

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Dislike for schooling as risk factor for teenage pregnancy: Development of a hypothesis using data from a study conducted on understanding factors associated with teenage pregnancy

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## Abstract

This paper is informed by the data extracted from a study conducted by the Multidisciplinary Research Centre (MRC) in 2014, titled, 'Understanding Factors Associated with Teenage Pregnancy in Namibia' that focused on 602 boys and 2875 girls aged between 14 to 22 years of age. The aim of the paper was to test the hypothesis of dislike of school as a catalyst to teenage pregnancy. The analysis of the paper is based on 1,393 school learners that were all female. In testing the hypothesis both univariate and multivariate regression analysis were used. No clear associations were found between dislike of school and attitudes and behaviours (outcome measures) which may predict the risk of subsequent teenage pregnancy except for alcohol use and parental employment. Parental employment as proxy for socio-economic status emerged as a significant predictor of unhappiness at school while higher levels of alcohol use predicted higher odds of dislike of school. Interventions to promote youth satisfaction with schooling should be based on longitudinal research to inform effective policy and practice.. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2021; 25[6]: 58-67).

**Keywords:** Teenage pregnancy, risk factors, dislike of school, Namibia

## Résumé

Cet article s'appuie sur les données extraites d'une étude menée par le Centre de recherche multidisciplinaire (MRC) en 2014, intitulée « Comprendre les facteurs associés à la grossesse chez les adolescentes en Namibie », qui portait sur 602 garçons et 2875 filles âgés de 14 à 22 ans. L'objectif de l'article était de tester l'hypothèse d'une aversion pour l'école comme catalyseur de la grossesse chez les adolescentes. L'analyse de l'article est basée sur 1 393 élèves qui étaient tous des femmes. Pour tester l'hypothèse, une analyse de régression univariée et multivariée a été utilisée. Aucune association claire n'a été trouvée entre l'aversion pour l'école et les attitudes et comportements (mesures des résultats) qui pourraient prédire le risque de grossesse ultérieure chez les adolescentes, sauf pour la consommation d'alcool et l'emploi des parents. L'emploi des parents en tant qu'indicateur du statut socio-économique est apparu comme un prédicteur significatif de mécontentement à l'école, tandis que des niveaux plus élevés de consommation d'alcool prédisaient des probabilités plus élevées d'aversion pour l'école. Les interventions visant à promouvoir la satisfaction des jeunes à l'égard de l'école devraient être fondées sur des recherches longitudinales pour éclairer des politiques et des pratiques efficaces. (*Afr J Reprod Health* 2021; 25[6]: 58-67).

**Mots-clés:** Grossesse chez les adolescentes, facteurs de risque, aversion pour l'école, Namibie

## Introduction

Several studies have been conducted on issues revolving around factors associated with teenage pregnancy<sup>1-4</sup>. These factors vary from the causes that drive the teens to engage into premarital sexual intercourse and the effects that these have in their lives. Teenage pregnancy has been defined<sup>5</sup> as pregnancy that occurs in young girls between the age of 13 and 19. The discourse on teenage

pregnancy is rooted in the thinking that having a child might lead to socio-economic disadvantage or it might be a career choice<sup>1</sup>.

Society often sees those that are pregnant as teenagers with a low socio-economic status among the unmarried youth<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, it has been stated that teenage mothers might have a host of other disadvantages to content with, such as growing up in poorer families, or within a rough neighbourhood<sup>7</sup>. This relationship between socio-

economic status and teenage pregnancy has been confirmed by<sup>8</sup> who reported that among women aged 25-49 in the Omusati and Kavango regions, the median age at first sexual intercourse increased with increasing education and wealth. According to literature, conventional thinking opines that low levels of educational attainment increase the likelihood of teenage pregnancy<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, it has been argued that a steep gradient in education is the prevalence for teenage pregnancy<sup>9</sup> and "...that high levels of educational attainment could be a protector against teenage pregnancy"<sup>4</sup>. This is supported by the view of<sup>9</sup> who found that an increase in education was associated with a slight decrease in levels of pregnancy. In contributing to the discussion<sup>10</sup> argued that school dropout might be a result of teenage pregnancy. A report by<sup>11</sup> confirmed this argument as it was reported that 26.0% of all female learners enrolled for 2018 in Namibia dropped out of school due to pregnancy. Other factors that might enhance the risk of teenage pregnancy were identified by<sup>3</sup> who proposed that "...teenage pregnancy might be a result of unreliable contraceptive use, sexual coercion, and poor communication skills between partners... (564)" while<sup>4</sup> supported the idea that non-school related goals such as earning an income, forming a relationship, and raising a family in all likelihood can be seen as an outcome as opposed to education.

