** continues: I think that is wrong, dating an older person while you are still in high school it's 9 it's 99 percent that that person will affect your school performance so that you won't participate at school and one thing that person will ask is if you can sleep with him. So, ma'am so I don't agree with that.

11.63. **Participant (F):** what she has said, is that a choice that you should decide whether you are going to finish school or not or you want to focus on that boy isn't it the truth I mean isn't that a choice that you choose.

11.64. **Interviewer:** what do the others think about this? (silence) what do you think about what she said?

11.65. **Participant (M):** mom one thing again is that if that boy impregnates you it's it's a fair chance that boy would run away and say to your parents that I'll never sleep with a young girl because I'm an older person it's a fair chance that that boy… (comments from the group)

11.66. **Participant (M):** I also I also disagree with her because older people actually don't understand they may have experienced peer pressure but they have not they do not know what's going through. So they think that the best way to solve your problems is to for you to pleasure the older person and that seems kind of that seems wrong because what you are supposed to ask from the older person is mmm how did you go through the bad things that am going through, have you ever experienced what I'm going through, that person I know the older person is not gonna answer that all he wants is pleasure from the young one.

11.67. **Interviewer:** that's your opinion about it because each one has different experiences, right (yes ma'am) so mmm we respect each person's opinion, okay (yes ma'am)

11.68. **Participant (F):** according to me mmm dating old persons it doesn't mean that you will sleep with them because you can date a old person and agree with him, him or her that you'll go and sleeps with you age group or types when we are dating because you won't be ready to do those things early age but dating old old persons...

11.69. **Interviewer:** so mmm what I hear, is that mm some of the choices you make so sort of either affect you or your school work or future careers. okay, let's hear from the last person if there is still something else that you want to talk about on the issues of identity or resilience.

11.70. **Participant:** yes, there was if there was such space like that I think will be good for other people because it will be a place for other people to meditate think about what what they really want to do? How how they should solve their situation. So, if there was such a place like that it will be very good for the community or adults.

11.71. **Interviewer:** aaaa okay, so that is about yaaa, the community spaces. Any final ideas from yourselves? We are all good you are fine with what you have said. So yaaa, thank you very much for your participation and will end our discussion here. And I hope to meet you again for the last time which will be the third phase.

Wave II-Focus Group 2 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/08/18
Duration of focus group / interview	36 minutes 58 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 1 Male participant
- 8 Female participants

12.1. **Interviewer**: So, hi everyone, I'm Miss Catherine Shirima, and I'm currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I'm conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents. Adolescents, are people of your age, who are living in disadvantaged communities in the South African context. So, what is identity? That's one of the things that we're going to discuss about, okay. So, identity actually mmmm involves active questioning about your own values, beliefs and roles in the society. So that's what you're going to mmmmm shortly discuss about. And we are also going to talk about resilience. And you might be wondering what is resilience. It's your ability to overcome hardships, challenges, to bounce back when you are faced with hardships. So, in this discussion, I want you to talk about your own views and experiences. It's not about questioning what your friends have just spoken about, okay? You just speak about your own experiences, your personal experiences, or views and on how you see your identity and what you think about your resilience. There are few simple rules that we have to observe in this group. And one of them is that any information that you are going to share here is going to be kept confidential. Please don't go back to your classrooms and share with your colleagues what has been said in this room. Everything we speak about stays here and we are called to respect each one's opinion okay. So, there is no right or wrong answer. You share your personal experiences. And if you feel uncomfortable in discussing any specific question, at one point, you can refrain from it. You're also reminded that your participation is voluntary. I insist on that no one has been obliged to be in this place now. Okay. You all accepted to come right? And you can pull out if you feel like this is not what I want to do, you can always walk out of the room, okay! and mmmm there will be no consequences about that. Aaaaa just know that the session will be audio recorded. Mmmmm if you really feel uncomfortable, you can leave, but those who feel comfortable after filling in the biographic questionnaire we can start. I think all of you have finished right. So, then we start with our discussion with a question. So just tell me what you think what comes to your mind spontaneously. What is identity? What do you know about identity, anything spontaneous that comes to your mind

12.2. **Participant (M):** Identity is when you speak about your personalities, and something that you wish to do in life, and some questions eish! some consequences about what

you choose, or what you want to do in your own future. And identity is more about actually is about your personalities. And, I just forget mom, sorry.

12.3. **Interviewer:** It's okay somebody else. How do you describe yourself to your friends, what do you talk about when you're describing yourself to your friends? Somebody else.

12.4. **Participant (M):** Me and my friend (name) he always told me that, that he always wanted to be a musician when he grow up, he want to be an artist, the best we're not an artist. And and I always told him that I want to be a soccer player. So every time he told me about these dreams, and I told him about mine, we always have an argument between us. So he he always want to start a fight between what we said what I said about his dream that he should not only focus on his musicians because it is his talent. He had to push in school things and be successful and and…

12.5. **Interviewer**: Somebody else, we are all going to have the opportunity speak.

12.6. **Participant (F):** Me and my friend (Name) we used to tell we used to talk to each other about our our careers. And she used to tell me that his career his career what she want to be when when she grow up. And I used to tell her what I used to to be when I grow up. And mostly we used to talk about school things, what subject she wants to do when he gets to … I used to tell her that when I grow up I am to be a dancer, aaaa a DJ or a netball player because I usually like sports. You see, but mostly I like to dance, so if when it comes to subjects choise I like mostly subjects that I like it's English, Creative Arts and maths. So, I used to tell her that in Maths I need to practice Maths mostly because I in maths sometimes I drop my marks sometimes I just make them be high, so yaaa that's all.

12.7. **Interviewer:** Someone else. What makes you different from other people?

12.8. **Participant (M):** aaaaaa what make me different from person is that most of us cannot play sports but I really enjoy playing sport , not any sport but most of most of the time I spend my time playing soccer so but when I play soccer, I couldn't see myself being a a best player because of there are many people not only me who loves sports but many people out there can do better than me. So, I just I just left I just quit playing sport and follow what mama Peter told me to be a musician. So most of the time I spend my time writing my own lyrics and and making making some instrument and seeing just like what my always do and told me, so I told myself that one day I'm

gonna be I'm gonna be a best musician ever. Just like --- dream and show him that whatever he can do I can do it, three times more.

12.9. **Interviewer:** Okay.

12.10. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa my name is * my surname is *. In my dream I like to be a soccer player because most of time I went to the ground and see people playing soccer and I play with them, after playing soccer am tired and I when I, I lose weight because of the soccer because of I want to be a soccer player. People say to me, I don't why I don't stop playing football because I told them I want to be a good player in a soccer. And another dream is I want to be a bikeman. I want to buy a bike because some people some few people don't like it because me I like it too much, that's all.

12.11. **Participant (M):** Most of the time I like I like cooking, no I like cooking but the main fact it is I don't have that mmmm appetite of cookie. The fact is I'm boy I like playing soccer. But the thing that I'd like to see about me being a soldier, protecting the other country because that's the whole I see you me. Danko.

12.12. **Interviewer:** Please.

12.13. **Participant (M):** Yaaaa like I want to be a producer because most of people like music.

12.14. **Interviewer**: Okay

12.15. **Participant (M):** My name is * the thing that I am talented in is soccer. I like playing soccer but people always tell me that I don't know soccer, is just I know soccer but I don't know soccer skills. The position that love in soccer is defending. Now, when I tell them that, I don't know their middle fielder, the striker they tell me they always they always bring me on to that positions, yes,

12.16. **Participant (M):** My name is * and I like to produce some piece and I used to… that to make a … it takes a lot of effort. And when you sell it to people it must not be cheap because you take a lot of effort to make it.

12.17. **Participant (F):** My name is * I like singing because most of time I always sing and I'm shy and I always like to love and I want to be a musician

12.18. **Participant (F):** My name is * my surname is * (interviewer requests the participant to maintain order) okay mmmm I like, I like to talk about my career but like ma'am I like to talk about my career but there are some people I don't trust here, and so I can see that those people they just pretending to be good. Okay, so then but I will just try

to tell everybody what I like to say to them because what I am saying it about what happens to my life when after my mom passed away, okay. So, like, I would some other I'm going to say to all of you guys, please don't pass that I'm saying to you to others because I don't like it. I'm going to say this because I trust all of you here okay, so but mmmmmm (comments from the participants)

12.19. **Interviewer:** Oooo we are talking about the factors that have influenced who you are right? Yes, yes. Talk about anything that is either from home or from family yaaaa or, community around you or from school, yaaa.

12.20. **Participant (M):** I always get the support from my from my friend that I used to I used to sit with them and do some couple things. They always tell me that I am good of what I want to do and they will support me just like we did back in the dates. So, but I always get that negative support from my from from my family because they want me to be bigger than what I want to be just like being a doctor or a teacher. So, I always feel like I cannot do two things, two things in one time so I just tell myself that I will just stop I will just stop for few few few years and focus on my school and after I just achieve something that I like to do as a teacher or an actor or a doctor or something else. I will just now go back to what I wanted to be in my life being a musician, that's all.

12.21. **Interviewer**: Others, what factors have impacted on who you are today? *Comments in local language from participants*

12.22. **Participant(F):** I always want to be a soldier but my mother wants me to be a doctor so, so I think that I should be a doctor to make my mother proud. Because I can't I can't let her dreams die just because I want to be soldier. But I think that I can be a doctor because I like maths and understand some of yaaaa.

12.23. **Participant (M):** Qualities. I always get my support from streets, I don't get support at home because things that I'm seeing at my at my at my home, my mom and dad says is bad because things that I see in me they see a lot mmmmm. They need, I deserve more more than what they think I deserve more more than what I think. They say I must be in be a doctor or a nurse because these things they don't have the disadvantages and advantages. Being a soldier It has sequences because one day you might die being in war or may get injury mmmmm that's all.

12.24. **Interviewer:** Okay

12.25. **Participant (M):** I always I always get support to my friend because of most of the people they don't want me to be a producer and I don't know why they don't want me to be producer because like I like music, like I like most of instruments … (comments in local language).

12.26. **Participant (M):** yaaa I almost gets support from my brother thato, he almost told me when I'm a soccer player I will be good anywhere teach something like the rapper what what and the skill about how to rapper now to do something in my life and I told him that I told him because I don't like to be a musician. I want to be a soccer player because at home they want me to be a doctor and I don't want to be a doctor because of I don't like when somebody died when somebody dies I'll go touch her blood and I don't want … about that blood and …

12.27. **Interviewer:** Okay.

12.28. **Participant (F):** Most of the time, … some people that support me it is my sister and my granny and others at home. Okay because just for me and for my dreams I would like to be mmmm a lawyer, okay. So then but I told my sister that I want to be a lawyer. What she told me she told me that I should she told me that I should study hard and I should I should not look I should not look what people says about what I want be even though I told them so then they just be like, "Oh, you, really know you can't be a lawyer!". So, then my sister told me that I should avoid those people. When I told them that I want to be what I want to be so those people is that they just judge me so then they can say that, "no, you are not". So, then my sister told me that most of the time some other peoples they just make make others to feel bad about what they want to do so then they can end up dropping out of the school. So I told so what my sister told me and my grand I learn that when you when if you want to become want in future, you have to take your study serious and you don't have to, to look to look what people or what people saying about your life, because right now as we say as we as we say look what is happening on our country. Most of children they are losing, they are losing the parents because they are losing the parents. Some people influenced influenced them to say bad things. to them so they go at home so pressurized their parents so some of parents die, getting heart attack in the end they they just regret that I shouldn't do what my friends told me so then for just for me, I learn a lot of things after my mom passed away. And a after my mom has I haven't say that I don't have a

mom so then I'm not going to I am not going … So then because of sorry guys like I'm not late I'm not late but I'm trying, there a lot I want to tell you about me or what I learn most so then even though I'm acting bad way at school, like at school I act different ant home I act different. Okay. So even some people at school says about me I am bad person or I'm a good person or whatever they think about me. Like, I appreciate it because I know who I am and I know what I want. Even though if you laugh about me I don't care. What I'm saying is true. Okay. So, but mmmm most of time I will because to be mmmm guys to be mmmm what is it, to be successful. Like it's a good thing to to us all of here because in the end if you're not going to listen to your parents if you're not to listen to your friends who give you some advice, so then you take it for a granted In the end you're going to regret a lot of things that's what your friends told you or what your friend doesn't tell you okay, but just for me a like I'm coming to a family that is not rich or even is not poor like it is in the middle. Okay. We can afford what we afford okay, but definitely I have three I have three little sisters that are coming behind my back, Okay. So, then I would like to see I would like me to help them. Not my my older sister or my or my granny or someone else, I would like me to help them just to teach them how what is life? Just like my sister teach me. Oh, so if my teacher my sister got marriage who will teach them if if I am not going to take my word that my sister told teach me. So, who else would teach my little sister that becoming my my behind my back? What I'm going to teach and so then most of the time, I like to say that mmmmmmm I like to question myself that is breaking me. Like sometimes I feel like school is boring me so then I don't know what happen to me and what is stressing me or what is happening to me. I can't get it. Always I asked myself some questions. Some people give me advice. Okay even though at primary there was a teacher there who is mama * okay, the teacher always when I was sad she's calling me so then she asked me a lot of questions, she asked me why I'm looking to sad because my mom passed away when I was seven. And I was 14 years old. Yeah. Okay. So, like she say she she told me she told me she teach me lot of things about life. What should I do what should not do? What is good in my life, in life, we have to respect people most of the like, just like I know, like my am still a child. There are some mistakes that I'm doing but after that mmmm, like mmmm, okay, so like guys,

that's all that I want to tell you that I … I think there are some people that are like like to announce something out, thank you.

12.29. **Interviewer:** As I said, resilience means to be strong. What does it mean to be a strong person, tough, able to overcome challenges? the fact that you're seated here, it means that you are able to pass all the grades. There were many difficulties and challenges, right? But you did not drop out. It shows your resilience, so what made you so strong? what made you so resilient? what's helped you to overcome all these challenges or the problems? Is it people in your family? is it school teachers who are supportive or your peers? So first you mentioned the challenges maybe some of you were tempted to use drugs. Maybe some of you attempted to go to taverns and use alcohol. Maybe some of you attempted many other things…

12.30. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa at home I used to… me and my dad we used to communicate with eyes because my dad didn't like my dad to me it seems like my dad didn't used to like me, yaaa because under under things that he used to do a crib yeah mmmm I used to be an alcoholic addict. I used to drink alcohol a lot yeah because of my dad's situation. But I sat down then I reminisce about this thing. Then I became strong body, yeah. Mmmmm me and my dad we used to fight eeeee, we used to fight a lot because my dad said that I was disrespectful and I didn't see that I was disrespectful. And aaaa I ran at home just to spend a day without coming back and I did that. I was with my friend then my friends we had a conversation about what we are going through at home. Me and my friend we had a conversation and we deal about the situation. Then a quit being an alcoholic addict because my friend told me that what am I doing and called for me yeah in a D date getting rid of alcohol. Yeah, I think it is that make me strong…

12.31. **Interviewer:** Okay, others, what kind of challenges have you faced and what helped you? What helped you to overcome those challenges? Yes.

12.32. **Participant (M):** What the challenges I faced in my life is that at my home my mother have just like five children so if I want something, I really don't just (comments from many participants) the challenges I get from home is that my mother just have more than have 5 children so if I want something that cost more than five cost more than a thousand I really don't just bombs and get it cause my mother try to balance balance balance this dead balance that situation cause nobody at my home is probably working

so sometimes I used to fight with my mother told him that I really don't have something that it is expensive. So, I just ran away from home and just spent two days with my friend sleeping up there. So, they told me that what am I what I am doing isn't cool and alright for my mother, for my mother, because that he's not working and he is old too. So, I try to balance that so I just living my life. I guess I'm here to … (comments)

12.33. **Interviewer:** Okay, the challenges that you have gone through, did they change mmmm how you see yourself, like did they change your identity or did they influence what you think about yourself, your future, your career in any way? If yes, how did they change?

12.34. **Participant (M):** For me, they didn't really change anything cause what I want to do, I can do it with no money or without man. You just like something that I want to do. It is being a hip hop, hip hop producer is that a hip hop producer was born in street. Hip hop is something that he was born in the street... So everyone or anyone can just do it and do what he wants to do about hip hop and feel feel like anything that she just dream of being into so that so it doesn't change anything for me, doesn't change anything and is really helped me to learn more about what I want to do cause there are a lot of hip-hop rappers out there that I used to look up to, so many of them when I listened to their music, they just give me advice that I have to respect those who respect me and forget about those who don't care or think about me.

12.35. **Participant (F):** to get home early

12.36. **Interviewer:** Anyone else who has thoughts, have you exhausted everything you wanted to say. Are we good? Okay. Then thank you very much for your participation. I will aammm meet you again mmmm in the third round that is the third phase. When I will come again. I will let you know okay. Yeah for today we will end here.

