

A STUDY ON THE HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY
SIGNIFICANCE OF OMWELE GWOSHIPIKA AMONG
AAWAMBO COMMUNITIES

A RESEARCH THESIS IN FULL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
HISTORY.

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

NDAMIAN NGHISHIDIMBWA HANGULA

201101812

OCTOBER 2024

SUPERVISOR: DR. MARTHA AKAWA- SHIKUFA (University of Namibia)

CO-SUPERVISOR: DR. GOODMAN GWASIRA (University of Namibia)

ABSTRACT

Omwele Gwoshipika is (or was) one of the celebrated objects of Aawambo material culture of the 19th to 20th century, and an object of historical status in the social and political structure of Aawambo communities. Omwele Gwoshipika excelled as a tool for the king to exercise political and social authorities in Aawambo subjects. The aftermath of Germany's colonial administration over Namibia from 1884 to 1915 has resulted in some of the Aawambo material culture being taken away to Germany. Omwele Gwoshipika was among the items taken away from the source communities to Germany in 1909 and kept in the Berlin Ethnographic Museum. The removal of Omwele Gwoshipika by the Germans as an instrument of authority in the royal delegation of power left a void in hierarchical representation of the king in the Aawambo kingdoms. This study attempts to establish the significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among the Aawambo communities, their views on its restitution to Namibia and its design structure. The data of the study were collected using a qualitative research method, which incorporated focus group and semi-structured interview with groups and individual participants. The study found out that Omwele Gwoshipika has a very great historical significance in the world of kings¹. There is mixed feelings among Aawambo regarding the contemporary importance of Omwele Gwoshipika. The study established the excitement and joy among the Aawambo regarding the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika and that the ancient design of Omwele Gwoshipika can be reinstated. Moreover, the study established mixed feeling whereby some Aawambo communities felt that the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika is not valuable because the traditional and spiritual ways that used to keep Omwele Gwoshipika have been compromised. The study concluded that for Omwele Gwoshipika to be successfully re-integrated in use in Aawambo community with its original cultural characters, there are certain behavioural changes that Aawambo youth need to favour such as discipline, orderliness and

¹ In Aawambo, a king is gender-neutral term and it is applicable to male and female.

adhering to the accepted standards of Aawambo cultural behavioural norms for the re-integration of Omwele Gwoshipika to be installed successfully among Aawambo communities’.

Keywords: Material Culture, Omwele Gwoshipika, De-heritagisation, belongings, Aawambo.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my profound gratitude to my two supervisors, Dr. Martha Akawa-Shikufa and Dr. Goodman Gwasira for their guidance and support.

I wish to sincerely salute the Gerder Henkel foundation and the Museums Association of Namibia for awarding me with a scholarship to undertake this study.

Furthermore, I wish to thank Mr. Erasmus Stephanus who assisted me when I was in the field, without his involvement, this study would not have materialized.

I wish to extend a word of appreciation to the four Aawambo traditional authorities (Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi and Uukwaluudhi) whose participants shared their knowledge with me.

Lastly, I wish to heart fully appreciate my friends and everyone who motivated me throughout the journey of this study.

Dedication

This study is dedicated to the memory of my late grandmother Gwakarenga Nekulu who loved narrating about her life history and the family lineage.

Declaration

I, Ndamian Nghishidimbwa Hangula, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part therefore, has not been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

No part of this thesis may be reproduced in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without prior permission of the author, or the University of Namibia.

I, Ndamian Nghishidimbwa Hangula, grant the University of Namibia the right to reproduce this thesis in a whole or in part, in any manner or format, which the University of Namibia may deem fit, for any person or institute requiring it for studying and research; providing that the university of Namibia shall waive this right if the whole thesis has been or is being published in a manner satisfactory to the university.

.....

Signature

Date: October 2024

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
Declaration	v
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 The research Objectives	4
1.4 Significance of the study	4
1.5 Limitation of the study	4
1.6 Delimitation of the study	4
2. Literature Review and Theoretical framework	4
2.1 Traditional Knives as material culture	4
2.2 Restitution of Namibia material culture items	5
2.4 Theoretical Framework	6
3. Research Methods	6
3.1 Research Design	6
3.2 Population	7
3.3 Sample	7
3.4. Research Instrument	7
3.5. Procedures	7
3.6. Data Analysis	8
4. Research ethics	8
2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1. Introduction	9
2.2 Theoretical framework	11
2.3. Origin and settlement of Aawambo	14
2.4. Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany	19
2.5. Metallurgy and Aawambo Blacksmiths	20
2.6. Aawambo Knives	21
2.7. Ordinary Aawambo Omwele	23
2.8. Omwele Gwoshipika	26