Furthermore, several studies found a significant association between dislike of school and subsequent risk of teenage pregnancy<sup>12-15</sup>. Hence, "...dislike in education is seen as a driver for becoming a parent before age 20"<sup>4</sup>, that can lead to higher levels of pregnancy. The main factors that contributed to being unhappy at school were identified as bullying by peers/ teachers; finding school essentially boring; difficulties with teachers or specific subjects and grade retention<sup>14-17</sup>. Resultant disengagement from school was evident in high rates of absenteeism and low academic achievements and often led the teenage learners to drop out or leave school as early as possible<sup>14</sup>. Faced with having to decide "...about their future direction in life; whether consciously, or unconsciously, becoming a mother became an option to fill the void" for some of these teenagers<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore, in explaining how unhappiness at school might be related to an increased risk of teenage pregnancy<sup>12</sup>, posits that "...people who dislike school (that is, are alienated from school) might be more likely to come to see teenage pregnancy as inevitable or as positive alternative to continuing education". Contributing to the discussion from a South African perspective<sup>17</sup>, refer to the schooling situation in South Africa that requires children to repeat a year if they did not manage to obtain adequate grades. Girls that get "behind", are older than their classmates and may become bored with and disengaged from school. Being demotivated and seeing little prospect in completing school eventually, they may opt for motherhood which "...is neither an irrational nor a completely negative course of action for some young women, but an alternative route by which to make the transition to adulthood"<sup>17</sup>.

This paper will focus on schooling, exploring the likelihood that dislike of school among learners in urban and rural schools in Namibia is associated with possible risk factors of teenage pregnancy.

### **Study aim**

The aim of this paper is to investigate the association between attitude to school and a number of outcomes that have been linked to an increased risk of teenage pregnancy using a hypothesis of the plausibility between exposure and outcome. It is hypothesized that dislike of school (exposure) is associated with attitudes and behaviours (outcome measures) which may predict the risk of subsequent teenage pregnancy. What the paper therefore wants to test is whether these outcome measures (possible risk factors) associated with teenage pregnancy have an effect on the attitude to school.

### **Methods**

This paper used quantitative data that were collected as part of the study conducted by the<sup>18</sup> of the University of Namibia on behalf of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNFPA on "*Understanding factors associated with teenage pregnancy in Namibia*". The data for that study

was collected from all fourteen regions of Namibia from girls and boys between 14 and 22 years of age who had been pregnant or who had not been pregnant or impregnated a girl, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The total sample for their study was 3477. Of those 2875 were girls and 602 were boys from both urban and rural areas. Their sample of male and female respondents still at school was 1723, between the ages of 14 and 22 years, and who were not employed. The sample used for this analysis only includes the 1,393 female learners. Analytical techniques employed included construction of frequency tables for variables of interest and univariate logistic regression to examine the association between these variables. In addition, when testing significance among the exposure variable and the outcome variables multivariate logistic regression was conducted.

### **Data analysis**

The paper hypothesised an exposure, attitude to school as the dependent variable, which was measured using girls' responses to the statement "I am happy at school". Girls disagreeing or strongly disagreeing were defined as "disliking school". Those agreeing/strongly agreeing or neutral were defined as "liking school". Variables hypothesised as outcome measures were informed by literature review and included: residence (urban, rural); parental employment (proxy for socio-economic status); knowledge about contraceptives; attitude towards contraceptives; confidence about condom use; expectation of parenting; age at first sexual intercourse and self-reported use of alcohol.

Residence was examined using the urban and rural divide. Parental employment was constructed using the questions whether mother and/or father were employed, creating a new variable called parental employment with three categories: both parents employed, one parent employed and no parent employed. Knowledge about contraceptives was indicated by five questions about contraception. Girls not answering correctly at least two of the five questions were considered to have low knowledge while three or more correct answers were considered as high

knowledge. Those who missed more than one questions were excluded. Confidence about correct condom use was indicated by the response to the statement "You are confident about how to use a condom correctly". High confidence was indicated by agree/strongly agree responses; low confidence corresponded to disagree/strongly disagree responses and those replying they were unsure were categorised as "ambivalent". Attitude towards condom use was measured on a five-point scale responding to the statement "A girl who uses contraceptives is being responsible". While a "positive" code signified agreement with the statement, a "negative" code denoted disagreement and the "ambivalent" code included those who were unsure.