Wave II-Focus Group 3 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/08/20
Duration of focus group / interview	41minutes 44 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	10
Name of informed consent hard copies	10

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	M	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	M	22	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
4.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
10.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	10						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 4 Male participants
- 6 Female participants

13.1. **Interviewer:** So good afternoon everyone. (Participants responded) am Miss Catherine Shirima, am currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I'm conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context. Mmmmm this means that my research is about young people, adolescents, people of your age, okay. So mmmmm in our discussion, we'll be talking about identity formation, and resilience. So, what is identity? Identity involves an active questioning about your own beliefs and your role in the society. Those questions are always coming up during this time of your life and mmmm resilience is the capacity to bounce back when faced with hardships mmmmm your ability to overcome challenges and also difficulties, okay mmmmmmm. In our discussion aaaaa I really want to ask you to talk about your own views and experiences on how you see your own identity with regard to your identity formation, and these can involve many things which you can tell me about. And you can also talk about resilience. We will be moving step by step, I will just be asking, mmmm guiding you with a few questions so that we can just move on smoothly. However, we have to put down some rules for this discussion to run smoothly, and one of the rules is just that mmmm remember that everything we discuss here is kept confidential. Nothing that we will talk about here will be discussed in your classrooms, okay? Please let's respect what our friends are sharing and keep it to this particular mmm gathering. So, each one of you can share their own opinions, there are no right or wrong answers. It's just your opinion. So, no one can claim that what you're saying is right or wrong because it is your experience. And when somebody is sharing about their personal experiences, please let us not giggle or laugh because it will discourage them from speaking, okay (Participants agree). But if you feel uncomfortable sharing anything aaaaa you can refrain from it… So, remember that your participation is voluntary. you all accepted participate in this focus group. You are not coerced. So, mmmmm but if you don't feel comfortable you can still leave. It's not mmmm obligatory for you to participate in this focus group, okay. And there will be no consequences if you do. So, I will record this session. And if you're comfortable and willing to continue, aaaaa you may please fill in the biographical questionnaires. So, I hope you're done with your questionnaires and we can start. So, the first question I want to ask you and I really want to ask you

to participate. Just tell me whatever you think, okay. What is identity? Just say anything that comes in your mind?

13.2. **Participant (M):** Identity is aaaaa …what am thinking identity is is what my things, my name my surname where I coming from where I was born. And we like is like where are my family from? Yaaa. That's what am thinking what identity is.

13.3. **Interviewer:** okay, thank you.

13.4. **Participant (M):** Mmmmm am actually goal getter but, yeah. Mom can I restart? (interviewer agrees) How about you ask me and I answer you like that one by one, okay aaaamm .Am in grade 10 and am 15 years old and I really like staying indoors I don't like …yaaa it's peaceful, I like to stay alone I enjoy my alone time, what I like to do to, to be honest I like watching TV most of the time yaaaa most of the time it's me watching TV mmm playing games checking stuff like that. And things I wanna achieve in life, my first goal is to get rich that's my first goal to make money but I'm gonna have to work hard at school and focus and mmm I really wanner be a pilot but my results are not getting better, yaaa.

13.5. **Interviewer:** Okay, you've mentioned a few things about yourself, your interest and aamm yaaa somebody else wants to say something.

13.6. Comments from participants

13.7. **Participant (M):** My person am from * in Taung me am going to talk about myself. I'm not really happy about because things am doing at my age they are not right. And me to I want, my first goal is to get rich, I wanna make money I want to be agric agriculturalist so the subject that I'm doing they are not matching to things to be, I likes animals too much I wanna learn about animals. In my report is not showing that much that am really learning. And most of the time I like to read but when am reading I don't remember everything because many times on my cell phone, TV and I like playing ball also, when I'm thinking or when I'm alone, I'm thinking many, many things through that's why much of the time I don't like sitting alone because some other things to me they are not good and I don't like them, so to myself I'm not happy about myself. Yaaa so that's me.

13.8. **Participant (M):** Am from Taung *am * years old am schooling at * secondary school. I'm a kind I am kind of person who loves joke, my dream is become an actor to become a celebrity, my goal is to become rich and build a shop for poor people to

come to eat I don't like to tell may people things that are not nice. All I love only is jokes and to become an actor ant make lot of money and drive nice cars and building a nice house. Thank you.

13.9. **Interviewer:** okay.

13.10. **Participant (M):** Am from * am in grade 10, am schooling in *, I think I'm a nice person because like like I have I have a nice heart because. I like people I like talking to people, I like kids, I like people who are poor, so the main thing is that my goals is to be a celebrity, I want to be a business man and a celebrity at the one time so I want to have businesses and my dream my big dream is to America and live in States like what am saying like in the states …because when am watching TV I can see that in States there are many things that you can achieve and you can do so like, I will like to have money, that my big dream, yaaa thank you.

13.11. **Interviewer:** Okay, someone else?

13.12. **Participant (F):** Mmmmm am from *am in grade 10 am 15 years yaaaa am not good am not good enough about myself and I don't feel okay about myself. (some local language) I have many challenges, I don't have anyone to help me, yaaa.

13.13. **Interviewer:** if I hear you well you've aaa yeah spoken about yourself things you dream of and everything, what you like what you don't like and the type of person you become today as you're seated there, so am just wondering what are the things, yaaa like factors that have contributed to who you are today? What has made you ---? Yes, it can be something that has aaaa transformed you either negatively or positively. And factors can be either from home, from school or from the community at large. We can start with situation that has positively impacted you. And you can also talk about situations that have negatively impacted you.

13.14. **Participant (M):** …have many challengers, my challenge at home is my mother my mother don't want me to go out of this school because I wanna do Agric, so the problem is my mother loves this school because this school is getting such a thing so she don't want me to get out of this school Batlaping is struggling at many percentage yaaa so what made to realize that am good in Agric is when I was growing up my mother, my mother my grandmother has animals such as things, you understand so I started love dogs love dogs who . So there is this one dog, I stole it at the community, I stole this dog I come with it and take care of it until it grows and grows, this dog

loves lives much it can come to me while I am far far far away from the community so am talking to this dog, so I realized that I am good in Agric so I started with pigs who go and buy some pigs care for them then they start growing when they start growing I realized that am good in Agric so they stole those pigs and I don't know who stole them then we heard some rumours then I didn't get it into mind so I just walk out of it . Then I go and buy some sheep. Someone it looks like someone was not taking care of them so they were very slander such things I took them, I took them at home take care of them till they grow and grow and I sell them and that made me to realize that am good in Agric. And my challenge is I'm not good in books my wish was if there was an Agric school not including other subject I was going to go there and study Agric so my challenge is I'm not good in school in some subject, Social science, Geography, yaaa.

13.15. **Interviewer:** Okay. Someone else.

13.16. **Participant (M):** Aaaaaa actually there is someone who inspires me to become successful in life and that's my mother, I actually wanna repay that woman. She played a really great … in my life. She is my father, she she is mother she she she's my everything. I can talk to her about everything. Right now, she's struggling financially so I wanna repay her for everything that she's done for me. She made sure that I never went to bed hungry, she made sure that I have everything I needed. And yaaa, I don't want her to die before before me spoiling her I wanna spoil her I wanna repay her, yaaa. My mother.

13.17. **Participant (M):** I will start with positive things, I I I I I have realize that I like I like celebrities and is good to be a celebrity so I I wanna I I I… do me that inspires me to be a celebrity is that, is TV because when am watching TV I can see these people are living a good life they have money, having money is a good things, and negatives things am not going into doing many things because like what am saying is that …nothing.

13.18. **Interviewer:** anything else… the factors may be that aaa they can be from school, as well the things that are challenging you …from home or from the community you live in. You can also say how they have contributed to who you are today or how they have changed the way you see yourself.

13.19. **Interviewer:** Okay.

13.20. **Participant (F):** I think the thing that influence me most of things is the friends I think am I have lot of pressure on friends sometimes I can feel that am alone then I can go to them and maybe they can give me company but when am with them I don't feel free am feel bored because am feeling boring them so is like I don't have they don't have much time for me and they they don't pay attention even that am trying to pay attention for them they don't so I think the friends are are the people who influence me on most of the things.

13.21. **Interviewer:** Do they also influence the type of careers you want take?

13.22. **Participant (F):** continues: No on the career I want to take, the career I want to I do I want to be a doctor so I'm just am just confused because of the subject that I chose is not relate related to my career.

13.23. **Interviewer:** Do have people to consult with when you struggle making subject choices with regard to your career, do you prefer just to keep quiet.

13.24. **Participant (F):** continues: sometimes I decide to keep quiet because sometimes the only person I can talk to is my aunty so sometimes she's not around so so I just decide to keep quiet. Because on my friends truly speaking I don't have someone to trust because I can share things with them but… they are talking behind my back.

13.25. **Interviewer:** Okay.

13.26. **Participant (M):** Yaaa, me as * I would like to say but am good yaaa, my I come from Fokolari then I have experience of word of life how to cooperate yaaa sometimes yaaa you have to take other kids as as if like your small brothers yaaa when I have something you have to share with aaaa.

13.27. **Interviewer:** Okay, thank you, so the question is mmm we move on to resilience and I just wanted to talk about your challenges or the significant mmm issues that you have experienced in your life and how you have managed to overcome them, Okay. But before we go there mmm I just want to understand what you know about resilience? What is resilience?

13.28. **Participant (M):** Resilience… resilience is that what is what is what is what is making you to know that to overcome things that … you are unable to overcome there.

13.29. **Interviewer:** So, would you describe yourself as a resilient person?

13.30. **Participant (M):** Okay, I think, the thing that inspires me is that I trust myself, that's that.

13.31. **Interviewer:** Others do you think you are strong people, tough people? (interjection from…)

13.32. **Participant (M):** when you are saying tough what do you, I don't understand?)

13.33. **Interviewer:** are you able to overcome challenges, are there challenges that you have already overcome in your life?

13.34. **Participant (M):** yaaa there are some challenges but when you, to myself when it comes to challenges am just skipping them then I move own (interviewer agrees) so some challenge am just skipping. I over think but I don't think --- I just over think I don't know if there is a difference but I over think a lot I mean I over thing about everything that is happening.

13.35. **Interviewer:** what are those things that come into your mind?

13.36. **Participant (M):** sometimes rejections, rejections are one of them and relationships I over think about relationships a lot. That's why from now now I wanna stay away from relationships because like they disturb me from my school work. Every time when I wanna try to study or write home works and and I end up leaving those home works and stressing over unnecessary like, yaaa.

13.37. **Interviewer:** Somebody else

13.38. **Participant (M):** aaaa my future is also one of the thing that stresses me a lot … I wanted to be a pilot right so like I I always wanting I always think that am may be am not good enough for being a pilot I always wanted to be somethings I know myself that I cannot achieve, I mean sometimes I just listen to songs and okay I wanna be a rapper but I don't know how to rap, I don't know those things, yaaaa.

13.39. **Participant (M):** the thing that stress me is that is school yaaaaa I wanna finish school is stressing me is hard in school so I wanna finish, besides that I wanna finish school yaaa.

13.40. **Participant (M):** yaa to my side I let me say I have future challenges because the thing I wanna be I don't have a doubts but to my life I am imagining that I am going to achieve what I wanna be that's a question am always stressing, I always stress what am gonna achieve what and what am going to do to achieve that… so I end up in a situation that sometimes I feel like (sighs) me too I can go quit school go to nyaupes be like them like quit other things just live my life alone… sooooo yaaa

13.41. **Participant (F):** Well my life my family negatively influenced me about my career choice I wanna be a rapper I wanna be an actress but they're not supporting me And also the subjects that I chose, they're not relatable to what I wanna be.

13.42. **Participant (F):** sometimes I think that I am over thinking a lot about my life because there is there is someone I trusted but now we are losing a bond we are starting to move a different way because she is the only one she was the only person that I talk to and she was the only person that when I was talking to she is not judging me. So I was feeling free to talk to her and I was feeling free to share everything with my love with my life so now we are starting to lose a bond we are not close together that much because she is starting to have a new friends and they are starting to, like I can say that they are starting to be jealous so we really lost the bond together that thing worries me because of but now I don't have a friend to talk to I don't have a person that I feel free to talk to.

13.43. **Interviewer:** Okay, so you have shared a few things that you are struggling with mmm and you managed to overcome them. So, what helped you to overcome the challenges you mentioned or what did not help you to overcome them, some say they did overcome, some are still struggling with mmmm some issues and some challenges, so what is it?

13.44. **Participant (M):** to my side I didn't talk to anyone about my challenges, even at home they don't know what my challenges are? I didn't tell anyone, especially my mother. I am afraid to talk to my parents because many times when am talking to them am always talking about money. When am going out I say friends, I always tell them please can you lend me some 300 rand just for the week end so some other things am afraid to talk. Yaaa

13.45. **Interviewer:** so, this means that mmmm you are not able to share with anyone what you go through, you keep everything to yourself, somebody else.

13.46. **Participant (M):** I overcome my challenges by not telling anyone, trusting in myself that I'm going to overcome these things by myself. I'm just going to forget about them and start another bond.

13.47. **Participant (M):** aaaa this sound weak but the thing that helped me overcome my challenges is actually music and time. I don't I don't talk to everyone about my life, my career choices and staff like that but every time I listen to music am lock myself

in my room alone, some a long time, I mean like time heals right there so, I think is time that helped me …my challenges

13.48. **Interviewer:** (agrees) somebody else.

13.49. **Participant (F):** Someone who overcome my problems is my parent she is really trying to be a big grow on my life but the thing is I don't feel free to talk to her because of I don't think I can earn that trust about what happen on my life so am just trying to earn trust on her but is not easy to earn trust so she is really like to see me happy, she don't want she don't want to see me sad, she want to play a role on my life but is not easy to earn the trust again.

13.50. **Participant (F):** that my family knows me because I haven't shared anything with them so yaaa only my friend knows me and I don't think school is important because I can utilize my talent to get money, you know. Yaaaa.

13.51. **Interviewer:** okay. how did the challenges you have gone through change the way you see yourself?

13.52. **Participant (M):** aaaaa the challenges aaaa the changes I see in myself they made me feel like am good enough … myself and I don't need nobody to be there for me I can be there for myself I can take care of myself I can handle myself yaaa so like I don't need to tell anybody about my life what I go through and staff like that yaaaa so like am here for me am there for myself and I got me.

13.53. **Participant (F):** but I won't say I'm a good person because if he test my patience I will test your life insurance.

13.54. **Participant (F):** I feel …I feel am kind of a bad person because it really ruined my emotions because I cannot just be free I cannot just do what I want so sometimes I feel like am a bad person even if am trying to be a good person on other people but on myself am not with my peers it is not that much because am just a kind person I just I just love to curdle with everybody I don't choose a person, every person who is feeling free to sit me to curdle with me I don't mind.

13.55. **Interviewer:** is fine, somebody else.

13.56. **Participant (M):** I have learnt that I have to I have to take thing easily things easily that am doing so ever thing that I have challenge I have gone through I just going to learn not to do things I have done, after all.

13.57. **Participant (M):** aaaaaa friends they are drinking a lot of alcohol and when when they drink a lot of alcohol like that they are forcing me to drink and I don't what to drink alcohol because alcohol will ruin your future, your life will ruin everything that is inside your body and you will end up on drugs pushing trolleys at town without a future. Yaaa

13.58. **Interviewer:** somebody else

13.59. **Participant (M):** aaaa they actually taught me to always be kind with everyone because you never know what someone is going through we should be kind every time we talk to them yaaaa be there for them where ever whenever they need us. Yaaa.

13.60. **Interviewer:** okay.

13.61. **Participant (F):** can you repeat the question.

13.62. **Interviewer:** aaam what enables you to overcome challenges…. it can be from within you or by talking to other people who can be your teachers, your parents or anyone who is available.

13.63. **Participant (F)**: continues: my challenges are overcomed because I can sit down with my aunt and talk everything that is not sitting me well on my heart inside me and she can come with good opinion and good advice, she can advise me very so that I can feel, I can feel it didn't happened so sometimes we can just sit down and talk about what happened then after that I can feel good and no more stressed.

13.64. **Interviewer:** anyone else who has something to say?

13.65. **Participant (M):** I just overcome my challenges by not telling anyone by sitting with myself by telling myself that these challenges am going to overcome t. Yaaa

13.66. **Participant (M):** mmmmm its actually me mmmm sometimes I just look at the mirror and say mmmm and talk to my reflection and say you know what am a goal getter am gonna get whatever I want and the most important thing I pray yaaa everything I put on God and my life I put my life on God I trust that man. Yaaa

13.67. **Interviewer:** okay.

13.68. **Participant (F):** Well, I mostly talk to my friend about this things you know she helps me to overcome my challenges.

13.69. **Participant (M):** I have doubts, I don't think I am going achieve what I want to be things am doing I don't get support I do get support sometimes but sometimes they don't support my decisions, things like that.

13.70. **Interviewer:** what do you do?

13.71. **Participant (M):** continues: I wanna learn about animals, I wanna go to school like like I feel like what I wanna be there is nothing to do with Geography, I wanna quit school and learn my thing…

13.72. **Interviewer:** and you say you don't find support from home?

13.73. **Participant (M):** continues: I do find support but not most of the time.

13.74. **Interviewer:** okay. Anything else guys.

13.75. **Participant (M):** Mmmm I worry about my future almost every day I I need to make it but the only thing that disappoints me I mean there are two things is my results they are not even improving and I feel am not good enough and secondly is financial at home I feel like if I don't get scholarship may be I will I can't even I will I not be able to go to school because of the financial problems and stuff like that and the career I wanna follow and my career choices mm so expensive like they gonna need more money for me to achieve that and am still at school I can't go out and make money yaaa so like I worry about my future almost every day.

13.76. **Interviewer:** Somebody else who wants to say something?

13.77. **Participant (M):** I don't have doubts what I gonna what I wanna achieve because my parents can can cover what will need to to achieve my my career.