2.9. Restitution of Namibia’s cultural objects	30
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	35
3.1. Introduction	35
3.2. Research Design	35
3.3. Sample	37
3.4. Data Analysis	39
3.5. Research Ethics	40
3.5.1. Gatekeeping in the selected Aawambo kingdoms	41
3.5.2. Dynamic of focus group discussion	42
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS	43
4.1. Introduction	43
4.2. Biography of the research participants	43
4.3. The historical and modern importance of Omwele Gwoshipika in Aawambo communities	44
(a) Knowledge of Omwele Gwoshipika	44
(b) Importance of Omwele in Aawambo culture	45
(c) Worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past	47
(d) Authoritative instructions the king gives through Omwele Gwoshipika	49
(e) Circumstances under which traditional leaders use Omwele Gwoshipika	50
(f) Consequences of individual refusing orders passed through Omwele Gwoshipika ..	51
(g) Current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika	52
(h) Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past	53
(i) Carrying and usage of Omwele Gwoshipika by women	53
2. Returning of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia	54
(a) Views on the coming back of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia	54
(b) Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika now that it is returned	56
(c) What else should be done to the returned Omwele Gwoshipika?	56
(d) Putting an artefact in use after a long time of absence in the communities	58
(e) Where should Omwele Gwoshipika be maintained.	59
(f) Aawambo artefacts in foreign countries	60
3. Creating the shape of Omwele Gwoshipika	61
(a) Production of Omwele Gwoshipika in the ancient times	61
(b) Materials used in the ancient times to manufacture Omwele Gwoshipika.	62

(c) Rituals associated with the making of Omwele Gwoshipika	63
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.	64
5.1. Introduction.	64
5.2. The historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika in Aawambo communities	64
5.2.1. Knowledge of Omwele Gwoshipika.	64
5.2.2. Importance of Omwele in Aawambo culture	65
5.2.3. Worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.	67
5.2.4. Authoritative instructions the king gives through Omwele Gwoshipika.....	68
5.2.5. Occurrences traditional leaders use Omwele Gwoshipika.	68
5.2.6. Consequences of individual refusing orders passed through Omwele Gwoshipika.....	69
5.2.7. Current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika.	70
5.2.8. Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.	71
5.2.9. Usage and carrying Omwele Gwoshipika by women	71
5.3.1. Views on the coming back of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia.....	72
5.3.2. Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika when returned.....	73
5.3.3. When the Omwele Gwoshipika is returned.	74
5.3.4. Putting an artefact in use after a long time of absence in the communities	74
5.3.5. Omwele Gwoshipika value should be preserved in local museums or communities	76
5.3.6. Aawambo artefacts in foreign countries.....	76
5.4. Comparing the physical design structure of Omwele Gwoshipika within the selected Aawambo communities, if there is any, with Omwele Gwoshipika that has been restituted from Germany, Berlin ethnographic Museum.	77
5.4.2. Materials used in the manufacturing of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.	78
5.4.3. Rituals associated with the making of Omwele Gwoshipika	78
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	79
6.1. Recommendations	81

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Aawambo: Is a group of people who formed up the largest ethnic group in the northern Namibia made up of eight sub-group known as Aakwanyama, Aandonga, Aakwambi, Aambalantu, Aakolonkadhi, Aakwaluudhi, Aangandjera and Aambandja.

Arsenal: A place in the palace where kingdom weapons are stored.

King, omukwaniilwa is gender-neutral term and is applicable to both men and women who are the tribal ruler/head/ leader of Aawambo tribal society or kingdom.

A queen (omunyakadhi, is a wife of the king, she is not a ruler/leader)

Material Culture: A term used to describe the physical objects/belongings produced and used by the members of a group of people.

Omwele Gwoshipika: is a knife with a sheath of soft wood, hollowed at the top for the blade and having a short V-shaped opening in the front.

Omwele: is an umbrella name of various Aawambo traditional knives, namely; Omwele Gwomalenga, Omwele Gwomolumpangwa, Omwele Gwoshimbo, Omwele Gwomandengu and Omwele Gwoshipika.

Palace: It is a royal house forming the official residence of a tribal King or Chief.

Restitution: The restoration or returning of something lost, stolen or taken away without the owner's consent to its proper or rightful owner.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Knowledge of our cultural heritage plays a major role in constructing group identity and enhances the understanding of ways in which cultural practices could be linked to the social values, which prevailed in the pre-colonial society (Shigwedha, 2000). Aawambo communities are the largest ethnic group in northern Namibia made up of eight sub-groups known as Aandonga, Aakwambi, Aakwanyama, Aangandjera, Aambalantu, Aakwaludhi, Aakolonkadhi and Aambandja (Sheetheni, 2015). Traditionally, the political structure of the Aawambo is established upon hereditary chieftaincies and counselors. The social structure of Aawambo communities is based upon a system of matrilineal parentage, whereby kingship is reckoned through the mother (Becker, 2006). Aawambo people are agro-pastoralist. Aawambo share a common historical background, cultural heritage, traditions, languages which are mutual intelligible, (Oshiwambo the groups of languages) and objects of potent cultural value, (Shigwedha, 2004). Aawambo were acknowledged to be highly artistic, skilled in metalwork, pottery, leather and tanning.

Aawambo through their artistic and blacksmith expertise manufactured Aawambo traditional knives with sheath, hoes, axes, picks, needles, spearheads, daggers, butcher knives, nut picks, arm leg bracelets, iron beads, native piano, arrows heads, copper leg bands made of iron, wood, cooper and leather (Loeb, 1962). Aawambo traditional knives were generally used for self-defence against unforeseen assaults, in hunting trips for killing and skinning animals and for everyday use (Silvester, Shikongeni & Kautondokwa, 2019). Traditionally, Aawambo knives often dangled from the belts of Aawambo men, in some cases also from those (which) of women and children. Aawambo traditional knife has double entendre used in reference to it. The knife is called Omwele in Oshindonga and Omukonda in Oshikwanyama ((Mwatondange, Nghishiko & Silvester, 2020). Omwele is an umbrella name of various Aawambo traditional knives, namely; Omwele Gwomalenga, Omwele Gwomolumpangwa, Omwele Gwoshimbo, Omwele Gwomandengu and Omwele Gwoshipika. Many of the mentioned Oomwele [plural of omwele] are just ordinary knives with wooden handle and wooden sheath, however, Omwele Gwoshipika, is a unique prestigious Aawambo knife.