Expectation of parenting was examined using a five-point ordinal variable reflecting the degree of agreement with the statement "A girl of your age is responsible enough to be a mother". Those agreeing/strongly agreeing were categorised as "Agree" those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing were categorised as "Disagree", and those replying they were uncertain were categorised as "Unsure". Age at first sexual intercourse was constructed using self-reported sexual activity as indicated by the response to the direct question: "Have you ever had sexual intercourse?" as well as the follow-up question "How old were you when you first had sexual intercourse?" The new variable "Age at first sexual intercourse" comprised three categories: never had sex;  $\leq 16$  years;  $> 16$  years. Self-reported alcohol use "How often do you drink alcohol?" was coded as: never; once in a while and once a month or more. The exposure variable and all outcome measures were derived from the questionnaire responses. Associations between the outcome measures and the exposure (attitude to school) were examined. Interactions between the effects on outcomes of the exposure were then investigated. Coefficients of the regression model and odds ratios generated in logistic regressions are reported.

### **Results**

The age of the girls in the sample ranged from 14 to 22 years while the average was 17.5 years. About a

**Table 1:** Description of the sample in terms of its key measures

Measure	Number	Percent
<b>Attitude to school</b>		
Like	1096	78.7
Dislike	297	21.3
<b>Residence (Urban/ rural)</b>		
Urban	938	67.3
Rural	455	32.7
<b>Parental employment</b>		
Both parents employed	375	33.5
One parent employed	561	50.0
No parent employed	185	16.5
<b>Knowledge about contraceptives</b>		
Low	431	31.6
High	931	68.4
<b>Attitude towards contraceptives</b>		
Positive	716	51.5
Ambivalent	278	20.0
Negative	396	28.5
<b>Confidence about correct condom use</b>		
High	719	52.0
Ambivalent	308	22.3
Low	357	25.8
<b>Parenting</b>		
Agree	172	12.4
Unsure	83	6.0
Disagree	1132	81.6
<b>Age at first sexual intercourse</b>		
Never had sex	677	51.7
<= 16 years	397	30.3
> 16 years	235	18.0
<b>Alcohol use</b>		
Never	872	64.9
Once a while	304	22.6
Once a month or more	168	12.5

third (31%) were enrolled in junior secondary school and over half (56%) were in senior secondary school at the time of the survey. Data that describe the sample in terms of exposure and outcome is reported in Table 1.

Twenty one percent of the female learners disliked school. Sixty seven percent of the students lived in urban areas. The majority (84%) reported that either both or one parent was employed and they could therefore be regarded as socio-economically advantaged. There was a high knowledge of contraceptive use (68.4%) among the learners, and about half had a positive attitude

towards contraceptives (51%) as well as a high confidence about correct condom use (52%). Results further stated that 12% of the students were of the opinion that at their age they are responsible enough to become a mother. More than half of the students (52%) indicated that they never had sex. Self-reported alcohol use was low with (65%) of the learners indicating that they had never used alcohol.

Table 2 shows the associations between the dependent variable (attitude to school) and the outcome measures (predictors). Reporting on the significant outcomes, results of table 2 show that dislike of school was significantly associated with residence (AOR=1.54 95% CI: 1.15, 2.05). Learners from urban areas had higher odds of disliking school than their rural counterparts. Parental employment was also found to be significantly associated with dislike for school. The odds of dislike of school were two times higher for students who reported that both parents were employed (AOR=2.71; 95% CI: 1.67, 4.40) or that one parent was employed (AOR=1.66; 95% CI: 1.03, 2.67) compared to those whose parents were unemployed. Further investigation revealed a significant relationship between residency and parental employment ( $\chi^2$  (2, N = 1121) = 30.8,  $p < .001$ ). Urban students were more likely to have both parents employed than those living in rural areas.

Dislike of school was also significantly associated with being ambivalent about correct condom use (AOR=1.51 95% CI: 1.05 2.16). Students who were not sure about correct condom use had higher odds of disliking school than their schoolmates whose confidence in correct condom use was low. Learners who agreed that they are responsible enough to be a mother at their current age had lower odds of disliking school (AOR=0.64 95% CI; 0.41.0.99) than those who were unsure or disagreed that they were ready for parenting. Compared to girls that use alcohol once in a while or more than once a month, those who reported never having used alcohol had lower odds of disliking school (AOR=0.53 95% CI; 0.36.0.77).