13.78. **Participant (M):** Me I think I wanna achieve my dream of acting because acting is not that too much bad all you need to do is going to is go to university and learn more languages and go to to and pass your CVs to the other channels or stories maybe they will sign you me I think I will achieve my dream, Thank you.

13.79. **Participant (F):** I wanna achieve my career because of my results at school… I don't have I don't have support (some noises).

13.80. **Interviewer:** if there is nothing else, or somebody else who wants to say something. So mmm I'll just say thank you for your participation mmmm this was our second phase data collection. I'll meet again mmm in the next phase, which will be about yaaa six months, so thank you very much guys for participating. Yaaa. Bye

Wave II-Focus Group 4 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2021/08/23
Duration of focus group / interview	36 minutes 21 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	10
Name of informed consent hard copies	10

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	M	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	M	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
5.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	20	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
8.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
10.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	10						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 5 Male participants
- 5 Female participants

14.1. **Interviewer**: So good afternoon, everyone. I am Miss Catherine Shirima. I am currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I'm conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in the South African context. So mmmm my research, the population of my research are adolescents, people of your age and mmm the idea is for us to discuss these two concepts that is: identity formation which involves an active questioning about your beliefs, values and roles in the society. And we will also like mmmmm to talk about resilience, that is the capacity to bounce back when you're faced with hardships. So, in our discussion, I would ask to aaa talk about your own views, your own experiences, and how you see your identity developing, are there differences, are there things that you are questioning now, maybe you were not questioning before, with regard to who you are and what kind of future you want. Mmmm also I wanted to talk about your resilience development. For us to be able to have a smooth-running session, I would like us to put down some group rules, and the first one is that of confidentiality. This means that everything we are talking about in this group should remain in this group. Please don't go and share what your colleagues have spoken about in this room, you go share it in class, that will not look good. So, you're also called to respect each one's opinion, there is no right or wrong answer. Whatever you say is your opinion, it is your experience which is different from somebody else's experience. So, let's not laugh or giggle when the other person is talking, or stare at them until they can't talk anymore. If you feel uncomfortable, to share something, it's okay, you can refrain from answering it and you're reminded that your participation is voluntary. Mmmm if you feel that you can't take it, It's okay, you can mmmmm just go out of the group whenever you want. It's not mandatory for you to be in this focus group. But you all volunteered and I appreciate that. And the session will be audio recorded, so mmm if you're all willing to continue, we may fill in the biographical questionnaires, the ones I handed. So now that we are done, we can start. I'll be asking aaaa few open questions and whoever is ready can just talk freely. Okay. And we can always mmm maybe contribute to what somebody else has said. Probably other people's idea might spark ideas as well. Okay. It must not just be something unique.

But it can also be a contribution to what has been said, although it has to be aaaa your own experience. Not talking about the other person's experiences, okay. So aaammm what is identity?

14.2. **Participant (F)**: I think identity is the way you value yourself. I think identity is the way you value yourself.

14.3. **Interviewer:** Okay, somebody else. What do you think?

14.4. **Participant (M):** I think Identity is a profile of individual person.

14.5. **Interviewer:** Someone else, if you are asked to describe yourself to somebody else, what would you say about yourself?

14.6. **Participant (M):** Okay, like (nna) I defined myself as a person who like like, who like to be in public with people, you know, like communicating those kinds of stuff. And I do have like, my own values, my own values like aside. My value like I value I value people, you know, I value other people, you know, opinions and and like what they wants, like what they share to me like I value it too much like I don't take it out, you know, telling other people what what you just told me you know, this kind of stuff, yeah.

14.7. **Participant (M):** Yaa I mean as myself I, myself as my attitude is actually based on how you treat me and to to whom I see every day I show much respect. And I like like communication to everyone who seems kind of friendly to me as I said my attitude is based to everyone's attitude then, yeah, if someone treat me bad I treat him bad, they treat me good, I also do the same. And yet I still show some respect at the end of the day, yeah, I guess that's myself and I I don't want to lie I have much confidence and my confidence is like, if it were to be calculated, I mean, it will be 63% 63% and actually I don't know how to describe myself because if I were to be described the new world should be made. And yeah, I guess about me, it's a lot. I mean, I chase dreams. I sometimes be serious, I sometimes lose focus, I sometimes concentrate and but mostly concentration takes place, and yeah, I guess that's myself.

14.8. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else.

14.9. **Participant (M):** Mmmmm I'm very loud person, like I'm very loud and straight talker. I'm not someone who if you are my true friend, and if you've done something wrong, I have the courage to confront you not let others or go with the rumours when I hear someone talking about you, I'm not going to be one of those people that I'm

going to gossip about without facing you. I'm a loud person, I'm a straight talker. And mostly I like people who are open because I'm also open. I don't like someone who's been uncomfortable around me because I feel like there is something wrong with me or you, so I like someone who's when around I want them to be flat to go all out to be comfortable to be there themselves, not be people they are not or not force your yourself to be something that you are not. And I also don't like people who are not like straight talkers. If you have a problem with me just confront me, instead of going around telling people against me. Yeah, when it comes to academics, I'm dedicated. I'm persevering. I have perseverance. I know that even if if not now but eventually the time will come for me to reach my success. Thank you.

14.10. **Participant (M):** Me like like I have plans from the for the future like yeah, my plans like is to be like an entrepreneur you know, to be a entrepreneur it will help people like my environment because I saw in my environment most of people like are suffering like from like don't have jobs, you know, they they they like that's why that's why most of youngsters become smoke drugs, you know, this kind of stuff. So, my idea was like, okay, I become a entrepreneur and solve the problem. Because you know like in all like our poverty, something else that like, I don't like, you know, I wish if I was if I was in control of that, like aaa sure, like dance done much, you know, so like, I'm not in control, but the least that I can do is like to build businesses in my like, in my, like, in my hood, you know, like employing people, you know, people who are like, we're unemployment, who are unemployed, you know, yeah and to become to become a musician, you know, I just wanna be like, I just wanna be a rapper you know, I've been inspired by a lot of rappers like 50 cent, you know, Eminem and Tupac, you know, those people, you know, yeah, those people, yeah they motivate me a lot. And when you come to like, when we come to aaaaa psychology, I've been like I've been I've been reading a lot about psychology, yeah, I've been listening to people like Dr. Lepton and or Dr. Lepton and recall, was this. I forgot his name. But like, maybe the name will pop out. You know, like those people like they motivate me a lot to know much about the mind that you know, like to know the difference between the subconscious and the conscious mind and how they do operate, you know, so like, like, I learned a lot about those things. And those those things are like, you know, I saw like, yeah, my I saw the world is like the invisible world, you know, is controlled,

like the the the physical world is controlled by the invisible forces, those kind of stuff, the invisible the unconscious world, you know so I've been learning a lot a lot about those things, you know, like like like I have a lot of goals to achieve in my future, and I wanna to be trader, you know, I wanna to be a trader, I'm inspired by Warren Buffett, you know, being inspired by Warren Buffett and Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon. So yeah, those people like do inspire me, even based on on what do you to call this thing on entrepreneurship, you know, so yeah, that's me.

14.11. **Interviewer**: Okay, thank you, anyone else.

14.12. **Participant (F)** I don't like sharing aaaa I want to do. I really don't like talking about planning in the future. Because you know, sometimes you can plan things but they don't according they dont go according to plan. But aaaaa I will say a few words. My actual dream was to become aaa a social worker. I wanna be a social worker because I want to help some children in our community. Yes.

14.13. **Participant (M):** aaaaaa What I like about myself is like aaaaa I pretelle, I'm different from all the people for my community. My goal is to be soccer player, a professional one, a good one aaa not just a professional I would like to go like to Europe aaaaa to to like aaa to introduce the the way we play in South Africa like to the other countries. Yeah. And about other goals like, I have many goals that like one day I decide to follow this, the other day I decided to follow this dream like, yeah.

14.14. **Participant (M)**: mmm talking about myself I can be more of an introvert but if I give it a try I may be open advising you know, accommodate I accommodate others. When you come to me, mmmm positive, positive mind may say, surely, we can make for sure. But if you've always been negative, always buzzing around, around things, it becomes easier for me to walk out in silently and taking up about my dreams sometimes they put they put they put me too much pressure because of mmmm what can I say because of is not easy to just reach out in it concentration, focus and ways of doing it, of reaching them. So sometimes I just sit-down figure myself out and try to concentrate more on what I want and how am I gonna achieve it. And things that will be needed for me to to reach it, so yeah.

14.15. **Interviewer:** Okay

14.16. **Participant (M):** Well, talking about myself, I don't like being open to anyone. Most of the time, I talk about my problems with people I trust mostly, so aaaa me about

what I want to be I want to be a soldier most soldiers aaaa, I want to be a soldier which protects the country the country he came from. So yeah, being a soldier comes with a big priority to me. So, I want to protect aaaa the country I'm from.

14.17. **Participant (M):** About myself, what I can see is that I'm mostly committed to people. I like being with people. And I like being outside spending more time outdoor seeing things that are new. Seeing people knowing more about what's happening in my area and know more about what's happening in other areas. And Iiiii another thing that I like is that being around with people that are more positive people that are more able to help others, people that are more to talk whenever something bothers them, and people that are not closely being alone, think that they are not appreciated and they are not worthy it. they or not being loved, nobody cared for them and no one admires them. I want what I, myself I like being with people that are want to want to want to help others. Always work towards every challenge they come across, not be always they close themselves or their problems because that might end up causing harm to them. They always find themselves guilty at all time. So being with people that are being with people that are always positive, people …who loves being out people full of life, people not only seeking gains and concentrating on what in what was bothering them or what they could do because I want people who can do what they couldn't do so that it might challenge them challenge challenges and always shows them that it is possible to do what you can do. Thank you.

14.18. **Interviewer:** Mmmmm what has contributed to who you are today, could be factors from your community or from home or from school. The way you define yourself, the way you talk about your identity and your future dreams. What do you think has influenced the kind of things … the kind of person you want to become?

14.19. **Participant (M):** Actually, the kind of person I want to become mostly is not recognize from where I come from, and what I mostly want to be is become a brand ambassador. I want more to create a brand and I want I want my brand to be popular, you see, my brand I want it to be international. So clearly, I don't like discussing this about my brand, I don't like discussing it to everyone because it is said that you can love them all but trust no one. But clearly, this doesn't have to this doesn't have to mean like I feel otherwise about everyone because obviously I love them, but trust I can trust them but obviously you know how it feels to tell someone about your dream

then someone betrays you because there's no love without betrayal and obviously betrayal takes place and I was scared of those kinds of things for maybe they will take my dream because that's the only thing I'm now focusing on building making a brand and yeah, I shared this with my family, they take me serious but mostly they don't. My friends of course some of my friends, you see, there are those we call friends as friends, but there are those we call friends and still become friends and yeah. My friends, best friends I mean they understand a lot when I tell them that someday I want to make a brand and I want y'all to take place when it really becomes popular when when I want you to give me your full support and they say yes (Jasen) we will and I can see that yeah, they they will do that for me. And they're always there for me honestly and yeah that's what I like about my future and clearly my from where I come from I am being took serious because where I come from is not like it's a village in the village is not like I don't know everyone I know everyone from where I come from and according to what I'm saying right now is like everyone knows me everyone knows me knows me as a loving person, everyone knows me as a joker so and yeah, that stuff I liked but most definitely they don't know what I want in life because they think in life I want to be like a joker as they see me and they think I want to be a comedian because that's what most people say I I I can do according to how they see me and according to how they hear me talking but that's clearly not what I want. From where I come from, from where come from most people have dreams but still don't doesn't have still doesn't have a chance to achieve them because opportunities are lacking and we we are not well fortunate from where we come from. So those things are are like bring bring ups and downs from to our dreams. So, what I mostly found out aaaa about how to tackle this situation, I thought that determination is the only thing that I could do to tackle all the situation because without determination I will never be a brand ambassador as I think, yeah only to become the brand ambassador I should mmm stay determined for mmmm for my future to be there. Most mostly at from where come from, yeah, some of them knows that I want to build a brand and I don't It's not like I don't I don't want to I don't want them to know which what kind of brand I want to create but I'm scared that they will like build their their own brand on the sides no, no and take the brand that I want to build, you see, even though they don't have they don't do it as I wanted but they will do it in their way. But that's not what I

want, because mostly I want a thing that I will call my thing, you see, the thing that I will I will say that things made by me and it is there because of me. And honestly, I want to be someone who is honoured who is an example to everyone. I want to be more like a souvenir to everyone. I want everyone to remember me as they see me your photo, or maybe in the news. Maybe even though I'm not there and I want I want the Lord I really want the Lord I guess that's all.

14.20. **Interviewer:** Okay. You are talking about those factors that have influenced your identity.

14.21. **Participant (M):** Oh yaa, factors that influenced me and motivated me to be who I am today it's because of confidence. And as you all know, charity begins at home mmm nna specifically me from where I come from positivity like my I was raised by my mother alone, my father since he left so my mother taught me about being confident being confident being who you are and being honest to yourself. Staying honest to yourself is what we should mostly aaaaa the challenges that I came across and managed to overcome was a point that I hate to look after my mother when she was sick. It was, at first it was tough because I'm a boy to look after a female so it's my mother was couldn't walk so I was the one who who had to look after her made sure that she has bathed, make sure that she's eaten, it was hard because in most cases girls' females are the ones who are likely to look after parents and children. But then, at in that point, I was at the point where I had to prioritize my mother first and put other things behind. I had to look after and then one thing that made me overcome this problem was to tell myself that I can do it and not to belittle myself and tell myself that I cannot look after my mother because I'm a boy and all that stuff. So being confident being strong and being honest and being being a hero and someone that you can be looked up to is what made me overcome all my problems.

14.22. **Interviewer:** Okay, someone else.

14.23. **Participant (F):** Mmmm what I will really say is that what I would say that has influenced me is my background mmm because mmmm because mmm because I was raised by my mother, but my father was present, but he didn't take care of me the way my mother the way a parent should. He never cared of me. He only cares of what people would say about me, mmm but you would, he was very proud of me, but that didn't that didn't exclude the way … yaaa, so the reason I said aaa the the mmm what

has influenced me is my background because I've seen how my mother suffered raising me. He had to to to pay for my school fees. Had to my school uniform he had to take care of my siblings, and he had to take care of me, roughly. So, what I'm really saying is that I wanna make my mom proud by trying to achieve my dream and my goals, yaa.

14.24. **Interviewer:** Okay, someone else.

14.25. **Participant (M)**: I think like my challenges like yooo I think I think it was three years back now, yaa when I was like in grade 8, yeah, I think it's eight. Yeah. Like I had this thing I had low self-esteem you feel what I'm saying I didn't believe in myself you know that much because like people put me down people would put me down and I couldn't like I view I view life in a negative way you know whereby like I was thinking negative, you know my attitude towards a lot of things aaa it was bad. So, like, it came to the point whereby like, I saw myself, you know, I have to change. I have to change you know, I met this guy you know, I met this guy like at my hood it was, yeah, it was last of last year, yeah, at my hood, he was he was I met him, he was like, he was like producer, I met that guy called Ginno, Yeah, then the guy the guy like introduced me a lot of things he like, he motivated me a lot. You know, he told me a lot, a lot about, about no like, self, like, I must do self-introspection in you know, like, meditation stuff, you know, always like think positive because you know, like, positive energy to attract positive energy. If you're always thinking negatively gonna attract negative results, you know, those are the things those are the challenges I face I face, but to me today I'm proud, you know, I've over over overcome them, even right now, I can say that I'm confident about everything that I want to be in life, you know, I'm always positive and I'm always sending positive signals to other people to have, like, you know, to be you have to be positive too.

14.26. **Interviewer:** Okay,

14.27. **Participant (M):** The challenges I overcame in my life is like when my father went to work, in Rusternburg, then my mother left too to Gauteng. I was like alone and I was left with my two nephews and I was still young, I was like in grade seven and that was so big. I didn't even have a car, or even smartcard ID so I could get some money to support them, so what I learnt in life is that you don't need those kinds of thing what you need is just knowledge and you just need again, know how to take care, what, I,

I, I provided for those two nephews. In my early age, I was like 14 13. I was like, 14 13 between those. I cared for my nephews when they were like seven. The one was seven, the one was five. I used to we were schooling the same primary. I used to wake up early so I could cook for them, and I used to aaa you see put water on the stove so they could wash and I washed them myself. Just to to for them to go early. I was always late at primary. I was I was always late and after my principal noticed that what made me late, is that I had to take care of this, like two nephews. She had to take place and she started being like, Okay, bring the other nephew to my home so I could help you. I was like, no, I can handle them. So, she used to once she see me at school, she used to give me money. Sometimes I will refuse to take the money. I will say no you give me money too many times I I can't even feel it would be that I'm depending on you. And I don't want that, it will it will ruin me it will ruin my reputation. I was like, I knew how to stand for myself even though for so those those were the kind of challenges I faced. I knew how to stand out for myself. I was like this young and then they came a --- into my house when they in then he told me where where where are your parents I was like I am the parents here. I am the parent. What is it that brings you here? He was like, I'm looking for your sister. And I know that these two kids I are you sisters. I was like yes, but now they are my What do you want to them. He was like, I'm here to take them only to find out that he wasn't here to my sister didn't send him he? Nobody at home sent him. I didn't know I didn't even know what he was going to do with his two nephews. Then I was like, I refused. I refused to I said, Okay, call my sister right now. And she could tell me that she sent him she couldn't even do it. He I mean, he couldn't even do it. He he didn't even have my sister's phone numbers, only to find out that he was now being aggressive, "hey boy I said bring the kids," I was like no leave the house then he started like now he was like, he was like an intruder. He was getting to the house like without any permission of mine. Then I was like I want to neighbours. The neighbours when they I found someone a coming come in aaaa some visitor and then I asked for help him. Then he came he it was a boy, but he was older me. Then he came to this guy only to found out that he knew this guy. I think this guy was like from the place further than my then he talked to him come on stop doing this to the other child, you shouldn't do this, the man refused then that that did that walked that made me realize that it is easy for it is easy for people to

steal from from young from young children, I mean, and this is to motivate those who are taking care for the siblings that not to always let everyone say I'm I'm I'm here to help you show them even you could you can provide for them. You can provide for them, thank you.