Omwele Gwoshipika is one of the celebrated objects of Aawambo material culture of the 19th to 20th century. Omwele Gwoshipika is a knife with a sheath of soft wood, hollowed at the top for the blade and having a short V-shaped opening in the front. The lower edge is covered with copper

plating, nailed along the top with copper nails and welded at the corners (Ella, 1938). Omwele Gwoshipika was used as a sign of great importance and highest order among Aawambo. Omwele Gwoshipika was often the material good of the government and were given as a sign of honour to persons admired by the king to be mostly skilled in matters related to royal shepherds, loyal soldiers and other valued men (Silvester, et al, 2019). However, if a person who carried Omwele Gwoshipika passed on or is discredited by the king, then, the king has to recall Omwele Gwoshipika back and give it to someone else considered worthy (Silvester et al. (2019). Omwele Gwoshipika's price value was equivalent to that of a cow.

During the German colonial regime in Namibia from 1884 to 1915, some Namibian objects of material culture were taken to various parts of the world. Omwele Gwoshipika and other items were taken to Germany and kept in the Berlin Ethnographic Museum. Available documentation on the acquisition of Omwele Gwoshipika by the Germans has shown that it was obtained in 1909 (Mwatondange et al., 2020). Since there are no records on how Omwele Gwoshipika was obtained from Aawambo communities, its acquisition remains questionable. The acquirement of the objects from their source communities was frequently done by either the traders, missionaries, individual soldiers or employees of the colonial administration, who were more interested in owning the objects than knowing what they were used for or what they represented (Reucher, 2019). This prompts questions of confronting the colonial past, on how collectors dealt with items such as Omwele Gwoshipika that were taken from the source community without understanding the context of its significance. The term belongings and objects would be used interchangeably through out the study.

The appropriation of a certain number of indigenous belongings from Africa is a serious problem, which calls for an everlasting diplomatic solution between the former colonies and their coloniser regarding the returning of the belongings to the source communities (Mbembe, 2021). The memory of the belongings, its function and above all the relationship it created and developed with other belongings or with people is slowly fading away, because most people who know the use and significance are elderly and death is taking them away from the community. Often, the value of African belongings exists while the belongings serve a function in the community that inserts it into practice and assigns it a specific purpose.

Therefore, the attribution of subjectivity to inanimate belongings were done in most cases through rituals, ceremonies and relations of reciprocity (Mbembe, 2021). The world in which people are dwelling is the world that no one can ever come back, once they have passed on. To that effect, most people who conducted rituals, ceremonies and sacredly used the belongings are passing on, going with the whole area of self-knowledge that would become inaccessible forever. Thus, as a wise alternative to mitigate the loss of very crucial information surrounding the use and handling of the belongings, such belongings, need to come back to their source community through restitution or repatriation. Further, the Collection Trust (2020) clarified the difference between restitution and repatriation. Restitution is the process by which cultural belongings are returning to an individual or community. In contrast, repatriation is the process by which cultural belongings are being given back to a nation or state at the request of the government.

African belongings convey messages, which can be understood only by the most elderly of the African society (Agorsah, 1977). Studying about the past helps us to celebrate a unique cultural identity and understand it better (Silvester et al., 2019). For that reason, I present a case study of one of Namibia's material cultures, Omwele Gwoshipika that was taken away from Namibia to Germany in 1909, and was resituated to Namibia's National Museum on the 27th May 2022.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Omwele Gwoshipika is a belonging of historical status in the social and political structure of Aawambo communities. Unlike other Aawambo traditional ordinary knives, Omwele Gwoshipika excelled as a tool for the king to exercise political and social authorities in Aawambo subjects (Loeb, 1962). In times of the war, when the king/chief led his combatants, he would wear one Omwele Gwoshipika in front and another at the back. Omwele Gwoshipika represented the king's authority, to which it was given to a messenger, he would have authority to acquire whatever he asked for in the name of the king (Ella, 1938). Omwele Gwoshipika was a sort of a king's signet, having authority to commandeer everything in the name of the king. It is arguable that the removal of Omwele Gwoshipika by the Germans as an instrument of authority in the royal delegation of power left a void in hierarchical representation of the king in the Aawambo kingdoms. This study sought to find out the historical power of commands attached to Omwele Gwoshipika in the socio-political context of Aawambo communities and established if Omwele Gwoshipika still holds the same decree of commands in the modern Aawambo communities.

1.3 The research Objectives

The overall objectives of this study were to investigate the significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities, its design and restitution from the Berlin Ethnological Museum. The study was guided by the following specific research objectives.

1.3.1 To determine the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo Communities.

1.3.2 To establish the views of Aawambo communities on the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika.

1.3.3 To compare the views on the physical design structure image of Omwele Gwoshipika among the selected Aawambo communities.

1.4 Significance of the study

This study aimed to supplement the documentation of Namibian material culture item of 19th -20th century in the Namibian historiography. In addition, the study is dedicated to recovering the value of Omwele Gwoshipika historically carried by Aawambo people in the northern Namibia.