In conclusion the univariate analysis of the association between dislike of school and the hypothesised outcome measures revealed that urban learners, those where one or both parents are

**Table 2:** Univariate logistic regression analysis showing the association between attitude towards school and outcome measures

Outcome measure	Attitude towards school (%)		B	Sig.	Odds ratio (95% CI)
	Like	Dislike			
<b>Residence</b>					
Urban	76.4	23.6	<b>0.43</b>	<b>0.004</b>	<b>1.54 (1.15, 2.05)**</b>
Rural	83.3	16.7			1
<b>Parental employment</b>					
Both parents employed	71.2	28.8	<b>1.00</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>2.71 (1.67, 4.40)***</b>
One parent employed	80.2	19.8	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.038</b>	<b>1.66 (1.03, 2.67)*</b>
No parental employment	87	13			1
<b>Knowledge about contraceptive use</b>					
Low	78.2	21.8	0.06	0.683	1.06 (0.80, 1.40)
High	79.2	20.8			1
<b>Attitude towards contraceptive use</b>					
Positive	79.9	20.1	-0.02	0.892	0.98 (0.72, 1.33)
Ambivalent	74.1	25.9	0.31	0.097	1.36 (0.95, 1.95)
Negative	79.5	20.5			1
<b>Confidence about correct condom use</b>					
High	81.2	18.8	-0.11	0.513	0.90 (0.65, 1.24)
Ambivalent	72.1	27.9	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.025</b>	<b>1.51 (1.05, 2.16)*</b>
Low	79.6	20.4			1
<b>Parenting</b>					
Agree	84.9	15.1	<b>-0.45</b>	<b>0.046</b>	<b>0.64 (0.41, 0.99)*</b>
Unsure	71.1	28.9	0.38	0.136	1.46 (0.89, 2.39)
Disagree	78.2	21.8			1
<b>Age at first sexual intercourse</b>					
Never had sex	79.2	20.8	-0.14	0.833	0.87 (0.23, 3.27)
<=16 years	77.6	22.4	-0.33	0.628	0.72 (0.19, 2.76)
>16 years	80.4	19.6			1
<b>Alcohol use</b>					
Never	82.6	17.4	<b>-0.64</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.53 (0.36, 0.77)**</b>
Once a while	69.4	30.6	0.10	0.646	1.10 (0.73, 1.67)
Once a month or more	71.4	28.6			1

\*Significant at a p-value less than 0.05; \*\*significant at a p-value less than 0.01; \*\*\*significant at a p-value less than 0.0005

employed and those who were unsure about correct condom had higher odds of dislike of school while learners who agreed that they were ready for parenting and those who had reportedly never used alcohol had lower odds of disliking school. The outcome measures that did not have a significant effect on the attitude towards school were knowledge about and attitude towards contraceptive use as well as sexual activity (age at first sexual intercourse). These findings concur in part with those of<sup>12</sup> who reported that there was no difference in the level of knowledge between those who liked and disliked school. However, in contrast to this study's findings<sup>12</sup>, found that girls that were sexually active by age 16 were more likely to dislike school.

As a next step in the analysis all outcome measures (predictors) variables were fitted to the multivariate logistic regression model. Table 3 portrays the outcome of the multivariate logistic regression analysis that predicts the odds of the female learner answering "dislike" to the question of whether or not they liked school.

Results as reported in Table 3 of the multivariate logistic regression show that only parental employment and alcohol use appeared to be significant predictors of dislike of school after adjustment for all other factors. The odds of dislike of school were two times higher for schoolgirls whose parents were both employed (AOR=2.40; 95% CI: 1.39, 4.15) or where one parent was employed (AOR = 1.75; 95% CI: 1.04, 2.97)