14.28. **Interviewer:** Okay guys. Is there anyone else or we end here for today? We are all good. Okay. Thank you very much for your participation.

Wave III-Focus Group 1 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2022/01/29
Duration of focus group / interview	46 minutes 34 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	8
Name of informed consent hard copies	8

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	M	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	8						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 2 Male participants
- 6 Female participants

15.1. **Interviewer:** Good morning everyone (morning ma'am) mmm I'm Catherine Shirima I'm currently registered as a PhD student in Psychology at the University of the Free State. I'm Conducting research investigates the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents, that is, people of your age. And also, in this regard, I'm looking at adolescents who are living in disadvantaged communities in the South African context. So, what is identity? When we think about identity formation, we see the active questioning about your own values, your own beliefs, and the roles you play. At this age, you already have different roles that you play, right, either at school or in your family families. So mmmm in the society at large, and we will also talk about resilience. Those are the two areas that we will be discussing about in our focus groups. So, what is resilience? When you think about resilience, ummm you see the capacity of people to bounce back to overcome challenges and hardships. So, when you look at yourself now, many things have defined who you are, and you've gone through challenges, but you managed to overcome them. So, we're going to discuss also about and, in our discussion, I want you to talk about your views and your own experiences. That is about your own identity. How do you see your identity developing? How do you see yourself changing from one year to the other? And also think about your resilient mmmmm your development, like what has made you so strong, so we have a few rules, it's a group, so for us to run the group well, just know that everything you share here, remains here. It's confidential. If you got to talk to the other classmates that will not be good. You'd have broken their confidentiality of the others, okay. So mmm each one is called to share your personal experiences. And I insist that there is no right or wrong answer. So mmmmm, but if you feel uncomfortable, to respond to any question or to engage in a discussion, maybe it's too personal, you can refrain from answering it. And mmmm your participation is voluntary, right? Voluntary means that you accepted by your own selves to be here. I did not coerce you, isn't it? So, and if you want to leave now, before we start, you're more than welcome. If you feel it's too hard, or you're not ready for these, you can just pull out and there'll be no consequences. And this session will be audio recorded. If you're uncomfortable with audio recording and also please either leave or abstain from engaging in the discussion. So, we'll start with filling the biographical questionnaires just for records and then we'll engage with the group. So,

then we can start, the question I will ask you to discuss about is about is about identity. So far, how do you define your identity? How do you see yourself? Anyone can start?

15.2. **Participant (F):** okay mom. My career is in choosing mmm subject mmm Tourism I'm doing Tourism at grade 10 then. Mmmm my passion for tourism is to do mmm traveling one place to another place to see ourself at another country like India, America and all that ---And then my friends, I don't have good friends, I have good friends and bad friends I have good friends. Some of my friends go to sheebin to drink alcohol. Some of us we are studying for our what we are going to be. Then if you go to sheebin and we gonna go and drink lots of beers, we don't have mind to think, you don't have sometimes you go for a man for having sex without having any with that because of alcohol infect. Then now I'm a person now I can see that drinking alcohol is not enough, drinking alcohol is not good and bad friends are not good. And now I'm ready to change and then I'm I'm hoping the best in grade 10 for tourism to go place to another place. Thank you, mom.

15.3. **Interviewer:** Somebody else.

15.4. **Participant (F):** mmmm when am on grade nine when I'm on grade seven I choose my career was to agricultural economist. But at grade 10 I choose Tourism, because at this school there is no agric agricultural subject and my friends my mom forced me to do Tourism but I don't like it, so I choose it because my mom said that I gonna choose it but it's not my career, but then I decided to be a tourist person. So I wanna be a tolerant person, I wanna travel see another places and so on.

15.5. **Interviewer:** So, what would you have wanted to be to choose if you mom had not told you to take Tourism?

15.6. **Participant (F):** I wanna do agric, I wanna be agricultural economist.

15.7. **Interviewer:** what is interesting in agriculture for you?

15.8. **Participant (F):** I love animals and like to farming so so that I can provide poor families, poor families.

15.9. **Interviewer:** Anyone else who wants to

15.10. **Participant (F):** mmm in in grade 7 I told my best friend that I wanna do. I wanna be when I grew up I want to be a psychologist. But in grade 10 I when I was thinking I was thinking, I must do Tourism or Physical Science. So, when I was busy with my mom, I was asking my mom that if I do Tourism will I succeed in my career? And

then she told me that that many people are doing tourism if you fail in tourism where will you where will you be in the end of this subject. So, I told her that if I don't do tourism, I rather do physical sciences. Then when in school we were choosing a subject I chose Physical Sciences because in physical science there were so many careers that I will rather do. In friends I have good and bad friends. In bad friends they don't support too much because bad friends think about bad things like going on taverns, pabs and going on a house party. Best friends can good friends can support you in sports, subjects or even in concept in schools. Or they can support you in mmmmm collecting like money for for younger children who don't have parents, yes mom

15.11. **Interviewer:** Somebody else wants to talk to us about (not clear)

15.12. **Participant (M):** aaaa mom, (nna) I wanna be a lawyer mom. The reason why I chose that career is because like I have that feeling of being a lawyer and I really can communicate with people, like maybe people telling me their problems like I always come up with a solution to be, I always come up with the solution to output the problem, you see mom, so like her mom being a lawyer like it's going to be fine. And like I really want to be a lawyer mom because like some of this street some of the street students say because like other people like they always chose people. So, like I'm trying to I'm trying show them the way the real way in life, you see mom, like they shouldn't judge because like pride can take you pride can't take you anywhere, you see mom, forcing other people to do stuff like honestly speaking nna I really smoker I smoke weed. I want to be honest, I smoke weed because like weed I can see that, maybe when I'm angry. Maybe when I'm angry then I smoke weed, weed mmm can make a person can make a person's body like to be calm may be for two to four hours. Then this that's where I started smoking. Like now is kind of jiggy and staff yaa.,.

15.13. **Interviewer:** does that mean you are still smoking it, you enjoy smoking it? Or is something that you felt is not good anymore.

15.14. **Participant (M):** Mom the reason why I smoked weed, my reason, the reason why I smoke weed is to see what what is it going to like a person's body like to experience to experience, I want to experiment what it does to a person's body, so like I have done experiencing it, I'm fine with it. I know what it does. Now I'm done with it.

15.15. **Interviewer:** talk about your goals, how do you see yourself in future and now what kind of person are you? It's all about identity.

15.16. **Participant (F):** in my life I have a friend, we always go out we always come late home, we always drink alcohol so after we change that friends did, that friends hate us and change she started to say that we are not good friends. Because we did say that we have to change we cannot do the things that we're doing for the rest of our life and also we cannot hate our mother, he she always shouting at us when we come late, so we cannot do that thing but now she is not our plans, we change for good things and I want to be I did want to be a doctor but I didn't choose that subject that can make me that doctor, because when I when I was at home and I told them that I want to do aaaa Maths Physics they did tell me that I cannot choose that subject because it's very hard. I was very I will never so I to choose Tourism.

15.17. **Interviewer:** So, you chose Tourism because at home they told you cannot do physics. And yourself what do you think? What do you think about your abilities? Are you able to do it, or you just follow what they told you because you are scared?

15.18. **Participant (F):** continues: I can do it but I just scared because they told me that it was hard.

15.19. **Interviewer:** So, you just started grade 10, right, you believe in yourself and you know you can do it, is it possible to speak to your parents or find teachers to guide you to help you to choose the valid subjects' parents.

15.20. **Participant (F):** continues: I can't because am scared that I will fail.

15.21. **Interviewer:** okay, anything else you want to share. Anything else.

15.22. **Participant (M):** That was that that's the problem that I was trying to talk about you see mom, like her parents told her that she must she mustn't do Maths pure Maths and physics and she said that she is scared to fail, like she should have that self-esteem and that self-confidence to herself that she can do it and pressurize herself that she can do it even better. Because like if you live like this you'll have such problems in life. You see, like based on your schoolwork, you see mom, that's the thing.

15.23. **Participant (F):** I love to smoking and drink alcohol, so every day my mother tell me don't don't don't drink and smoking, so every day when I sleep my mind will remind every day what my mother tell me. So, I want to change my life to drink and smoking.

So every day when I'm to come to school, my friends and other learners just go to shop and smoking.

15.24. **Interviewer:** So when you say you want to change, is it something you want to do now or you want to do in the future?

15.25. **Participant (F):** continues: on my future.

15.26. **Interviewer:** okay, and currently do you have somebody to talk to about your ---

15.27. **Participant (F):** Somebody talk to me.

15.28. **Interviewer:** Okay, so people are talking to you, and do you think about your future?

15.29. **Participant (F):** My future go on, I wasn't to be a police happening because of I want to tell every people on the streets to stop to stop to using a drug.

15.30. **Participant (F):** I believe in myself because, I believe in myself because many people tell me that I haven't change a lot because I'm busy playing with boys and not being with girls as I respond to them I tell them that I can see girls because girls have their things can influence you in many things that you don't want to do. So, I prefer playing my boys because boys I can share thinks not like I can tell them my secret things because I sometimes I feel like I don't transpose, you see. So, friends that I have they're not like, they're not girls. I've only two two friends of girls, the rest are the boys, I have boys that am playing with they're very good and I can share things with them. So that's what I prefer in my life.

15.31. **Interviewer:** Okay guys, let's move on to something else, just hold it mmmmmm so what has contributed to who you, are you've spoken about the careers, what you to do, some of you have already mentioned your parents encouraged you to choose what you want to partake, especially the subjects that you've chosen. And mmmmmm what else apart from your parents makes you to choose mmmm Tourism, what makes you to want to be lawyer? It can be either mmmmm factors from home or from my school and it can be some experiences that are positive or negative. Some good experiences will push you to do this and some want to push to want to change something. Okay you can go ahead. What has made you to change the way you see yourself.

15.32. **Participant (M):** The reason why I want to I want to be a lawyer, you see mom, or the reason why I want to be a lawyer is just that like the problem here at school mom, (neh) there is no that communication between learners and teachers. Like some of the learners like they don't take teachers seriously when they say they stop laughing to

school work, you see mom. So, like mostly girls. Girls, some of the girl's mom like I can't understand the situation, maybe it's in anxiety or something that is hitting their minds. So, like some of the girl's mom I don't think that they take their life seriously, you see mom. They think that life just life you see mom they are just living, you see mom, that's what I can say to them, yaaa. So that made me to choose the career to like to help them build their self-confidence, yes mom, to be something maybe in life you see mom, yaaa

15.33. **Interviewer:** So, it's mostly from the school environment, okay, anyone else who wants to share.

15.34. **Participant (F):** The reasons why I choose Tourism is because I want to travel one place to another I want to see new people, I want to meet new people, I want to see lots of things I don't know at other places. That's why I choose Tourism because I want to infect I want to be a a a education tourist, why education tourists because I want to encourage young people young people for being tourists tourists. Yes mom.

15.35. **Participant (F):** The reason why I wanna be a agricultural economist is by providing poor families with food, clothes and so on. And at municipality of (word not clear) natural adventure. They they they are having lots of money but they don't provide communities. So, we wanna change things and agricultural economists have more monies so the same I wanna change my home situations and so ons.

15.36. **Participant (F):** Living but I want to become to be a doctor because I really want to help others. I really want to tell help others that they are sick and.

15.37. **Interviewer:** It's Okay, she wants to say something.

15.38. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa am here to talk about myself, yaaa, at home aaaaa my my parents are not treating me well because of aaaa I don't know what is going at home because all the time when I when I when I try to sleep aaa my parents aaa kick me out and say hey Mpho what are you wanting aaaa in that house so I aaa …

15.39. **Interviewer:** Are you done? Just continue, let aaaaa him finish neh!

15.40. **Participant (M):** Me I want to aaa to talk truth mom yaaaa (asks to speak in SeTswana) my parents treating well mom so aaa when come aaaa yesterday my young brother called (name given) so she I don't know what's going on at home mom so aaaa he tried to to to to kill me, so I don't know why she will like to do that mom to me.

15.41. **Interviewer:** Your own brother?

15.42. **Participant (M)**: continues: Yaa

15.43. **Interviewer:** What did he do to you?

15.44. **Participant (M)**: continues: No I was at home mom, at the house so when I sleep she came to me and said, “hey Mpho voetsek” I should go out, yaaa so I don’t like that one yaaa, me I like to be a good man, mom and mmmm let me see, I want to be a doctor --- mom and I want to be a good learner at school and I want get aaa good results that I want, aa yes mom. At aaaa some people at school they are not, they dot like me and I don’t know why. Me I like them, yaaa, I like them because of aaaaa

15.45. **Interviewer:** Are you done, okay, if you are still thinking can give the others. So, guys mmm you can tell us about the challenges you're facing, it’s about your resilience so what are aaaa may be the issues or the stress that you have gone through it can be family or relationships and how did you manage to overcome them. How did you manage to overcome them? Did you get support from your family, support from your teachers or support from your friends so…?

15.46. **Participant (M):** Me like I was struggling with problems at home mom, like me and my brother we have that issue of not, of not like talking to each other communication, like lack of communication mom, like there was the other day that I went home like. I went home first like he was coming the way so like I got there so like, we used to talk like some of these days like we used to talk. Then there was that one-day light like he changed up on me, you see mom, he was not talking at all like he doesn't have the communication between the family you see mom he has that anger like is bas is basically the reason why I chose the career he has that anger like I don’t understand like it’s.

15.47. **Interviewer:** How does that affect you?

15.48. **Participant (M):** continues: mom it affects because like I need that like that bond from my brother, you see mom, like because like he need way like he needs to be my light like you see like mom, yes mom. So, he doesn’t do some of this staff mom like, I don’t know what is going on. I managed to get out of that problem because is like have someone to talk to my family, yes my sister, we use to talk and I talked to her about my problem then she then she gave me motivation (local language and comments) she encouraged me to do better. Then I just kept quiet even like yesterday,

let me say yesterday maybe this week like haven't been talking to my brother like the whole month mom, like it's been a month, we haven't been talking to each other. Then I just kept quiet you see, yes mom.

15.49. **Interviewer:** do you want to share something.

15.50. **Participant (F):** After, at home like there is a lack of communication. Then like my mom do IT at school. So, my my uncle said my mom has stored her money at her bank account what what what what so now my my mom changed he has a lot of momey so money changed her, they don't care about us. Every time he can he can buy clothes not clothes but (local language used) he doesn't care about us. So, after my sister's funeral, uncle changed, they drink lots of beer but so now life changed I stay with my grandmother, yaa so I bond, I bond, I bond with my grandmother. So now is my friend, I don't have a friend. My friend is only my grandmother.

15.51. **Interviewer:** You can talk about anything. You are still free to talk about whatever you want to share okay.

15.52. **Participant (F):** when it comes to family, I am okay but my aunt always get drunk. And when she got drunk she's more stubborn. So, then he always come with excuses. She starts fighting with my mother and those family we are living with, so my mother don't like talking too much. She always says you have to accept whatever is happening and let him be because the life she choosed she's the one who's been discussion of it. So when my family always talk, she doesn't like it because she thinks they've been thinking of him when she's not around. so always my mom always told me poor background doesn't mean we both having to have poor future. So she always talk much and families doesn't have anything to say with her. She has been starting to build her own house. She failed, then they have been stealing some furniture's that she bought. In a past few days he tried to go back at home apologize for what she has done at the beginning. So my family tried to accept the situation. That is she is in, they accepted apology then she's the one who started this thing again then they've kicked him out. Now she's stays far from the family. When he tries to speak to you uncles no one listens and her child are living with heart broken. They don't like what is happening because they can't live without their mother.

15.53. **Interviewer:** And how does that affect you?

15.54. **Participant (F)** continues: This affect me because I know the pain of living without parents.

15.55. **Participant (F):** Me I have this issue at home like everything that I do is like alright, but have this issue with my uncle. Like my uncle used to just shout at me even if I didn't anything. But alcohol he does drink a lot. He can drink let me say he can drink 12 bottles without thinking of what will she eat after drinking. So this this issue affect me a lot because sometimes I can't concentrate at the class of thinking what he has do to me like he used to just be beat me without doing anything or just shouting without doing anything. So, I have this feeling that I should tell my fellow like next door that I trust the most because there is this a family that we speak together like we share things, you see. So, I'm scared to tell the teachers and scared to tell someone who is trusted. So, I can make myself so strong but I tell someone else but when I come close to him to tell him this things, I feel like I could cry or just shout without anything that happen to me because of that feeling.

15.56. **Interviewer:** so how do you overcome that situation? what helps you to stay so calm and somebody when we see you we don't think you are going through?