1.5 Limitation of the study

The limitation of this study depended on referrals of research participants from the selected subgroups of Aawambo communities. The study used snowball referrals; however, the study findings would not be generalised to other Aawambo communities who did not participate in this study.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

The scope of the research is focused on Omwele Gwoshipika that returned from the Berlin Ethnological Museum. Additionally, the research concentrated on Aawambo traditional leaders and other informants who were derived from snowball referrals. Therefore, the study excluded other Aawambo traditional leaders who were not sampled for this study.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical framework

This section presents literature reviewed about traditional knives in Namibia and Africa, as well as restitution of Namibian material culture.

2.1 Traditional Knives as material culture

Material culture are belongings that form part of communities' cultural heritage and contribute to their sense of traditional identity (Shigwedha, 2000). Aawambo people have various material

culture items such as food, drinks, narcotics, clothing, ornaments and craftsmanship (Loeb, 1962). In the 19th -20th century, Aawambo craftsmen and blacksmiths produced various traditional daggers, Aawambo knives in copper sheath were considered as a fitting gift and token of appreciation from the king and Aawambo elite (Shigwedha, 2004). In Namibia, traditional daggers were not only being made by Aawambo but the Aakavango people also manufactured traditional daggers made of iron and copper wire with a helmet like shape (Mwafangeyo, 1980). Historically, many of the possessors of the Aawambo traditional ordinary knives used them as tools for fighting and other uses (Ella, 1938 and Loeb, 1962). In modern time Namibia, Aawambo ordinary traditional knives are still used as fighting tools and, to some extent, regrettably used in cases of murder (Menges, 2005; Simiyasa, 2016; David, 2020).

Generally, Africans were known for crafting unique weapons during the pre-colonial era which were then used for various activities like war, traditional ceremonies and some even for prestige (Kenyan National Archives, 2020). African weapons were emblems of authority, social rank, ritual commemorations, royalty, strength, identities, divine power, life and death (Nzewi, 2014). African weapons communicated social codes that governed communities and apportioned societal roles in the past. It is not only Aawambo people in Namibia who had traditional special knives, but other African countries too had unique traditional knives. Ethiopia had a traditional knife used for warfare and as a prestigious object and symbol of identification. In DRC, the Salampasu people had a ceremonial knife of 19th-20th century made of steel metal and wood, used as a symbol to foster cooperation and discourage violence at community gathering such as public dances and funerals (Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, 2014).

2.2 Restitution of Namibia material culture items

The past decades witnessed intensive debate on the issue of the returning African belongings found in western Ethnographic museums to their original source communities (Mumbula, 2004). After Independence, Namibia has witnessed the return of some of the material culture items, such as the Oukwanyama power stone which was returned from Finland in 1995, the Ombalantu sacred stone returned in 2014, as well as the Hendrik Witbooi bible, and whip which was returned from the Linden museum in Stuttgart and the Cape Cross returned from Germany in 2019 (eNCA-News, 2018). The return of belongings reveals cultural continuities and ruptures; it can also trigger cultural revivals and debates within the descendant communities (Silvester and Shiweda, 2020).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is located within the academic discipline of material culture, therefore adopting an object-driven approach by (Herman, 1992) as it appears in Harrison (1999) work, which gives an emphasis on understanding how an object can help people to speak to us of the values and beliefs of the object. In addition, this approach has specified that people will speak about the importance attached to an object. The object-driven approach set the bar clearly that object may change through time and space. Usually, an object is a product of a particular time and space; hence, an object can tell the researcher more about the societies that gave birth to it. Therefore, objects always help to speak to us about its significance to the people who created the object.

The object-driven approach further emphasised that objects have a lifecycle. They are created, used, consumed, appreciated and finally dissolved, disintegrated and die. In some instances, the object is afforded some after a lifetime in a museum.

This approach is appropriate for the discipline of material culture because it would assist the researcher in understanding the historical and contemporary lifestyle of Omwele Gwoshipika. Besides, the approach would help the researcher to evaluate the lifestyle of Omwele Gwoshipika to determine if the usage of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo has dissolved, and assess through the selected Aawambo communities to determine if Omwele Gwoshipika could be afforded some after a lifetime in a museum or in the communities. The study is guided by the symbolic interaction theory developed by Herbert Blumer an American Sociologist in 1937.

3. Research Methods

This study employed an interpretive paradigm and descriptive qualitative approach. The study investigation was achieved through the participants own understanding and interpretations of the subject (Omwele Gwoshipika) significance to Aawambo Communities (Kivunja & Kikuyu, 2017)

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent and achievable empirical research (Van Why, 2020). This study is a qualitative case study whereby the selected five kingdoms were investigated to provide in-depth information regarding Omwele Gwoshipika historical commands of power in the modern socio-political context of Aawambo communities.

3.2 Population

The study population consisted of eight (8) kingdoms, which are Aandonga, Aakualudhi, Aakolonkadhi, Aambalantu, Aambandja, Aangandjera, Ukuambi and Ukuanyama.