**Table 3:** Multivariate logistic regression predicting dislike of school

	Coefficient	Wald	Sig.	Adjusted Odds ratio	95% CI for ratio	Odds
<b>Residency (Urban)</b>	0.33	2.85	0.092	1.39	0.95-	2.04
<b>Parental employment</b>		10.37	0.006			
Both parents employed	0.88	9.89	<b>0.002</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>4.15**</b>
One parent employed	0.56	4.36	<b>0.037</b>	<b>1.75</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>2.97*</b>
<b>Knowledge about contraceptives (Low)</b>	-0.01	0.01	0.935	0.99	0.70	1.39
<b>Attitude towards contraceptives</b>		2.33	0.313			
Positive	0.11	0.29	0.591	1.11	0.76	1.63
Ambivalent	0.35	2.20	0.138	1.42	0.89	2.24
<b>Confidence about correct condom use</b>		3.08	0.215			
High	0.05	0.07	0.795	1.06	0.70	1.59
Ambivalent	0.36	2.49	0.115	1.43	0.92	2.22
<b>Parenting</b>		4.04	0.133			
Agree	-0.55	3.72	0.054	0.58	0.33	1.01
Unsure	0.12	0.14	0.707	1.13	0.61	2.09
<b>Age at first sexual intercourse</b>		2.55	0.279			
Never had sex	-0.31	1.71	0.191	0.73	0.46	1.17
<= 16 years	-0.06	0.05	0.820	0.95	0.59	1.52
<b>Alcohol use</b>		8.57	<b>0.014</b>			
Never	-0.48	4.46	<b>0.035</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.97*</b>
Once a while	0.01	0.00	0.962	1.01	0.62	1.66

\*Significant at a p-value less than 0.05; \*\*significant at a p-value less than 0.01

compared to those whose parents were unemployed. Alcohol use was also significantly and independently associated with dislike of school. Compared to alcohol use once in a while or more than once a month, never having used alcohol was associated with a 36% reduction in the odds of dislike of school (AOR=0.62; 95% CI: 0.40 – 0.97). Residence, confidence about correct condom use and attitude to parenting became non-significant after adjustment for other outcome measures while knowledge about and attitude towards contraceptive use; and sexual activity (age at first sexual intercourse) remained non-significant.

## Discussion

The focal point of the paper was to investigate whether dislike of school is associated with attitudes and behaviours which may lead to an increased risk of subsequent teenage pregnancy. In other words, does dislike of school make girls more vulnerable to the risk of teenage pregnancy?

Findings showed that girls living in urban areas were more prone to dislike school as opposed

to rural learners. A reason for this may be that urban life offers a range of extra-curricular activities and recreational opportunities for the youth, leaving less time and commitment for school matters. Furthermore, not all recreational offers and socialising opportunities may be appropriate for young girls, as some places such as unmonitored nightclubs or mixed-sex parties may "...expose adolescents to early sex since they socialize easily with men"<sup>19</sup>. It may also be that school environments in urban areas are less safe than in rural areas as urban learners may experience higher levels of violence at schools such as bullying. Apparent dislike of school has been linked to experiences of bullying which may lead to truancy and even dropout from school as bullied learners may fear returning to school<sup>20,21</sup>. That bullying is a serious concern in Namibian schools has been documented by the findings of the Global School-based Student Health Survey as "...45.4% of girls and 47.9% of boys aged 13-15 had been bullied at least once within the 30 days prior to the survey"<sup>21</sup>. However, no statistics are available for urban/ rural divide which could confirm or disprove this

assumption that greater dislike of school amongst urban learners may be associated with higher levels of bullying and other forms of violence at urban schools in Namibia.

Parental employment was independently associated with dislike of school after controlling for the other outcome measures. Learners where either both or one parent was employed were at greater odds of having a negative attitude towards schooling than those whose parents were unemployed. Since parental employment was used as proxy for socio-economic status (SES), this finding indicates that students from supposedly more well-off homes (both parents employed) with more resources and opportunities for schooling, appeared to have a more negative attitude to school than those from homes where only one or none of the parents were employed and were more likely to have limited resources for their children's education.

This result contradicts the findings from other studies that established a link between low socio-economic status and negative attitude to schooling<sup>12,13</sup> in rural areas of Namibia<sup>22</sup>. Looking at the urban/ rural divide in terms of SES, the analysis established that significantly more urban than rural learners had parents who were both employed. In explaining these findings by following<sup>23</sup> line of reasoning on the effect of parental involvement on neighbourhood choice and teenage pregnancy, it could be argued that working parents of adolescents living in urban areas have less time to commit to their role as parents regarding parental control and support for school and that this potential shortfall of parental involvement may affect their teenage children's attitude and behaviour to school. Likewise<sup>13</sup>, reported that "among girls with a parent in employment, those from lone parent families were more likely to report sex".