15.57. **Participant (F):** continues: sometimes I just think about some good things that can remove all the situations that happening.

15.58. **Interviewer:** Is there anyone that you can talk to either your friends or teachers at home? You don't have any sauce or support. Okay guys, you've spoken about the issues surrounding your identity how different you see yourself now after the past few months. You've spoken about the challenges that you're facing or you have gone through and how you've managed to overcome them. So mmmm if look at both experiences mmm do you think the challenges that you have gone through have made you a different person. Do you see yourself like differently, how? Just if anyone wants to share one or two words, then you can tell us. Does it make you define yourself differently, anyone. I see people nodding.

15.59. **Participant (M):** mom I see myself as a different person because like the anxiety that I was living in like it's it's a fog in my mind you see mom, like it's no longer there because like some of the things that I was that I was about to do, and I was thinking to do like it's no longer there. So, now like I'm fine, I don't have that kind of stress in my mind, yes mom.

15.60. **Interviewer:** Thank you.

15.61. **Participant (F):** the thing that I used to do in my past I changed for the better person now. I don’t go to the tavern every day and I don’t drink alcohol. I don't smoke hooker pipe now. So, I'm change, I’m I change I changed for the good things. I don’t, I always stay at home and always people ask me where I am because they used to see me at the tavern(comments).

15.62. **Interviewer**: somebody

15.63. **Participant (F):** the challenges that I have been through them has changed my life better than before, because I’m no longer thinking about them. I’m now thinking about better things like chilling with my friends having fun, you see, yaa.

15.64. **Participant(F):** Now I'm changed I’m different than last time. I don't drink beer, smoke weed and so on. And I accepted that for my friend that will always gossiping about people us and people will always people, people and people always talk so this we are fine about it.

15.65. **Interviewer:** I thing you have said everything you wanted to talk about. Okay, then aaaa we will end our session and yaa, the discussion was mm good, thank you for everything that you shared just know that it will be kept confidential.

Wave III-Focus Group 2 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2022/01/29
Duration of focus group / interview	57 minutes 40 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	9
Name of informed consent hard copies	9

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently?
1.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	9						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 1 Male participant
- 8 Female participants

16.1. **Interviewer:** So good morning, everyone. I'm Catherine Shirima and currently registered as a PhD student in psychology at the University of the Free State. I'm conducting research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents. And mmmmm yes adolescents are people of your age and the research is about mmmm specifically the adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in South African context. We will be talking about identity and resilience. So, what is identity? Identity involves an active questioning. So most of you at this age, you have lots of questions either about the values, the kind of friends you want to keep, the kind of beliefs that you have, you've got lots of questions around that and the kind of roles you play in the society. How do you want to be seen in the society? What do you contribute as an adolescent? Questions around your careers. What kind of persons do you want to become in the society. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back when you're faced with hardships? When you meet challenges in your life, and you manage to overcome them, it shows that you are resilient. So, resilience just means you being able to overcome problems, challenges and hardships. Okay. So, in our discussion, I want you to talk about your own views and experiences. It's about you it's about me as a person, not about my friends or my cousins. Okay, my own experiences, about your identity or your resilience. And in this group, we will have a few rules and the first one is that everything we talk about will be kept confidential and there's no right or wrong answer. It's about our own experiences. So, if somebody is sharing, let's not laugh at them or think that what they're sharing is not true. It is their own experiences. We don't know each other fully. So, but if you feel that there may questions we are talking about that make you feel uncomfortable, you can refrain from answering them. Your participation is voluntary, right? You all agreed to take part in this focus group interview. But if you want to leave now, it's okay you can leave and there'll be no consequences. Okay? If you really feel that this is not for you, you can leave. This session will be audio recorded. So, if you really feel comfortable and willing to continue, you can fill in the biographical questionnaires. So, the first area of discussion that we gonna focus on is about identity. So, talk to me about your own identity, who are you? What do you think about yourself, how do you define yourself?

16.2. **Participant (M):** mmmm what I gonna talking about is about friends my friend mmmm actually let me start. Am gonna talk about my friend because few of my friends are bad influencers, some of them they are not bad influencers. So, I was struggling to, to choose friends who I'm gonna ride with, so but at the end I did decide on my own that I'm gonna, I'm not gonna choose friends anymore. I'm just gonna do my own things at my own. My friends do other things. They sleep. They sleep in the guest house. They do stuff that they can never been been forgetted yea.

16.3. **Participant (F):** When it comes to when it comes to mmmm bad influencers and good influences. I don't have friends, I don't have a problem problem with that because in life we have good and bad so according to me, I don't have problems with bad and good influencers friends.

16.4. **Interviewer:** How do you see yourself what kind of person are you?

16.5. **Participant (F):** I see myself as a person who have a great future. When if when if I see on my achieving my goals and I'm small myself is a person who just mmmm who just want to leave …

16.6. **Participant (F):** my career, when I grew up I wanted to be pilot but then pilot wants physics, life sciences other subjects but then pure maths and physics are killing subject for me. I shall find out for me that I wouldn't be pilot, but I wish to … when I grow up I can be a pilot but then my career I won't be a pilot anymore because I choose Tourism and Geography

16.7. **Interviewer:** How comes you didn't take physics and pure maths?

16.8. **Participant (F):** They hard for me mom.

16.9. **Interviewer:** Did anyone help you to change to take geography and Tourism, did you speak to somebody?

16.10. **Participant (F):** No ma'am. Because in * there is pure maths, life sciences and Tourism there are no other subjects ma'am.

16.11. **Interviewer:** so, in this school there is no pure maths?

16.12. **Participant (F):** there are ma'am, but for me they are – subject, I changed.

16.13. **Participant (M):** asaa I see myself as a better person. But I got a problem with anger issues. Yes, in in in three past months aa I talked to somebody with this being anger issue so he told me how to get away of it. So, I tried by locking myself at home and keep myself busy and with it deed help a lot, it did helps me out. So, if I want to be a

better person, the way I want to be a better person, a lot of pull up my socks so that I can see myself for is far. Aaaa Yep.

16.14. **Participant (F):** aaa as for my friends aaammm as for me for my friends, my friends are not good for me to tell you because when I was …

16.15. **Interviewer:** so, you are saying when you're in grade eight…

16.16. **Participant (F):** I was in grade eight eish ma'am I'm not ready because it's too bad for me. I have, when I was in grade 8, I have some problems from my home. And also I have problems from my friends and the problem that I was the problem the problem that I was the problem that I have for myself is that I have a calling. I think you understand what I'm saying when I when I say I have a calling that comes on n grade 8. Then I have only wan friend, I think that friend was a good person but after seeing me … eish ma'am I'm not ready.

16.17. **Interviewer:** okay.

16.18. **Participant (F)**: in last three months, I noticed that I'm lesbian then, when I'm telling people that I lesbian they are laughing me so that I don't like to talk about that am a lesbian.

16.19. **Interviewer:** … How do you see yourself? What about your goals, how do you see yourself at this stage?

16.20. **Participant (F)**: as a kid then I realized that my friends that I trust is not good for me. So then after realizing that, I think I have to move to move on with my life because they find that the friend that I have is good for me. I was sick on grade 8 because I have those callings, so then I thought it was my friend so that I can share with her, then she was not understanding my problems. So, then I trust her deep I trust her with all my heart. I think it was only the one who can I share my secret with beside but does not mean my parents I cannot share with them. I came but I think also I was I was taking my as my family friends. I was taking like so that led the person one talking about it was my my best friend on grade eight. That person I told her everything that happens to me when I was it was when I told her about everything what happens to me. She told me that I have … because before those calling (some local language) before before this is before they didn't show up. Those my friend I was going with him out doing stupid stupid, like we we were doing those out things, were going to tarvens, we didn't focus on schools. That is that is why my friend was so shocked that

I have the callings. So, my friend starting to change so I ask myself what happened to my friend why she behaving bad way like the way she behaved to me. Then we were on December writing examination. But I was not like I was not sick bad badly. I was sick like not really bad. So, this friend of mine I hate her. I'm sorry to say that but I hate because she did something that I didn't expect her to do. Because she hates me badly. And when I told her that I was on grade six some of I told her that those callings to to show up, there was a someone at home who wanted to assault me but she didn't assault me. I told her everything but she everything that I told her she I was thinking that is going to keep it she's not going to spread it over over the class. But some of my class mates knows about everything that I told her even my bad things so that is why now I don't trust friends because friends are a friend are bad, yes, I feel betrayed because of friends. And I realize late for I realize friend are bad persons. I'm a friendly person. I like people and I'm a simple person because I don't like those people fI take someone, like mom, me as for me, me after because I experienced lots things after my mom's death. Like but as for me, I'm a great person is only a good person, but I don't like those people, they are judging other persons. I don't like those things. And I don't like to see others suffer like also most of people they can think that I'm a bad person because of I don't like lying totally because I I I explained a lot of things because before my mum before my mum was a live I was So stupid I was doing things that my mum was always telling me stop doing this do it. Then I was thinking No, Mommy's going to leave until I caught up. So then before after my mom's death I realized a lot of things over know things are not good. So, then I started talking to myself that I should change. So, then I can know what is wrong with this right? So, then I can know myself better after that. But as for my career I wanna, as for my career, when I was a child I wanted to be a lawyer. But because of the because of the changes that--- I wanted to be a lawyer, but when I getted at grade 10, I started changing my mind. So I said if I want to be a lawyer like, I started thinking that a lawyer to be a lawyer is going to take me for seven years okay mom at varsity. So, I think I should change my career that I wanted I wanted to be when I was a child. So then when I get at grade 10 I choose to to do a tourism. So then when I go to varsity I think I will do maybe teaching or a nurse, but I'm sure about teaching.

16.21. **Interviewer:** did you get any guidance from anyone?

16.22. **Participant (F):** yes, is from my sister I chose geography from sister. She is the one who guide me what to do, thank you.

16.23. **Participant (F):** going to talk about y career, when when I was a child I wanted to become I wanted to become a social worker. First time I the first career I wanted to be a lawyer because I wanted to help people who were denied justice. I wanted to I wanted to get justice for my father because my father was killed brutally. So I wanted to to get just for my father but but he did, but I changed my mind then all of a sudden I changed my mind then that I wanted to become a social worker because of I don't love kids, I don't want to see a kid suffering because it breaks my heart. I wanted to help every I wanted to help old people because old people know they need help. Who knows. So, I wanted I wanted to become that person who was to help them, you know, have old people parents, children, you know, I wanted to become a better person after my father's death. After my father died when I was a child when I was maybe 11 or 12 years when I was in prime when I when I was in grade 4, no after my father's death troubles that I was a trouble started. I faced I I I faced so many challenges in life, you know, when I was in grade 5 I started getting sick. You know I almost died because of that illness. So, my mother was there for me. So, any before my father died, I needed my father the most. I needed my father. My father wasn't there for me. I needed him. I wanted to be close to my father like Like father like daughter. I wanted that relationship between my family. So, I I I I kept asking myself why me? Why all of this why is it because of my father was what was it was always drunk. You know? I wanted that to be, I wanted to, I wanted to be close to my father. So, I couldn't just say that I couldn't accept my father's death. My father that method my father is dead, I couldn't have said that, I started hating I started hating my father when my father was dead, I started hating him, I started asking my grandmother why my father why why my father was not there. No, I started having anger issues. I started getting angry at everyone get angry at my cousin's, you know? My My mother told me that this this problem that I had this, this problem, the anger issues. My father once had that anger issues. So, I started asking myself what if, I started asking myself what if, no.

16.24. **Interviewer:** okay, if you want to talk about it it's okay we can go to the person.

16.25. **Participant (F)**: how I see myself? I see myself as a better person. I like people. I like to share my things with other people. But then I used to have a friend. My friend was

my best friend. I loved her, he loved me but then I was asked myself why did he change at me? He talked, he liked talking with me. They were enjoying. But then he find finds another friend at school. So it was on Monday, I went to his house like I feel like okay then I have to go home because he don't want to talk to me. When I went home. There was there was there was a guy who called. There was a guy who I like to talk with him. He's my coach at netball, then he asked me, Cathy, why do you and a friend not talking to each other? I told her no mom, he changed at me, I don't know why. So last year I used to have anger issues. By then this year I told myself that this thing mom, have to change. So, ma'am, I think that ending him I changed, I have no problems.

16.26. **Interviewer**: what are your dreams?

16.27. **Participant (F):** I think my time is too long because I'm no longer going to be a pilot because I don't know that when you want to be a pilot is touring applying for it or not?

16.28. **Participant (F):** I'm seeing myself is a great person but not perfect, when it comes to careers I wanted to be fashion designer but things changed and past first few days my mother asked me what do I want to become so I told her that they don't know so aaaa. So, I asked her that (some local language) I told her that IT, HR or social worker. She says she said that and so from now I don't know but because she has said that I might be doing …I've never faced mmm problems with friends. I'm not friendly. I'm not a person who likes to go visiting friends. So, when it comes to friends, I haven't faced a problem because she has been my friend since from primary (local language) when it comes to friends and family issues, I never had family issues. So since from past was six months I see myself like I haven't changed am that old person.

16.29. **Participant (F)**: in the past in the past six months in the past 6 months, my friend, some of my friends are bad influencers and only I can trust my cousin because she is my friend…So my cousin always tried to encourage me not to do bad things. So, my friends always, always tell me that I must go out with them at night and do such a thing. So, my cousin told them no I should I should not listen to them because because they go out into some some bad thing and they want to influence me to do so. So, there was a day that my friend came to my place and told me that there is party there is a party there is a party somewhere else I should go with them. So, I agree to go with them. And when we get there, they get drunk and want me to get drunk too, so I

refused to drink and they forced me, so so I decided to drink with them and my cousin … to go out with them. So, we got home late and their parents didn't shout at them. So, my my, my parents shout at me and tell me that I shall go with them and what if they rape me at the street, who to encourage me to drink alcohol and who I was I wasn't that bad girl to go out late. So, I started having conflict with my parents and and so I started having conflicts with my parents and they told me that I should not go out again late and drink alcohol. So, in in in last year my mother went to Rustenburg (poor sound) to work at Rustenburg and took my siblings with her and leave me alone with my aunt, and always my aunt wat to tell me that you should go to your mother so always I feel so bad. So, when I call my mother and tell they started to say I want to cry in my mother and she is not fare with me no one no one no one will my mother won't come something like that. So, my mother told me that I should leave them alone and continue studying and focus, she will come. So, in so in mmmm December last year my mother my mother sent me so that I can come at Rustenburg so my aunt took that money and tell me that if my mum want me there she should send me money to come, she should send me money to come. I should not go there, something like that. And telling me that if my mom wants me if wanted to see me she will have she will have been coming to see me for herself. So…

16.30. **Interviewer:** okay, somebody else, guys you can share about mmmm resilience, the challenges that we've gone through, let's share about the challenges that we have gone through, how we managed to overcome them. Okay. It can be challenges from home at school or in the community. If anyone wants to talk about anything mmmm that comes to mind you're most welcome.

16.31. **Participant (F):** Last year in October when it was my my aunt lobola negotiations something had happened to me. On that day it was Saturday afternoon. Some there was the other guy, an old man who assaulted me like sexually assaulted me. I didn't even tell anyone because at that day, everyone was really happy. Everyone was drinking and was full of joy at the day I didn't even I didn't even bother to tell my my cousins my cousin that I trust so much. I didn't I asked myself why I asked myself why me out of all people. Why this old man chose to assault me don't we have the old people why? Why this old man chose to assault me. No. I didn't even tell I didn't even tell anyone. I was about to tell my grandmother. So, my grandmother was very happy.

My grandmothers were very happy. My uncles, everyone was were, was very happy. I I was so scared because I was crying inside. My heart was very broken. Even so … I even thought that what if I tell my grandmother and that men she's uses to lie and he chooses to lie that he didn't assault me. So, so I told myself that it's okay. That's how life is. It took time and it took days to forget about that. No, it took days it took a lot of time to forget about that. So that's why I started hating when I started hating boys I started hating boys. I started hating men, you know. I started hating all of them. When when other guys so when other guys when other guys stalks, me and tell me in telling me that he loves me so I used to insult I I I insult I insult him at all I insult. I insulted him. I've told myself that I'm never ever I told myself that I would never ever let this kind of thing happen to me because it once happened when I was in primary. It once happens when I was in primary in grade 5 and grade 7. No. So so, so in January in January, I started having problem with when it comes to choosing subjects so I chose maths and physics, because in because physics, I Pass it very well with level five so Maths, Maths was was a difficult subject for me. So, I chose maths and physics because of when it comes to career, I still now confused, I wanted to first I wanted to to become a social worker or a doctor, second, I wanted to become a lawyer. Third I wanted to become yeah, social worker, yaaa social worker. So, So I told my mother that my told my mother that I have problems when it comes to choosing subjects so my mother asked me that my mother asked me that. What do you which subjects do you want to choose? So, I told my mother that I don't know, I'm still confused. I don't know my head spinning. I don't know. Um um so it was so it was the day when we when we started choosing subjects so I started realising something that my my my grandmother my grandmother used to tell me that when you choose subjects, don't let don't let anyone force you to do to do the subject that you don't want to do. Don't don't let don't let don't let bad friends influence you, no, so, so I didn't trust that anyone so I don't have friends, I only have one friend which is my best best best friend. I trust her with my secrets. What happens to me, you know, we we used to share we used to share. I can't trust anyone just like that.