3.3 Sample

This study used snowball non-probability sampling to purposely sample five kingdoms from eight kingdoms of Aawambo, namely, Ondonga, Ukwaluudhi, Ongandjera, Uukwambi and Uukwanyama. Ondonga and Uukwanyama were sampled for this study for their blacksmith skills who manufactured Omwele Gwoshipika as early as the 1800s (Ella, 1938), Ukwaluudhi and Ongandjera kingdoms were sampled based on having an undisruptive historical reign on their Kingdoms. Ongandjera was one of the most powerful kingdoms in the 1800s through superior military technology acquired from the Bushmen (Salokoski, 2006). In contrast, Uukwambi was sampled on the basis that it is a kingdom and Omwele Gwoshipika was a prestigious object of the Chief² (Ella, 1938). Other Aawambo communities, namely, Uukolonkadhi and Ombalantu were not sampled based on the historical narrative that they had no central power in the mid-1800s and have been described as kingless or republica (Salokoski, 2006) societies, although presently they have kingdom leaders in place (Salokoski, 2006). The researcher identified one initial potential subject in each of the selected kingdoms, which were the king/chief. The researcher then asked the initial subjects to signpost/direct other participants as found deemed suitable and well-informed on the object being studied (Dragon and Isaic-Maniu, 2013). The sample size was determined and stopped by the researcher when he considered that the information gathered was satisfactory and saturated and have met the objective of the study.

3.4. Research Instrument

This study used one semi-structured in-depth interview guide to collect data from the initial snowball respondents (kingdom leaders) and from other respondents who partook in the study as a result of referral. Furthermore, the researcher requested for permission from all participants to use a voice recorder for the interview session. On occasion whereby, the research participants were not comfortable being recorded, the researcher opted for note-taking during the interview session.

3.5. Procedures

At the beginning of the study, the researcher identified one potential subject in the population (Kingdom leaders) who were personally known to have met the research criteria. The researcher

² A male ruler of a tribal group in Aawambo communities, some Aawambo communities have no kings, and therefore are ruled by chiefs as the head of the tribal group, for example the Chief of Uukwambi Chiefdom.

then requested each initial subject to refer and direct the suitable persons for the study. Therefore, the referral process continued until an acceptable number of eligible respondents were located. As soon as consensus letters were received and signed by every initial respondent, semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted concurrently.

3.6. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze data collected through interview transcripts and observation conducted with the selected Aawambo traditional leaders and referred respondents. Thematic analysis is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities, differences and generating unanticipated insights (Nowell, Norris and White, 2017).

4. Research ethics

Ethics relate to the way a researcher treats participants in the research study (Simelane-Mnisi, 2018). Ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the UNAM Ethical Committee. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the study participants. Every participant was asked to sign an informed consent form that dictates that the respondents have confirmed to partake in the study. In addition, the study employed voluntary participation. Participants were not compelled, coerced, or required to participate in the study without their intentions. Interview participants were alerted that observations were being conducted concurrently. The right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any given time without fear was respected. The study ensured confidentiality of the research participants and only mentioned their names when the study participants agreed. Additionally, the data collected would be stored on the external hard driver belonging to the researcher and would be handed over to the National Archives of Namibia and Museum Association of Namibia for permanent preservation. Furthermore, all the data collected by note-taking were disposed of by permanently shredding the physical notes taken.

2. CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, a review of literature concerning Aawambo knives is given. In search for relevant literature on the research topic, it became apparent that there was little research done on Omwele Gwoshipika in Namibia. This chapter addresses the following aspects: theoretical framework, origin and settlement of Aawambo, Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Metallurgy and Aawambo blacksmiths, Aawambo knives, Ordinary Aawambo Omwele, Omwele Gwoshipika and Restitution of Namibia's cultural belongings.

In pre-colonial Namibia (before 1884) Aawambo communities produced the material requirements of culture dating back centuries that included technology and arts. Study of this nature strongly suggests that the people of Namibia, especially Aawambo communities, had developed technology appropriate for the manufacturing of tools, implements, weapons, vessels, musical instruments and ornaments of all kind which demonstrated creativity, uniqueness and an understanding of the natural environment in which cultural values were fully appreciated. Aawambo and their culture have its roots in history stretching back over four centuries to a time when Aawambo settled in the regions of Owambo around 1550, in the modern Namibia (Eirola, Rytkonen & Sivonen, 1983). One of the branches of weapons Aawambo group produced using their know-how were Aawambo knives, which they used for various purposes. In most cases, many Aawambo knives were ordinary knives which were used for hunting, skinning, deboning meat and as defensive instruments for fighting. However, there were Aawambo prestigious knives, which were not used for daily activities but were being used as ceremonial knives and as a symbol of power and status among Aawambo communities. The study covers the period from 1801 year to the year 2000 (about 19th to 20th century). This period is essential in understanding and analysing Aawambo knives, particularly in the digging of information about the historic and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities in the pre-21st century.

The field of material culture studies integrates a range of scholarly analysis into the uses and meaning of objects. Shigwedha (2004) described material culture as the objects that form part of a community's cultural heritage and contribute to their sense of traditional identity. Aawambo people have various material culture items such as food, drinks, narcotics, clothing, ornaments, and craftsmanship. Even though human cultures vary in contents, the human ability to appropriate instruments culture is held correspondingly by all people. Shigwedha (2004) further argued that

Aawambo communities who live in the north central regions of Namibia (Owambo) have seemingly inherited traditional ways of articulating themselves culturally through their artistic and creative talents. The end products of Aawambo creative skills have produced numerous objects that were essential in the cultural life of Aawambo communities.