However, it could also be that employment of parents may not have been a valid measure of socio-economic status, perhaps because the term "employment" limits the economic activities of parents to primarily include wage earners. For rural girls in Namibia, this question may be difficult to

answer as many parents are subsistence farmers, and fewer are formally employed.

Findings concerning the attitude to parenting suggest that the odds of disliking school were lower for respondents who agreed that at their age they were responsible enough to be parents compared to the others who disagreed or were unsure about parenting. Whereas dislike of school has been associated with low academic achievements, absenteeism and eventual school dropout, often coupled with low self-esteem<sup>14</sup>, proposed that girls who are happy at school might have higher self-esteem and are therefore more confident that they could shoulder the responsibility of parenting at their age.

With regard to confidence about correct condom use, those who were unsure had higher odds of disliking school as opposed to the others who reported low or high confidence. The reason for some girls indicating ambivalence might have referred to their insecurity in negotiating condom use rather than their lack of knowledge of correct condom use<sup>12</sup>. To increase the validity of this measure of condom use, additional questions could be included that address other dimensions of condom use. For example<sup>24</sup>, in their study to identify factors related to actual use of condoms among secondary school youths in rural Tanzania used a five-item self-efficacy scale for condom use that included a statement about the youth's ability to negotiate condom use, amongst others<sup>24</sup>.

Alcohol use was independently associated with dislike of school after controlling for the other outcome measures. The study established that alcohol use had a significant effect on dislike of school: girls who used alcohol once in a while or more than once a month had significantly higher odds to dislike school than their peers who had never used alcohol. It was reported by<sup>25</sup> that lower school engagement was associated with higher rates of delinquency and substance use (including alcohol), which, in turn, could lead to adolescent risk behaviours, such as early sexual activity<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore<sup>26</sup>, stated that teens using tobacco, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs are more likely to be sexually active, to engage in risky sexual

behaviour and to experience the consequences of risky sex, including unintended pregnancy, compared with peers who do not use substances. This was confirmed by<sup>5</sup> who reported that alcohol and drug use amongst learners at a school in the Zambezi region (Namibia) resulted in high-risk sexual behaviour and unintended pregnancies. Alcohol use amongst Namibian youths is a cause of great concern<sup>27,28</sup> as prevalence of alcohol use was reported to be 27% amongst females aged 13 – 17 years who drank at least one drink containing alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days<sup>21</sup>.

## Conclusion

The study did not find clear associations between dislike of school and attitudes and behaviours (outcome measures) which may predict the risk of subsequent teenage pregnancy except for alcohol use and parental employment. Parental employment as proxy for socio-economic status emerged as a significant predictor of unhappiness at school as findings showed that, contrary to expectations and findings from other studies, that assumed higher socio-economic status (both parents employed) had a significant negative effect on attitude to schooling. This result suggests firstly that perhaps parental employment may not have been a valid measure for socio-economic status in the Namibian context and that secondly, other factors such as low parental involvement in the education of their children may have confounded the association between parental employment and dislike of school. Further research into factors that contribute to dissatisfaction with schooling and its effects on teenage pregnancy is thus warranted also with regard to establishing firm conclusions about causality. Cross sectional studies as this one report on adolescent behaviour at a given point in time and definite conclusions about cause and effect cannot be established since “It may, for example, be that, rather than alienation from school causing young people to engage in certain behaviours and hold certain views, it is actually engagement with these behaviours and views that increases young people’s feelings of disengagement with school”<sup>12</sup>. Thus, interventions aimed at increasing the youth’s satisfaction with schooling which would at the same

time address the prevention of risky adolescent behaviour should be based on empirical evidence in the form of longitudinal studies that will explain the direction of causal effects to inform effective policy and practice. Such studies should also investigate other factors that may be related to dislike of school such as parent-child; teacher-child and parent-teacher relationships as well as school environmental issues that were not addressed in this study.

In terms of alcohol use, higher levels of alcohol use predicted higher odds of dislike of school. Since lower school engagement has been associated with higher rates of alcohol use and subsequent adolescent risky behaviours, such as early sexual activity, this finding underscores the need for continued efforts by school authorities and policy makers to deal with the growing problem of substance use and abuse among the Namibian youth.

## Conflict of Interest:

None to be declared.

## Authors contribution

All Authors have read and approved the manuscript. Gert Van Rooy conceptualised the idea of the paper through a literature search and was responsible for the analyses and the write up with the support of a statistician. Gilbert Likando and Paulus Mwetulundila contributed conceptually through the writing of the manuscript.

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