16.32. **Interviewer:** So how do you uummm what helped you overcome the challenges faced, for example the abuse, the assault. What support did you have, who helped you?

16.33. **Participant (F)** continues: I didn't even tell my mother I didn't even tell my grandmother, my cousin, my aunt, or even my brother, I didn't whether to tell them, it, even do today, this is a secret, you know, I didn't tell the secret I I was scared that when I tell my mother or maybe my my brother they will start judging me, you know, I was I was I was very scared of that. I told myself that. I told myself that I told myself that I I want I told myself that I'm strong. I can overcome some challenges, so I overcomed so many challenges in life, the challenges that I was facing in primary, at home everywhere. So so even though I I Even though I even though I hate, what I like about myself is that I am I I I have a self-esteem, you know, I I some other people hate me because of I talk too much. So, I I I I used to tell them that's who I am. I can never change myself. I can never kill myself for that. No, I am a very talkative person. I am a nice person. But even though sometimes a I get stubborn when my grandmother reproving reprimands me about this, I get stubborn, so my grandmother used to tell me that you are you you you are a hot headed? You you are stubborn. I cannot listen to anyone.

16.34. **Interviewer:** Okay, or how do the challenges that you've faced define who you are, have they change the way you see yourself, have they changed your personality, have they changed the goals that you have?

16.35. **Participant (F):** They have changed my personality because last year I was a I was thinking that I was a bad person because I was not listening to my mom. I was going to the taverns with my friends, yea, such things but this year I think I have changed because I'm no longer going to the taverns I wanna focus in my books.

16.36. **Interviewer:** Mmh, someone else,

16.37. **Participant (F)**: because I don't have a sister or a brother, I'm the only one for my mother and father, the only child, and I don't have someone that when I have problems and share that with, mmm I have learnt to since I started sharing like keeping mmmm my problems with me, I'm I'm now when I have problems and don't tell anyone and and and make that nothing happened because I've never shared my problems with anyone and keep them with myself because I told myself that on, on, on on on on on on life I came alone then let me just do my things alone, be me and be strong for what I'm facing. So, when is come to sharing my problems, it is hard for me because I'm used to not share my problems with anyone.

16.38. **Interviewer**: Mmmm do you want to say what your problem is or is just okay.

16.39. **Participant (F)** continues: It's okay mom.

16.40. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else, who wants to say something?

16.41. **Participant (F)**: Like for now, ma'am. I want someone who I can share my secret with and that person I need to trust her, I don't know someone who gonna take my things out when (local language) (interviewer: when you're talking about them) Yes, ma'am. When I …each other, I don't want someone who gonna talk my things out, I want someone who gonna keep them ma'am, yes ma'am, because I have … no ma'am is fine.

16.42. **Participant**: I have been going through a lot ma'am.

16.43. **Interviewer:** So, you need a friend that you can trust.

16.44. **Participant (F):** Yes ma'am, even if it's not a friend, someone.

16.45. **Interviewer:** So, even an adult, you are looking for an adult figure that you can share with, either a teacher or anyone.

16.46. **Participant (F):** Anyone ma'am, yes ma'am.

16.47. **Interviewer:** she wanted to say something…

16.48. **Participant (F):** Mmmmm my cousin is the one that I I I ma'am, my cousin is the one who I I my cousin is the one who I told him my problems and, and even and even when we angry to each other she never shared anything to anyone. And, and, and sometimes, sometimes, sometimes when I share my problems with her, she took it personally and it hurting her. And and she's the only one who I can tell everything to her, no one else, my cousin only.

16.49. **Participant (F):** Mmmmm so me too I have problems and there's nothing that is changing because I things is getting worse, right now as I speak because I don't trust anyone but I trust my sister but my sister did, my sister did not understand me better, totally at all, she did not understand me, because there are some of the things that happens to me and I'm going, I'm going through, so but as for now, I told my I told myself that maybe even in teachers, there is no teacher in ** that I trust, to to be honest, because there was a teacher that I trust on primary at ** but I don't have a chance to talk to her, but I need someone who can understand my problems and the person who will understand my family issues where we are going through a lot of problems after I have three I have three little sisters today that --- I have three little sisters and I have

two sisters that are older. So then at our family after our mom's death we face a lot of problems. We have faced we have faced a lot of problems. We go through a lot of pains, so but the thing that I was I was the thing that was making me strong that I should I should believe in praying so I shouldn't give up. I should focus on y study because my sister is working two of my sisters is working, she's taking care of us but we have problems at home, because that problems, like I'm sorry to say that I'm sorry to say that I can't tell it, yes mom because I'm going to tell is deeply a deep secret --- had maybe they can tell them cry because of is never bad. So, then this week I need someone who can help.

16.50. **Participant (F):** Mmmmm my personality, (silence) people like to show mmmm

16.51. **Interviewer:** It's okay if you feel uncomfortable ….

16.52. **Participant (F):** continues: and I like to talk too much with people and mmm (local content, laughing a lot) …I drink alcohol I drink.

16.53. **Interviewer:** Okay, mmmm are you done, okay, anyone else who wants to something? Otherwise… Yeah, anything else for today? It looks like you've exhausted everything you wanted to say. Okay, yeah. Thank you for your participation. And yeah, this was our last mmmm focus group. Thank you very much.

Wave III-Focus Group 3 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2022/01/29
Duration of focus group / interview	59 minutes 11 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	10
Name of informed consent hard copies	10

Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Race	Ethnic group	Home Language	Adolescent / In between / grown up	Doing currently ?
1.	M	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
3.	M	22	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
4.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
5.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	15	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
8.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
10.	F	16	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	10						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 4 Male participants
- 6 Female participants

17.1. **Interviewer:** Good morning everyone mmmmm I'm Catherine Shirima currently doing my PhD at the University of the Free State, and mmm I'm conducting this research to identify the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents that is young people of your age living in disadvantaged communities in a South African context. So, what is identity if you want to define identity? Things that you should look out for is about values, what kind of values do you keep? Your beliefs and your roles. At your age you already play different roles in your community, at home and even at school. So, the different roles you play in the society, all together they form part of your identity, how you define yourself, whereas, resilience is the capacity to bounce back when face with hardships, your ability to overcome challenges. So, in our discussion I want you to talk about your own experiences, personal experiences, neh, not my friend's, so don't talk about my friend's experiences or my cousin's or my sister's. It's just about you, neh. And your experiences on how you see your identity formation and on how or what you think about resilient development. For us to run the group well we have a few rules, the first one is that everything we talk about here remains here, it's kept confidential. We're not going to share anything outside, okay. So, we should respect each other's opinion okay, when somebody is talking let's not laugh and let's not look at them to make them feel shy, we just listen and not say what are they saying is false or it's wrong, it is their experience. But if you feel uncomfortable in sharing any questions that will be in the discussion you can always refrain from answering it. Remember that your participation is voluntary it means you willingly accepted taking in this focus group. Mmmm so this session will be recorded, if you feel that you are not ready for this session, you can please leave and there are consequences if you decide to leave aaaa the focus group. But before we start you can fill in the biographical questionnaires for record sake. So, we can start. I'm going to ask you to think about your identity, who are you? … and what does that mean to you?

17.2. **Participant (M):** My experiencing since last year last 6 months ago, I experienced a lot of things that I don't know if I'm the only one person experiencing this especially challenges about schools, school that I'm attending because of the person that I am I think I'm a strong person who has potential to make it but as I'm experiencing things in school I'm experiencing that each and every one in school has a potential but the

only thing is that some of us we come from a different background where some of us we have some challenges that we can't share with other people, maybe our teachers, so we just take things easily and keep quiet don't share how we feel and the challenges that we are going through because of the other students that we are attending school with we can't share our challenges with them because of when we share our challenges with them they are going to tell their and that is the only thing that make us as children to be to make ourselves confident to be down so that we can lose our self-esteem but as I am and I stand for myself, the challenges that am always facing is that when I'm at school I see that I'm a strong enough person who can make it in life, but what I see is that there is no one teacher who take us equally, maybe if you don't understand something and you have challenges you come from home when you see that you are enough and you need to share with someone they will not listen to you as you want you to support you or to give you hope that you will make it, but as I am I experienced that me as I'm I can make it but if I have hope that I will do everything in the way that I can do it, even if now because of am in grade 12 am stressing about my life experience that I will be experiencing next year, because of next year it will be where I will start to face the challenges because it will be a time that I've to achieve my goals that I wanted to achieve in life, as I wanted to be someone who is living a wealthy life who see things in a different way because of as we are people and teachers we have eyes but the eyes we have we see the world in different way we cannot see like others can see, they can see that the world is an easy way but the world is unfair because of we have many career choices that we want to achieve but some of us we are not achieving because of we don't have support that we need when we are facing the challenges but I have one person who I like to believe and faith that I want in life I will achieve it only if I have faith and strong potentially on my studies, I know that will make it one day and I will have what I was wanted to have in life, that is all I can explain about my life. Because of when we are student, we think but we don't think outside the box, most of us we think inside the box because of we think we can't make it in life but as I am I see we can make it in life if we have faith and hope, that's all I can talk about my identity.

17.3. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else.

17.4. **Participant (F):** Aaaa about my identity, I'm just a person who has a lot of anger inside, you can see how tiny I'm but the anger inside me is very big and the past six months I had lots of fight arguments with my mom. And I just hate the fact that I can't control my anger. And I still I still regret about stream that I choose last year though I didn't want to do that stream I'm doing right now but there is this teacher that made me like I'm a fool I can't to do those stream aaa that stream was based on the career I wanted to choose I just wanted to see myself as an accountant in the next coming years but the career I choosed now it won't allow me, so I'm still struggling asking myself that how will I cope when I finish school this career will do and it will benefit to me now, you see. And the friends I choose yaaa are those who can guide me when I'm wrong, they can tell me that this and this (wabona). They always guide me about good things even sometimes bad things, you know, friends are not good all the time, yaaa. And the person I see myself in the next coming years, I might be a better person but what I choose doesn't … aaaa I will be the good one and though I don't have a supporters I I always do my things on my own ways, I don't like to share many things with people because of they don't guide me, they always tell me to do what I don't wanna what I don't like. That's why still now I don't have someone who guides me even on life, who wanna tell me support me, even my mom doesn't do that, yaaa.

17.5. **Participant (M):** Morning fellow attendants mmmm due to home situations and peers, the peers that we live in I mean the next past years I have been through a lot and I mean dealing with a lot of things. Mmmm some of some of the things was was like my home situation, everything was starting to get mess and I couldn't cope with myself. I couldn't be myself, I was facing lot of things, challenges going through trauma and stuff and stuff. So, I firstly had to start maintaining myself mmm and being myself in order to be in order to be apart from from my home situation I was trying to avoid everything, you know, just to be in the safe side. But it was really affecting me in a critical way because I couldn't concentrate at school, being myself around people and it was really taking, playing a big part, playing a a a big role in my life. And my peers, when I failed my grade10 mmm last of last year it was a bit of a challenge because my friends were in a in a in the next grade while I was behind I was left behind. It really put pressure in me because I had to study more, I had to I wanted to see myself with them, at the same level as they were, but then, I got to realize that all

I need to do I had to focus on my school work, my studies to be the next grade, develop and develop myself, so I started focusing concentrating and ever since I have I have been focusing and concentrating a lot has changed even though I have been through some challenges but a lot has changed. I I think I have I have gained so much, even matured because I got to I got I got to see things the other way round, you know, because of the experience I was going through so I started seeing myself in another position and another level and another way of doing things the right way and focusing yaaa and a lot happens especially when you are a teenager, the thing is you need to focus on yourself to overcome everything you go through more especially challenges, you need to be yourself, it needs to come within your heart first to face other things or to go through some challenges because if you are not yourself, you pretend to be something you are not or somebody you are not, it is going to be hectic for you or it is going to be critical for you, to catch up with the kind of people you meet more especially friends, when you began to meet new friends and carry on with their pace how they going through the levels and the standards you are not going to be myself yourself unless really really you are forced to be in that kind aaaa at that kind of state, thank you.

17.6. **Participant (M):** Yaaaa morning morning my fellow attendants and morning to you mom. Yaa speaking of experiences aaaa for the past 6 months aaaa we speak of depression, stress those are the things that I have been having lately and anxiety. I once thought of staying alone just having some me time because at from where I come from there's a lot of people who like to discriminate, there is a lot of take downs, there is many things and that start to make you feels like it started making me feels like I'm nothing in that world and it make me to stress, I stress a lot, I I I even sometimes cry as I thought of my future and everything I wanna do in life. So the main point as I'm speaking about experiences is being quite hard, yaaa is quite hard even now because everyone you try to speak to they don't listen they just think you are bluffing and they don't take you seriously because they probably just look you in the eyes and tell you that they care of course caring is there but are you are you are you crying with me, are you support are you supportive, but a lot of people are just refraining but yet we are still I'm still, I'm still moving on with this life, this depression, anxiety even now I speak a lot. I'm a person who like to speak, I'm very talkative in a bad and good way,

so sometimes I speak in a good way I speak I I tell some I tell somebody that this and this and then they can't handle the truth so they take it as if I am the one discriminating them because definitely can't handle the truth, so in a bad way I tell you the truth of course. Obviously, it's in the bad way you might take it bad, but I know how to apologize because everyone makes mmmm mistakes, in each and every mistake I make to anyone I apologize even here in school, I apologize. But for the mistake I am I am not credited on I don't, cause what cause what right even now what stressed me even more is just is that my future? Because each and every kid nowadays aaaaa they don't have they have different backgrounds. They come from poor rich families no matter how where you come from but I come from… okay, my family is not well fortune but at least I'm be cared of by my father, my mother's staying in another place. So that thing made me starting thinking that these people don't seriously take takes me seriously and they yaaaa they start to make me feel like they don't care anymore. They made me feel I don't have parents, so what's happening right now is that even now at home I'm not speaking to lot of people, even my siblings yaaa because none of them takes me seriously as I said the things, they think I'm bluffing each and every time I tell them my serious stuff. Probably they don't listen. So once I speak of my future, once I speak of what I want to do in life, they will start talking about their experiences in life instead of giving me advices on how how to clear a way and how to how to make your way out to take yourself serious because they need to advise me so so that I can be encouraged, they need actually actually they need to encourage me to move to the next step but clearly that's not what they doing right now, instead they are pulling me down so far from my experiences in the last six months it's been quite hard. And it's been it's been unusual of course probably is just a mess because nothing's coming up and I I I failed grade 11 am now repeating grade 11 and it made it made quite a big challenge. And this year is very challenging of course, they thought they thought it will be the last year so they will show me that they want me improved and they want me to to develop. So, I disappointed them, yes, I agree but they must not show me that. They are disappointed in the way that they don't want to hear anything from me. Of course, failure is failure we take it from where we left off and we try again. But definitely they are they are discouraging me because I failed and it's the first time I'm failing. So, the thing I'm I'm now changing. Of course, we all do bad

things but bad things are sometimes you need think through them and see them in a brighter side like see everything a bright side to at least give that person a credit that you tried there and there, but not to discriminate them and discourage them. It clearly shows that what they care of is they care of what's you are doing they don't care of myself. They just care of what I'm only doing.

17.7. **Interviewer:** And how has that impacted on you on who you are, how you see yourself?

17.8. **Participant (M)** continues: Yaa it made me it made me see myself as useless. It made me seem useless. Yaaaa it made me sesms like my life is ending because if everyone starts losing hope, obviously I will to. So, it's either am choosing to regain hope or choosing to give up completely. But from where I am right now I didn't choose to to just give up I choose to pull up my socks and take it from where it left off. Thank you.

17.9. **Participant (F):** Yaaa about me yaaa, the challenges the goals Yeah. So, I take myself as a strong person and a bubbly even though I'm shy but I'm a bubbly person a loving, loving one, and these things the strongest the bubbling neh the … and the lovings it showed it seems like it's a it's a definition to be like am a fool of something because they always took advantage of me because I showed I showed them a lot of love. And I showed them that I cared for them so that made them think that I'm a stupid person or kind or something like that, yaaa is one of the challenges that I faced, yaaa is one of the challenges that I faced and that I had endured on them. And I kind of feel like the challenges that I faced like people taking me like a fool. It made me feel like having the the the introspection alone. It made me tell myself …you you you're not a fool, you know. Even though people take you as one, you just even though they take you as a fool keep on helping them keep on doing this for them even if they made you they made a mistake to you keep on helping them. Don't show them that don't show don't pretend the heat the heat like that you're that made me feel like a strong person. Because no one can ever do it, some people will return the hatred and doing all these things and yeah and witchcraft and that, and yaaa me failing my grade 8 me failing my grade made me made me feel like I'm not enough you know, I started feeling like I started feeling like aaaa started feeling I started losing interest in school. I started feeling like I'm not good enough to be around the school because especially when my friends are behind are are are at the top are are ahead of me, you know I started losing

interest. I started not talking to them because I felt like they're the ones that were were denying me on my school work but then but then I started I started doing self-introspection, telling myself oh no, you did this on your own, you failed this grade on your own. You didn't study. Don't blame them don't do this. And they also told me even though I failed the grade, that doesn't mean is the end of the world. So, I kind of feel that the friends that I chose is the friends that are good enough for me because they are friends that always tell me what is wrong and what is right you know, they always guide me in this path. And my goals my goals are to finish school, going to the university and work and start securing the bag, taking care of my mom and my siblings and start, just secure the bag secure, secure and all that yaaa.