Objects of material culture in traditional societies are not only a tangible result of everyday need, but also an expression of creative act that has invested the object with intangible meaning. Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin (1988) highlighted that objects of material culture serve as an active participant in the constituting of ideas and hierarchies in the communities. Furthermore, Arnoldi et al. (1988) argued that objects have the capacity to participate in people's resistance to situations. In either historical or contemporary terms, objects have various meanings within the context where they were produced. The same multiplicity of meaning applies at each level of the object removal from their original context. For instance, would the meanings of Aawambo knives that found their ways into European museums, be understood at the time of their removal from the source communities? This 'understanding' of the meaning of an object, at any particular level, might get misinterpreted as the object's meaning can get tied directly to the interest of those involved in the construction of the meaning. Material culture studies are clearly capable of critiquing what is regularly alleged by outsiders to be universal, technical, or rational solutions to what is local and culturally accepted (Arnold et al., 1988). Questions on whether objects undergo changes in context, style, use and meaning would depend on the technology, production, progress and skill and a movement towards forms of indigenous knowledge that are local and embedded in social and historical context. Therefore, the focus should be centred on the communities who created the objects. The communities whereby the objects have originated are in a good position to engage the researcher and explain how the object acquired its meaning, how it was being manufactured and emphasises on the issues of cultural process that occur during the manufacturing process of the object. Therefore, objects like Omwele Gwoshipika would be a good point of departure, to generate greater awareness of the high-status knives' history of northern Namibia and the way in which aspects of culture blend to create something new.

In most cases, objects carry messages, which could only be understood by the elders in the communities. As part of human mortal nature, many of the elders in the communities who understand both the production and life histories of objects are departing from earth through death.

In a few years, the elders would be gone with the knowledge they possessed about material culture, if no study were undertaken to record their untapped knowledge about objects of material culture. Therefore, this study is endeavouring to reconstruct the meaning and beliefs of Omwele Gwoshipika which was held in the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Material culture is the study through artefacts of the beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions of a particular community or society at a given time (Prown, 1982). Additionally, the term material culture is also often used in reference to the artefacts themselves, as well as to the body of material culture available for the study. Therefore, the term material culture puts emphasis on how people used objects in their environmental settings and carried out social functions, regulating social relations as well as giving a symbolic meaning to human activities. This study is focused on material cultural object, Omwele Gwoshipika of Aawambo communities in Namibia. Omwele Gwoshipika falls under ethnographic art objects. According to Alweendo, Iizyenda, Nangolo and Silvester (2011) objects, which fall under ethnographic art, are those objects, which are vital with great symbolic and traditional significance. For that reason, ethnographic art objects demand special respect because of their importance within their cultural context. In addition, the object's association with a particular individual or group invokes practices, which are recognised by the whole community, and shows a demonstration of respect accorded to the object (Clavir & Moses, 2018).

This study is located within the academic discipline of material culture, therefore adopting an object-driven approach by (Herman, 1992) as it appears in Harrison (1999) work, which gives an emphasis on understanding how an object can help people to speak to them about the values and beliefs attached to the object. In addition, this approach has specified that people will express themselves about the significance dedicated to an object. Objects are well defined as the material things which people encounter and interact with and use, (Woodward, 2007). Conversely, Material culture study is concerned about the relations between people and objects. It has to do with what traditions people put on objects and what objects do for people and to the people. Objects have various symbolic meanings for people, as much as their physical presence structures the realistic aspects of social life. Moreover, objects are culturally powerful because in practice they connect physical and mental manipulation. Object-driven approach theory is appropriate for this study, as

it could be applied to acquire information from Aawambo communities about the usage, beliefs and values of Omwele Gwoshipika in their socio-political life.

This study employed a symbolic interaction theory developed by George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Colley in 1937 founded on the meaning of things. The motive to use the symbolic interactionist theory is that, the theory focuses more on individuals and helps people to gain a broader understanding of how society operates. Further, the theory focuses on individual acts and what goes on between people in relation with Omwele Gwoshipika. Based on this theory people live both in the natural and symbolic environment, whereby the meaning and values of things are defined by how the people interact with the belongings. The belongings do not have meaning on their own. However, belongings acquires their meaning from the social actors who made and use the belongings (Blumer, 1969). The theory fits well in the study as it would assist the researcher to evaluate how Aawambo participants in the study understands well the meaning and function of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past and in the present time.

The theory emphasised that the meaning of the belongings for a person arises fundamentally out of the way they are defined to him/her by others with whom the person interacts (Blumer, 1969). For instances, Omwele Gwoshipika's meaning has been passed on from the ancient generation who used it to the current generation. The current generation of Aawambo who are in possession of the information about Omwele Gwoshipika have the knowledge acquired through tacit knowledge transfer. Moreover, the theory highlighted that there are common belongings, defined as those belongings that have the same meaning for a given set of people and seen in the same manner by them (Aksan, Kisac, Aydin and Demirbiken (2009). For instance, Omwele is a common belonging among Aawambo communities and seen with the same meaning by most of Aawambo communities.

The symbolic interaction theory claims that facts are based on and directed by symbols. The theory examines the meanings emerging from the reciprocal interaction of individuals in a social environment with other individuals and focuses on the question of which belongings and meanings emerge from the interaction between people (Blumer, 1969). The theory emphasises that individuals interpret and give meaning to symbols and belongings based on their own subjective beliefs, values and experiences. Therefore, belongings can have different meanings to different individuals and that the meanings may change over time. The theory is very appropriate for the

study and would direct the researcher in determining if the meaning of Omwele Gwoshipika have changed over time.

The position of symbolic interaction is that the world that exists for people is composed of belongings and these belongings are the product of symbolic interaction. The theory-classified belongings into three categories, which are as follows: (a) physical objects such as Omwele Gwoshipika, chairs and table, (b) social objects such as the priest, president and student, (c) abstract objects such as moral principles, philosophical doctrines, or ideas such as justice and exploitation (Aksan et al, 2009). The belongings consists of the meaning that it has for the person for whom it is a belonging. The meaning sets how the person sees the belonging. The way in which a person is prepared to act towards it and how the person is ready to talk about it. This theory stresses clearly, that a belonging may have different meanings for different individuals for instance; Omwele Gwoshipika would be an ordinary object to others while to Aawambo community it is a prestige knife.

Further, the theory highlighted that certain members of an ethnic group may see a particular belonging as a different kind of belonging, while other members of ethnic group may see it as an unimportant something. Generally, belongings, people, conditions and events do not feature an intrinsic meaning. In often times, the meaning is indorsed to these elements through human interaction (Blumer, 1969). For example, if the Aawambo communities see a person carrying Omwele Gwoshipika while walking towards them, they would think that such a person is a messenger from the palace. They know that through the frequent interaction between themselves and Omwele Gwoshipika. Thus, people give meaning to belongings and they express the meaning using the language spoken in a certain community.

In addition, the theory indicates that the belongings provide a different picture of the environment of people, emanating from their standpoint that the environment consists only of the belongings that the given people recognise and know. For instance, one cannot be able to conduct a study in Ovaherero community asking them about Omwele Gwoshipika; it does not belong in their environment. The meaning that the belonging maker have for the people interacting with the belonging sets the nature of the environment (Aksan et al, 2009). Therefore, the theory emphasises that the meaning of the belonging must be considered as a social creation, being formed in and arising out of the process of definition and interpretation of people.

Symbolic interaction explained it clearly that human interaction with belongings is a vast process in which people are forming, sustaining, and transforming the belongings they have manufactured and give meaning to such belongings (Blumer, 1969). In addition, belongings have no fixed status except when their meaning is sustained through indications and definitions by the people who manufactures and use the belongings. Therefore, the way of life and actions of people essentially change in life with the changes taking place in their world of belongings. The theory lay emphasis that people act towards the belongings based on how they understand the purpose and function of the belongings rather than merely responding to their stimuli (Blumer, 1969). The researcher used symbolic interactionism in a theoretical perspective that aims at addressing the instinctive meaning that Aawambo communities inflict on matters to do with Omwele Gwoshipika, events and their behaviours towards it.

In conclusion, symbolic interactionism sees meaning as social products and creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they do interact. The shortfall of the symbolic interaction theory is that it is focused on the subjective interpretation of individuals, and how they understand and value Omwele Gwoshipika. Therefore, the researcher being objective in the whole process of the study would tackle the subjectivity of the theory.

2.3. Origin and settlement of Aawambo

Owambo is situated in the north-central of Namibia and borders Angola. Owambo borders Kunene region on the west and the eastern border is Kavango regions, In the South there is the famous Etosha National Park. Owambo area is a wide, plain without mountains, hills or permanent rivers. The whole of Owambo is, however, interwoven by shallow water courses known as “Oshana” which end in a number of small lakes in the south of the country (Afrikaans-Deutsche Kulturgemeinschaft 1980). The Oshana are usually full of rainwater during the rainy season. The etymology of Owambo (the area) and Aawambo (group of people) have been covered in various studies such Galton 1851; Andersson 1861; Williams 1991; Shigwedha 2004. In all the studies, it is allegedly emphasised that the word Owambo was of the Otjiherero origin. The term Aawambo is applied collectively to the eight associated tribes which dwell in Owambo, which are Aandong, Aakwanyama, Aakwambi, Aakwaluudhi, Aakolonkadhi, Aangandjera, Aambalantu and Aambandja.

Vedder et al (1966) claimed that Aawambo were a branch of the great Bantu family and were descendants of Nangombe ya Mangundu. According to Vedder et al. (1966) Nangombe allegedly came from the east together with his brother Kathu. Nangombe and Kathu are seemingly believed to have been the sons of Mangundu. However, Mangundu is not known whether the latter was their father or mother. The two brothers apparently parted ways in Ondonga area in the tree called the great Omomborombonga tree. There are two contrasting versions about the exact year Aawambo settled in Owambo. One account, is assuming that Aawambo group might have come from the Great Lakes of the Central Africa around year 1300, following the same route through Kunene river and reached their present location Owambo around year 1775 (New Era, 2016). The other account, according to Shigwedha (2004) is claiming Aawambo communities to have settled in Owambo in about 1550. “Oombo” Otjiherero word is the oldest name the Ovaherero people used in ancient years in reference to Aawambo which literally means “there they are” (Symonds, 2009). In a different interpretation, Loeb (1962) associated the term Aawambo with cattle-posts (Oohambo). However, Williams (1991) related the name Aawambo to wealth “yamba” which literally means rich. Williams (1991) further argued that Aawambo were linked with richness since they used to have better homesteads in earlier times, compared to Bushmen’s houses. Therefore, when the Ovaherero encountered Aawambo, they referred Aawambo as yamba “the rich” based on the fact that Aawambo were having good houses and cattle. The map below shows the circled Aawambo O³ four regions in Namibia.