17.10. **Participant (F):** About my experiences, lately six months ago I experienced a lot about me and also about my life. Things a lot of things happened a lot of things I experienced because it was too much emotionally and the challenges that I faced was really bad. Because it it it already affected me emotionally and also physically because of I started I started to choose my other path of a way and the friends that I had it was the loyal friends and those friends some of them there was there was a good friends and some of them were bad because of they were advising me on the other way that I didn't think that I will I will really talk really talk with them. But other friends were good to me because they already advise me that the things that I was doing I was wrong, it is very unacceptable. Now I chose them because of they they, I will go far with them because of the thing that they are advising me with, they are things that I will need in my life and my goals that I want to face them it was the goal I want to go far with life and I want to be someone in life because of I want to help my mother on the path that she's going on. And I want to help her with my siblings because the challenges from now own they are hard and unacceptable because I didn't that my life was going to go that way, I was thinking that I was going to have a better life but I want to push harder on school and I want to push a lot of things that, I want to push the the subject that I chose at school harder and I want to take it seriously so that I can I can go far on life so that my mom,I can help my mom on other things that she will need also that the things that my siblings siblings will want and need on their school and on their homes so that so that I want I want they won't struggle enough like I struggled on my previously previously. My previous life was so emotionally

was so hard because I had to push lot things alone. And there are so many, I have two lives and I have to live with it because they are differently so hard with them because now on now on I've chosen that those life are mine no one can choose that no one can cannot come any way way he or she comes so that she can tell me that this, the life I have chosen is a wrong way because of the life I chose I chose with a reason, I didn't chose it because of I like it I chose it because it will end it will ends me somewhere else not the life I didn't want and end with the life that I want I have to push harder with that one.

17.11. **Participant (F):** About my identity, nna I'm such a shy person. I'm I'm I', such a normal person and ordinary girl, I like I can --- of something it sometimes depends on people around me who am who am with. I have also went through some difficult challenges I experience a lot of things which I don't feel comfortable to share and one thing that makes me happy is that I have got such such supportive, supportive parents, supportive parents. They always support me no matter what kind of things I'm going through, no matter how hard it is they always support me, they always got my back.

17.12. **Participant (M):** What makes me that feel like I'm a strong person who has confidence is that I face tough challenge in a very young age, the challenges I faced is that since I was young, before I can start school I lose both parents by the year 2006 That it's been 17 years from now, but after losing them I was not attending school. But I was staying with my, my aunt she wasn't wanted me to go to school buy by the year 2010 I got someone who take me to the school by age of 10 years is the year that I started my grade 1, then I got through primary school I didn't fail there till I'm in grade eight till grade nine till grade by grade 10 then I fail my grade 10, by the time I fail my grade 10 I talk to myself that as I am and as we people we have to learn to our mistakes so I started to change my life there, I started to focus on my studies because of what my experiences is that where come from it's just behind the tree. But where I'm going is very long journey, and I have to face many challenges. So, from there started to be other person because of what I think is that me, what I'm lack of is the support from my parent but that challenges I handled it in a solution that each and every time when am around people I'm not thinking too much. I'm just laughing with them and being kind to avoid more thinking about emotions and what challenges I

face. So, as I am I think I'm a strong person who can make it in life without both parents or with them, thank you.

17.13. **Participant (M):** About myself I'm a strong person, I I take myself serious and my personality personality is the only thing that's keeping me up, I I am calm, I'm simply an easy person yaaa I am talkative as I said previously, I'm talkative in a good in a bad way but mostly in good way, quite across I like to speak to everyone even though i don't know i don't know you but I will forced to speak to and I I just myself alone Yeah, I think I can make it in life since is quite hard in my life, yaaa. So, I think I can push as I'm and I think I actual I don't think I'm a strong person, I know that I'm a strong person because a lot of things I experienced I experienced them I went to them and it was just overtaking, I overtook them, I even forgot them, are still in mind now. Even even now they are the ones that are pushing me to do better in life. Since I got challenges in lack of support from me even on peers mmmm you know peer pressure sometimes they tell you to be tell you to do to do so. Some some are doing as their peers do but I never done what my peers does. The only thing that I'm doing now and my parents think it's my peers is smoking, I smoke both cigarettes and marijuana but nothing else. So, since myself m, since I have been, I have been myself, yaaa I like the I I I like I like staying alone even though even back in the years aaa since I was young I really favoured being alone because it gives you peace of mind and it gives you time to talk to yourself to be introspective. Otherwise in setting other people in your life is just causing problems, as I experienced, so being talkative sometimes is being is just mmmmm has they're on advantages and disadvantages because --- speaking to someone and in a proper way and someone will just underestimate you does look you in a different way, and think that you are stupid yet you know what you're doing. You're trying to make peace. You're trying to show everybody that you have a caring heart. Yet they will still discriminate you and underestimate but even though everyone's doing that to me, I still I still stay strong because being mmmmm discriminated is a big thing for you whether you take it by heart, you take it personally or you just move own. But for myself, I choose to move on at home at where am staying with my friends, yaaa I choose to put my life first and I choose to take control of my life before it takes care of because some people just failed aaa silently in a sudden way that everyone was not expecting so I don't want to be example in the next

five years. Maybe some parents tell their kids about me that you see that druggist that junkie, I don't wanna be example of being discriminated. Otherwise I want to be an big example to everyone I want to be I want to be good influence to everyone seeing me. Yeah, that's what I'm aiming for right now and that's what my personality is making. And that's how I am probably I'm the person who's unique and yaaa, thank you.

17.14. **Participant (F):** After the challenges that I have faced. Talking about the years that I faced, in 2015 there was a really hard challenge, I was living at Rustenburg at… that the year that my mom my mom has lose her work because of a friend that will be a reason that be a thing I never forget because I was at school at Rustenburg (… called … school) I was at … school doing grade 4, my mom losing her work that because of a friend, I have to leave there and come and wish she should come home. I have to come to Taung so that I should we should rebuild our life again. We came back on June on 2015, we came back in Taung I started to go to the school at I started at Pampierstaad called --- I went there because of the challenges that we were facing because of her friend, her friend ruined her things at her work, he was upgraded at her at her work, we have to I have to live there at Pampierstaad because I have to rebuild my life. I was living with my father and my mom was living with here in Taung. I have to live with my father and my stepmother. Things was not good because of I was I was used to live with my mom. I have to I have to get used to live with my stepmother and she treated us, me and my younger sister so badly, telling us that he she is not our mother. We have to face that challenges, we have to know that she is not our mother and our mother she is leaving far from us, we have to accept accept that … she carry on with her bad treatment with her bad treatment. We were just living with her just because of we want to go far with life. Dealing with and we want to go to school. But my father didn't have a say because of she was controlling her. We have to live there and we live there for 2 years. I see that I have enough with her, I called my mother and tell my mother everything. My mother didn't like it and she didn't accept it, she took us from there and we came to live in Taung. We took life from there and --- all we are living here with our mother. I think am from now own I think am too weak for the challenges that I have faced, I didn't become stronger after that to the point that I think I will become. I think am too weak for the things that I have faced and for the

things that happened for the things that happened years ago. That are the things that I have experienced in my life and that was the sad thing in my life.

17.15. **Participant (F):** I see myself as a strong person though I don't need anybody from other side telling me am a strong because of I can handle everything happiness, sadness, pains. The reason am saying that mmm my mom and my dad they broke up when I was 2 years, though I was young but a I grow my mom told me the things that my dad always do and I just ask myself, I once asked my mom that am I a mistaken child, why I don't deserve fatherly love. I hated the fact that whenever am around with my friends when am around with people they are talking about fatherly love but me I don't know that love. And the thing is that am a strong I became the strongest person because of I I can hide my pains with a smile, I can laugh but knowing inside that am heartbroken. And I always find a way of solving my problems instead of telling another person. What I always do is that standing on my mirror crying whenever I want to cry a lot, throwing things, hats how I relieve pain, unlike telling someone and that someone will surely won't bring solution to myself. The hate I, the thing I hate about myself I got a lot of anger and the cause of this is my father though, I also ask myself that why I don't deserve him while he is alive, every time I wish to receive a call and tell me that he is dead because that is what I always though he can't he don't play a role of being a father so he don't deserve to be alive but though I can't do that, is by God choice, and its hate me that my siblings my own siblings the ones that I share the father with they always tell me that aaaaa you don't have a father don't tell me don't call our father a father you don't have a father, your father left you and that always hate me, that make me that make my angry to be broader every day because of I have that mentality that I don't have a father and surely not knowing a father lover is not nice because of, especially on father's day, people will be celebrating will be appreciating there father while knowing me that aaaa my father left me and I didn't care and you don't even --- how the shoe of size that am wearing or my birthday, yaaa so I see myself as a strong person because I always handle my pains I am my own pillow to cry on, I mean I'm my own shoulder to cry on I don't need a shoulder to cry on, I don't need anybody.

17.16. **Participant (M):** As for me throughout the things I have been through, I think my strength tells me that I have potentially in doing in upcoming all the things that I go

through because under everything I have been through and till today never got supported by anything, I have always put myself together to do something to achieve more, you know, I have always rush into things, you know, to overcome them. I mean really I don't need anybody support come actually I don't socialize, It's really hard for me to socialize, mmmmm being engaged with people socializing, having friends, family members, some sometimes it's just awkward when it when it comes to my side because I think, actually I haven't I haven't met the person that is really honest with me, you know people can share everything being friendly you know, play hide hide. Mmmm I think sometime I think people change and then from experience here I could say people change course, along the way when you go through you get similar with each other, get familiar, get to communicate. You will have your own path and when you get to to to decide where you want to go, I can't stop you. I can't say they don't do that don't do that. Even if I advise you, you wouldn't be able to listen and then gossips around some friends will always tell you about others even though they don't know about me, they always tell throughout throughout the thing that am socialize, that what makes me very strong and all the challenges I have been through, it's much more of of of a trauma like, okay, ever since ever since I was staying with my paps everything's been complicated, you know, we could get through because I was living with my stepmom, ei ooo it was always hard, really am very stubborn, I don't I don't listen, I hardly listen to what gotta say especially when it is wrong or especially when you have been pity or you have been choose or you demanding, I don't hardly listen. So yeah, ever since their life has been on another level I had to stand up I had to maintain myself, you know, I had to start from scratch, start from the bottom even if coming to school sometimes I just wake myself actually I've been waking myself up ever since I started schooling, yeah. I learnt to be on my own and ever since I have been managing to go through all the things, having this and that, did it by myself, having friends, no I don't do friends, thank you.

17.17. **Interviewer:** Do you think aaaa you knowing yourself has helped to be able to overcome some of the challenges.

17.18. **Participant (M):** Yes, I think it helps because if you know yourself you always do the right thing, what you feel is right when it it always come within you.

17.19. **Participant (M):** Was this question for all of us? Yeah obviously knowing yourself clearly show know where you are going because if you if you go everywhere and somebody ask you who you are and you elaborately tell them who you are , they will even see that you are determined in life you are a strict person and you are a person who wants to be something in life, so I should speak about myself here. And then knowing who you are clearly state I I can achieve most thing in life, thank you.

17.20. **Interviewer:** Anyone else

17.21. **Participant (M):** What makes me that am a strong person is that from now and from little years ago, from little years ago where I am is not each and every one can be that is the thing that made that am a strong person.

17.22. **Participant (F):** Yeah, knowing who you are makes you overcome (yee mom)… things yaaa. Aaaaaa knowing who I am it made me overcome a lot of things like being body shamed, like, yaaaa like being body shamed that made me overcome a lot of things because I know that am a I I know I know who I am and I believe that who who, I don't believe in other people's opinions about me that made me overcome a lot of things.

17.23. **Participant (F):** I think knowing who who I am it really helped because of knowing who I am it will determine on what I wanna be and what should I do because other people's opinion are really bad and other people's opinion can take you to the things that you didn't want in life and you will go in on those things you didn't want to do in your life and the things that you want to do in your life you will forget about it and you will go on with other people's opinion, because other people's opinion it is it is the thing that they want to do not what you to do. So, knowing who you are knowing what you want, it truly helps a lot. Thank you.

17.24. **Participant (F):** Yaaa I think I know myself, I know everything about me, I don't need anybody telling me who I am because I know about myself and I believe in myself. I don't like when people tell me what to do. I know my wrongs, my rights, everything about me. So yaaa, I know myself.

17.25. **Interviewer**: How does it help you to overcome your challenges

17.26. **Participant (F)** continues: No, it helps me because I do what I want what I like not what somebody like.

17.27. **Participant (F):** When am growing up being a doctor because I love the I love the way … I love the way we love the kids and other people.

17.28. **Interviewer:** Okay, you can stop and give the opportunity to the next person. Somebody who has not said anything and still wants to talk.

17.29. **Participant (F):** About careers nna when it comes to careers am still a bit confused mmmm that's why that's why I choose to do maths and science because I think those subjects are the keys to a lot many courses many careers. But my options my option I n I think I think of listening I think maybe I should do teaching because I used help I use to help my primary teachers with their jobs and that when I discover that's when I discover that I kinda of love I kinda of love teaching, yaaaa. Teaching is one of my options. Thank you.

17.30. **Interviewer:** Anyone else who still has something to say?

17.31. **Participant (M):** What I can say is that as we see that we know ourselves, there is nothing much I can say, what I want to say is that knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.

17.32. **Participant (M):** I think of myself as a strong person because late years ago I have overcome some challenges that some other people even right now they haven't managed to overcome. I used to smoke and drink alcohol badly influenced by my first friends. I used to think about mmm how can I take care of my mom in the future while I drink alcohol as a at a at such a young age. After thinking about my mom, I later on stop drink alcohol and … because don't have a bad impact in me so I stopped and found new friends which have good influence me. We always advise each other and back each other when something is done wrong by one of us. And right now, we are focusing on our studies and we want to become better people in the future.

17.33. **Interviewer:** Okay guys, is there anyone who wants to say something? otherwise we end our focus group discussion. Are you all good, aaaa, so thank you very much for your openness and for everything that you discussed in this focus group. It is our very last one. Your participation is much appreciated. Thank you.

Wave III-Focus Group 4 - School 3

Name of Project	**Longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities**
Date of focus group / interview	2022/02/07
Duration of focus group / interview	37 minutes 56 seconds
Focus group / interview conducted by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Focus group / interview transcribed by	Ms Catherine M. Shirima
Number of participants	10
Name of informed consent hard copies	10

Participants

Participant	**Gender**	**Age**	**Race**	**Ethnic group**	**Home Language**	**Adolescent / In between / grown up**	Doing currently?
1.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
2.	M	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
3.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
4.	M	19	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
5.	F	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
6.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
7.	F	20	African	Setswana	Setswana	In between	Schooling
8.	M	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
9.	M	18	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
10.	F	17	African	Setswana	Setswana	Adolescent	Schooling
Total	10						

Interviewer: Ms Catherine M. Shirima

Male / Female Participant:

- 5 Male participants
- 5 Female participants

18.1. **Interviewer:** So am Miss Catherine Shirima and am currently registered as a PhD student in psychology at the University of the Free State, and I am conducting this research to investigate the longitudinal trajectories of identity formation and resilience development in adolescents living in disadvantaged communities in South African context. So, we are going to discuss about identity formation and resilience. So, what is our understanding of identity? Identity involves an active questioning about our values, beliefs and roles and at your age, you already are assuming different roles either here at school, at home and the society at large. Resilience is the capacity to bounce back aaaa ability to overcome hardships. So, in this discussion we are going to talk about your own experiences and views not about the experiences that you have heard about other people it should be something aaa related to your personal or your views, how you see things [neh]. And aaa this is related to your identity and your resilience. For the focus groups to run well, we need to set a few rules and the first one is that of confidentiality, whatever we share in this group remains in this room so no one is allowed to go share with other learners what your friends have shared in this circle. We are called to respect each one's opinion there is no right or wrong answer, each one shares their personal experiences and if you feel uncomfortable in discussing something that mmmm the others have raised you can refrain from aaaa answering mmmm mmmm such questions. Mmm just a reminder that your participation is voluntary, right! and mmm even now before we begin if you feel that you don't wanna be here it's okay you can leave, you won't… aaa there is no consequences for that. We are going to record the aaaa focus group interview. This is aa just to to allow me to capture the data aaa later. I will just repeat once more, if you don't feel comfortable please you can leave and if you are okay then we can begin but start by filling in the biographic questionnaires.

18.2. **Interviewer:** So, we can start and I will ask you the first question which is related to identity. Let's just discuss about identity, so what is identity? How do you aaaa see yourself? What do you think about yourself? and the kind of goals that you have, so you can just talk about those things that are related to your identity.

18.3. **silence**

18.4. **Participant (M):** Okay, like like aa I think like I change a lot, I think I think I change a lot like when I compare like aaa the when I compare compare like aa myself like

like I don't know how I can say it okay sharp because like I do aa aa made this what do I call this thing like like self-introspection introspecting my life you know like and I feel like aaa there is other things that I didn't realize way back but like I came up I came up with aaa a plans a plan like to follow so I can change to achieve things that like I want to achieve in like in the future even right now mmmmm like aaaa I like I like good friendship with my friends you know like and myself too you know like yea (participant giggles) okay cool (interviewer: it's okay) … {silence) I do have friends like we do like they do help me with things like that I want to achieve in life like schoolwork mmm like things aside that I want to achieve that like they can contribute to the work with success (wabona) yaah they do help me a lot but am not on drinking staff no I don't I don't like I do drink but I don't drink a lot I don't drink a lot because drinking like I think I feel like if you drink a lot like you go lose yourself you know in a long run because like I saw from like previous like the previous like people people who were living like who were living like aaa you know I don't know how can I say (participant giggles), someone who can

18.5. **Participant (F):** Aaaaa aaaa I have introspected myself like and then I I saw some changes like within me and like about myself like the way my haviour was my my behavior was was back then like if there is change now like...on my books like aaa I have changed like how how how I reacted towards my books like right now I don't like need anyone like to push me like to go and study or something because like I know like grade 12 has a lot of work and like I gotta do it like myself yaaI don't have an option like that I can lay on like I gotta many options that am interested in but the main ones like the main one was like to become a chief or or aaaa or doing law but to I could but I couldn't make it then.

18.6. **Participant (M):** okay like aaammm I couldn't like to goes to goes like aaa I just wanna see myself aaaa like aaa like succeeding a lot like I just wanna be aaaa a rapper you know I just wanna be a rapper doing music studying the whole music I just wanna study the whole music and you know be like a artist I dont wanna I don't want only to be a rapper be an artist wabona or like or magician mmm musician wabona I just wanna make be like that and be aaa aa what I call this thing and be aa aaa what I call thing an entrepreneur that's what that's what I dream of being an entrepreneur that's what I want to be in the future even when am doing Tourism but I know like I can

even still make it to like aa to be an entrepreneur and investor that's what I want that's want I like I want to achieve and yeah

18.7. **Participant (F):** (clears the throat) I have come to a point whereby I have started to to interrogate myself thinking a lot and like changing changing myself because for the past few years and days I have I have been struggling doing nasty things you know lot of things so and I have started to cut of friends whom were making to do this those things then I have started to make up new friends and those people are like I can see that there are true friends and are real to mine, yeah

18.8. **Interviewe**r: do we have any interests?

18.9. **Participant (F):** (clears the throat) aaammm when comes to interest I like have many options and right now I can't tell what do I want what do what I want to go with its like clearly am little bit confused

18.10. **Silence**

18.11. **Participant (M):** aaaaa since the past six months I have noticed some changes in my life, there are some experiences I have faced during those that six months period. The first one was that I lost my grandmother on the way things were not easy for me to to to handle but there are I told myself one thing that even if there are challenges in my life nothing can stop me from from doing what I want and and no one will stop me from being the person that I want in the future that I want to be in the future so aaaa my interest or my careers is that wanna be a DJ and aaaa I wanna join the military and so yaaaaa those are my interst.

18.12. **Silence**

18.13. **Participant (F):** aaa in the past six months aaaa there a lot of changes that I have met like last year I wasn't aaaa really a hard worker but then this year am will to change because I want to pass my matric with good results and I have also decided that am not going to aaa University ooo I just want to go straight to work because I want to help my mother yaaa soo

18.14. **Participant (F):** I was saying that aaa because I I want to help my mother I'm not going to any university but I might decide on the way that I'm going back to to school because there are some things that are…me but right now I I won't be able to share.

18.15. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else.

18.16. **Silence**

18.17. **Interviewer:** Are there any situations or things that have negatively impacted the way you see yourself now, or also situational things that have positively mmmm affected or influenced the way you perceive yourself?

18.18. **Participant (F):** There are negative and positive. Yaa eish! The negative one is painful I'm not prepared to talk about it.

18.19. **Interviewer:** If you feel uncomfortable to share about it, it's okay.

18.20. **Participant (F):** continues: The positive one is that my mother always she always calls me to check out she motivates and she always tell me to to look after my school work

18.21. **Interviewer:** What about the others?

18.22. **Participant (M):** Like mmmm I will say like mmm I will say both bad and good at some point, like mmmmm, like, you know, like, like the bad is negative negative negative like negative, you know, some people like they can like they need to like to put me down (wabona) like way back, they used to put me down, I think it was two years ago. If you put me down saying, you know what, tell call you names, shit kind of stuff online judging by his physical appearance, that kind of stuff, you know, they gonna hate you and they like mmm they … what I call they like mmm they end up making to you low self-low self-esteem, you know but like, but like, you know aaa, like, I've been like, I've been with many many friends that like they encouraged me a lot like even now I can be proud to say like everyone that I'm handsome, because that's what I know like I don't need I don't need someone aaaa approval to say that not saying the answers, because that's that's what I do. Like, I don't mean I don't need someone like our approval to say that, I really, I really know that, I believe that, you know what I'm saying? Like when it came to the point like the good side, the good side is that is that most of the time I have to myself even when I'm like walking by the road, you know, like, I can like some people they think that I'm rapping I'm not rapping I'm just talking to the inner me. You know what I'm saying, I'm just talking to the inner me like mmm motivating myself like in this COVID like I need to tell myself a lot when like I like I face I'm face like difficulties. I need to tell myself like is not the end, it's not the end until like mmmm am 6 feet, is not the end until I'm 6 feet as long. I can I'm walking I'm still gonna give it only those who are dead they sing that end of the war but if I'm still walking it means am still in the war am still grinding. I will get

what I want, no matter what nothing gonna distract me, that's what I use to tell myself. Yaaa.

18.23. **Interviewer:** What about the others?

18.24. **Silence**

18.25. **Interviewer:** What makes you different from the other person?

18.26. **Participant (M):** Aaaaaa what makes different from the other people like is like the appearance of myself, like the way how I think, like yaaaa. They may think like this and then I mean like I think like the way the way I am not I I I mmmmmmm like when when I needed my place I don't like easily be something like they can make me very cheap easily, yaaaa.

18.27. **Interviewer:** Have you already thought about your future careers? those who have not spoken, do you want to say anything around that. Do you have goals? how do you see yourself in the next years after matric? Are you still thinking about it or do you have already aaaa well set mmmmm ideas and thoughts about what you want to do?

18.28. **Participant (M):** Mmmm as I said nna like I just wanna like I don't wanna I don't see myself in the future being mmmmm like, an employee, you know, that's what I don't like I don't wanna be that's what I like I told myself that like, I just want to be like someone who can employ people who can employ people because I saw like mmm where I came from different people like don't have jobs, like they are waiting for other people to make themselves jobs. So that's why I I like came up with the idea, so, to say no, let me be different, like what you said, like what makes you different. Like I told myself let me different and think about like one step above and think okay sharp we do this and do this and do this in order to help those people who are not working because I feel like poverty is like is taking over right now. So, like I think for myself and at some point I think for other people.

18.29. **Interviewer:** What about the others? What are your thoughts around what is being shared? Okay, I'll ask you another question. Mmmm would you describe yourself as aaaaa a resilient person? which can also mean as a strong person or as a tough person?

18.30. **Participant (M):** yaaa I can I can nna I know am strong yaaa I know am strong like am strong enough, like emotionally like emotionally and physically and mentally. I know that I'm strong. I know like I told myself like nothing can beat, nothing can beat me up even when I fall, like I know like I gonna get back up like I'm a soldier. A

soldier is a soldier no matter what happens to me but to come back up, before once I came back, I came back up twice, yaaaaa.

18.31. **Interviewer:** Okay, you want to say something…

18.32. **silence**

18.33. **Participant (M):** Aaaaaa nna I see myself like as a business because I have been strong like a lot, so like with my still life with my situation like I never needed anyone anything like talking to somebody so like I have been all along like because like when I share with someone like I feel like I'm kind of lifting like my burdens for me and then like…

18.34. **Interviewer:** What kind of challenges have you managed to overcome so far? It can be related to home or here at school, or to your studies or with your peers in the community at large. What kind of challenges do you experience or have you expereinced?

18.35. **Participant (M):** Aaaaaaaa I have a challenge like with my siblings but it was back then when I was still in grade 8/9 then like I was like still playful and a lot of people who high consequences, yaaa, so like then when I reach certain stage then I see myself like the action that I'm doing like it kind of bad consequences then I have changed myself like, yaaaa.

18.36. **silence**

18.37. **Interviewer:** do you you want to say something?

18.38. **Participant (M):** Mmmmm yaaa, like I think mmm when I was in grade 10 like … like I think I was dead. I was dead I was like I was irrational that's the thing like that's the challenge I think I passed, I was manage to pass through because like eeii. I made a lot of introspection about mysef if I continue I continue this way will I will I be able like to succeed with the future because I was like I was like I feel like I was toxic. I was toxic but like I have changed because if I don't change it means like iiiii nothing will be good for me and I only what is good for me like like that time I was not thinking straight . I was irrational. I was I was irrational yaaa. So, like I had to make a choice or like life will be ruined.

18.39. **Interviewer:** Anyone else who wants to add to what has been said so far. What in particular helps you to overcome the challenges you mentioned? Even though you did not say anything you can still talk about whatever helps you to overcome aaaa

challenges in your life. Is it support from home or support from school or support from your peers?

18.40. **Participant (M):** adding adding to what I've been said adding to what have been said like previously like mmmm like what helped me a lot is like mmmm to have mmm like mmmm like I meet like people like who were more like intellectual than I, no, but like more intellectual than I would be like, like knowing those behaviours like before like way way way back and you know like mmmm I cannot eat some books like wabona about mmmmm, about about those things. I cannot like went close those books and I'm read a lot about those books. In like like I think like I became the product of them because like at the end they helped me enough.

18.41. **Interviewer:** So, reading is one of the things that helped you to overcome the challenges. What about the others, what do you do?

18.42. **Participant (F):** Well, what helped me to overcome the challenge that I have, you know, I always loved when I have a challenge a certain challenge always, like expressing, express it on writing like I use to write about my feelings and yeah, and sometimes I'll talk to my mom and she will help there and there, yeah.

18.43. **Interviewer:** Yeah, that's what do, what you do when you're stressed when you're overwhelmed by difficult situations?

18.44. **Participant (F):** Well, I sometimes write them down like come up with some solutions like if I can't come up with I can't come up with some solutions I I tell my friends … sometimes make a joke of it but at some point, they they help me to solve that situation

18.45. **Interviewer:** Talking to friends and writing helps you.

18.46. **silence**

18.47. **Participant (F):** continues: And even like standing on a mirror and talking to myself helps me a lot.

18.48. **Interviewer:** Are there situations, maybe from either here at school that are very challenging for you?

18.49. **Participant (M):** Eeee to me what I'm saying like what is challenging me right now mom is my school work, yeah, that's why I I kind of like receive a lot of work like this, so like right is coming eee pressure on me so like I didn't attend today, come tomorrow, yeah.

18.50. **Interviewer:** and how to you deal with that? How do you manage the stress?

18.51. **Participant (M)**: continues: Aaaa I like talk to myself aaa not using a mirror, I just like lie and face upwards then talk to myself and then I I ask myself like questions and then I answer me.

18.52. **Interviewer:** Okay. Are there situations that you were not able to overcome? Can be at home or here at school or the community at large. And how did that impact on your identity? Did they help you to understand yourself better? How?

18.53. **Participant (F):** Sometimes like they things like kind of commitment teaches, they teach more lesson like maybe like they can prepare you for something that comes in the future. Then like you will be able to face like kind of like this character like …like …this kind of small thing I can pass it, yeah.

18.54. **Interviewer:** Guys do you think knowing yourself can help you aaaaa to able to juggle challenges much better? How does that help you?

18.55. **Participant (M):** Yes, nna I think like mm knowing yourself better like is more important because like I think I think like is an art that you must master, like because like most people they ended up doing things like like that things that they were not meant to do. They were not meant to do like, like like because they don't know themselves like knowing yourself like it came from like himself, like seeing see like your abilities, you're like your strength, your strengths, your ability in a weakness. You have to write them down like I I I was inspired by what you see I was inspired by one of one one of the philosophers he said, no, he would like to say most of the time I quote, he says, "know thy self" he like to say Socrates, he said know thy self. If like if you can know yourself you can win battles that's what I know you can win most battles you can know when to react on your things and not when to like like yourself awareness will be like higher higher because like you already know yourself, you know when like you master you end up mastering your emotions, yeah like it's more important, like you know some people they don't they like they can't control their emotions but when a certain trouble comes in like they want to react, but when you know yourself you won't react because you will know you will cause a terrible situation, yeah.

18.56. **Interviewer:** Anyone who wants contribute from what he just said

18.57. **Participant (F):** And knowing yourself helps you to stand your ground whenever you feel like yeah. Like most of your problems are …like have impact, it has an impact on your life negatively. I think …

18.58. **Interviewer:** Those who haven't said anything, do you want to say a word or two?

18.59. **Participant (M):** Aaaaa like knowing yourself is like kind of helping you like to face like some kind of problems aaaaa like know that you are putting as you can see economy like how can you handle it or like how can you tackle it, like yaaa. Then like as I …like you different a solution appropriate.

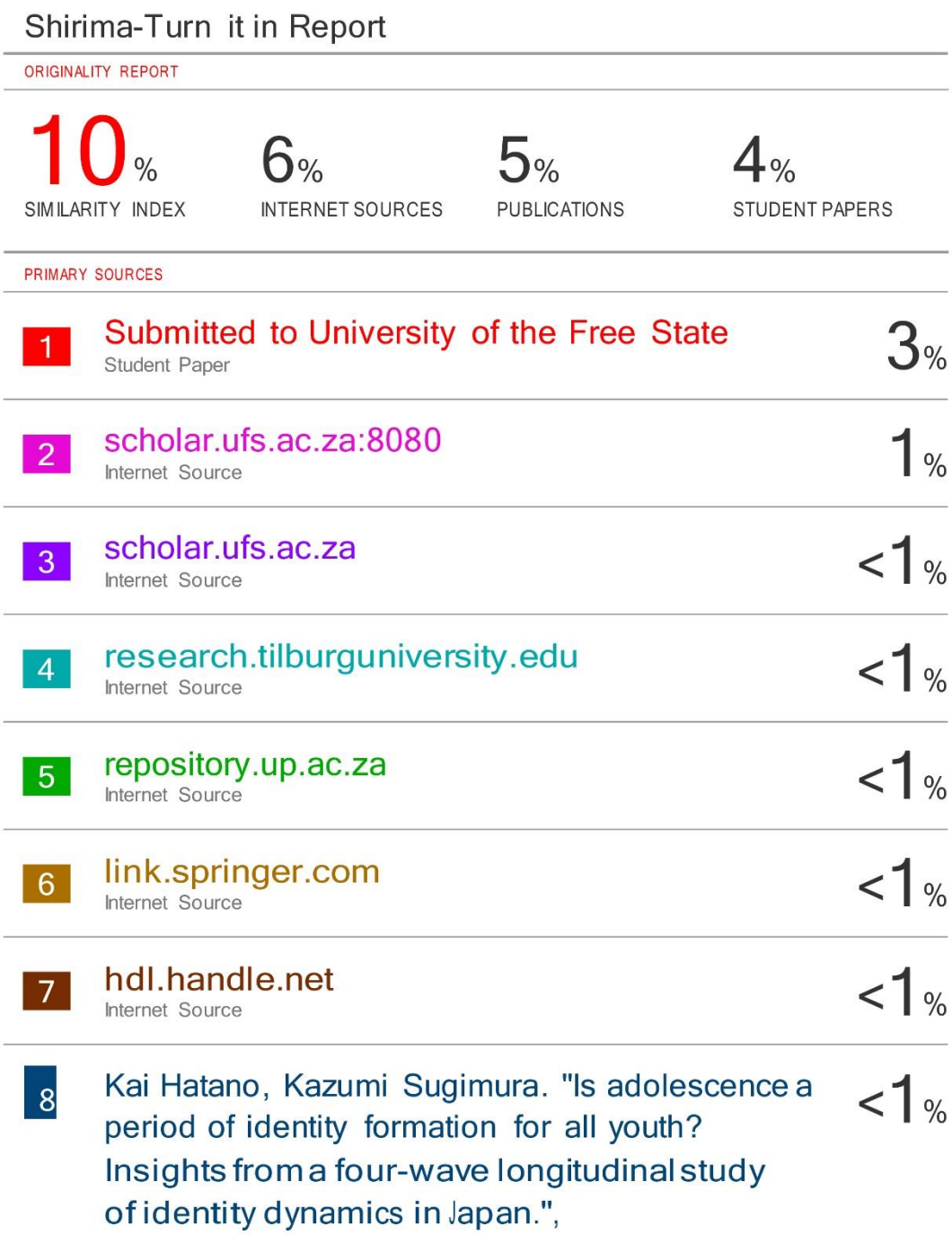
18.60. **Participant (F):** And knowing yourself how to to know when where you want to stand, and what you want to do or achieve.

18.61. **Interviewer:** So, knowing oneself will help one to understand what they want to do, what they want to achieve, the kind of mmmm life they want to embark on... Anyone else with something before we close.

18.62. **Participant (M):** By knowing yourself will help you again – pressure in terms of the situation you are in at home and the challenges when the challenges that you are going through because some of some of the people who don't know themselves they tend to carry some other people's burden so just certifying other friends in terms when he say there is something happening there is someone or something such a place --- happening tomorrow and you know that you have a class to attend you can say when you know yourself you can say no and a no is a no when you know when you don't know yourself because … esteem low confi confident maybe you want to please them more than you please yourself.

18.63. **Interviewer:** Okay, anyone else with something to say? Okay then if aaaa we are all good, okay. Thank you for your participation we may end aaa our focus group here and aaa it is our last last focus group. So, thank you very much.

Appendix H –Turnitin Report



Shirima-Turn it in Report

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