³ The four-O region came about after independence as a way of ending the apartheid administration of Namibia into homelands. After Independence Namibia introduced the first level of subnational administrative division. The four-O region comprises of Oshana, Oshikoto, Ohangwena and Omusati) is a region in central northern Namibia

In general, Aawambo have similar customs, speak dialects and languages that are mutual intelligible. (Cooper, 1984). Aawambo groups were believed to belong to one group and broke away and established sub-clans for various reasons. According to Symonds (2009) Aawambo division occurred as follows; while Aawambo group were moving westwards from Kavango towards Etosha pan, one of the leaders of the other Aawambo subgroup apparently said to his subjects “Ndongo Oompaka” meaning no more moving further. The group, which ceased moving further, eventually started calling themselves Aandongga. In addition, some of the Aawambo group members had different interests, which marked the beginning of the separation into eight recognised tribes. For instance, there was a group which liked to hunt for meat, this group of Aawambo split off from the Aandongga group and settled in another area where there was plentiful game. Then, the remaining Aandongga group started calling the breakaway group as “Aakwanyama” meaning people who like meat. Another group of Aawambo also skilled in hunting moved south of the Kwando-Kubango River in search of fresh hunting grounds. The group organised themselves in a cultural identity and called themselves “Aakwaludhilumwe” meaning people of the same origin (Shigwedha, 1991). Aakwaluudhi were named after Mukwaludhi Lumwe because they were his followers, nevertheless, the phrase lumwe has been discarded and today they are called Aakwaluudhi and their tribal land Uukwaluudhi (Symonds, 2009).

In the past all Aawambo tribes had kings and kingdom (Symonds, 2009). Although, at the present time not all Aawambo tribes have kings. Eirola et al. (1983) gave an emphasis that in traditional Aawambo society, the king of a sub-tribe was regarded to hold the supreme wisdom and power. The king was the ultimate authority and was considered to be a mediator between the superhuman powers and ordinary people. Moreover, it's alleged that it was not only the king who was accorded a prominent respect, but his family members too were sacred people. On occasion whereby, a king or Chief has died, the Council of Chiefs takes charge of ruling. For the smooth administration of the people under the traditional authority governance, Owambo is divided into villages administered by the minor Chief called village headman man/women (Siiskonen, 1990). Shigwedha (2004) in his thesis has provided an argument that before colonialism, all eight Aawambo groups allegedly did not resort to a unifying social entity. Shigwedha (2004) pointed out that Aawambo individuals in each kingdom have related their identity with the kingdoms to which they belonged. For instance, an Omuwambo individual would call himself as Omukwambi, Omundonga, Omukwanyama, Omumbalantu, Omukwaluudhi, Omumbandja, Omungandjera and

Omukolonkadhi. In modern-day, the trends of attaching ones' identity to a kingdom which they belonged still continues. Numerous Aawambo still attaches their identity to a kingdom of one of their parents, which they belonged to by birth.

In contrast, today, not all Aawambo kingdoms have kings. Historically, Aawambo are orientated matrilineal. This literally means that a tribal chief cannot put in his son as a successor and that property were not being inherited by his own children. The deciding person in the matter of chieftaincy and inheritance was the matrilinear uncle "Omutekulu" (Siiskonen, 1990). In modern times, this way of succession has often led to problems. Nevertheless, nowadays amongst Aawambo communities' children can inherit properties from biological parents (due to the western Roman law practised in Namibia). In addition, according to Shigwedha (2004) there has never been a uniting Oshiwambo language, but there have been eight separate dialects of Oshiwambo language. The two Oshiwambo dialects Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama were made standards in education as medium of instruction in schools. This trend was sustained after Namibia political independence in 1990.

Presently, the Aawambo traditional authorities are either ruled by a king, or a chief administer. The Aandonga, Aangandjera, Aakwanyama and Aakwaluudhi are governed by kings. Aakwanyama made history when a woman, Ohamba⁵, was coronated in November 2005 (Styles, 2014). The traditional authorities of Aakwambi, Aambalantu, Aambandja and Aakolonkadhi are headed by the chief⁶. Moreover, a council of senior councillors, councillors and headmen/women supports omukwaniilwa/Ohamba or chief in the performance of his or her duties.

Aawambo people who inhabit in Owambo practice a mixed economy of subsistence agriculture and stock farming with cattle and goats. Omahangu (Pearl-millet), sorghum and beans are the mainly crops that Aawambo grow. Furthermore, in Owambo, numerous small bars, locally known as coca-shops, small enterprises and locally owned shopping complexes are a demonstration to the business intelligence of Aawambo. Besides, there are also open markets in major towns in Owambo.

⁵ Ohamba (oshikwanyama)/Omukwaniilwa (oshindonga) loosely translated to equate to a king. In Aawambo communities, ohamba/omukwaniilwa is gender neutral.

⁶ A Chief is a male ruler of a tribal group in Aawambo communities' some Aawambo communities have no kings but Chiefs as the head or ruler of the tribal group, for example the Chief of Uukwambi Chiefdom.

2.4. Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany

The Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany was established in Germany in the 1870s to offer a home to the collections of cultural artefacts from other parts of the world (NBC-news, 2019). In the 19th and early 20th century centuries, ethnographic collecting of cultural objects was considered as a routine part of colonial life. Ethnography mostly considered objects as self-evident proof of cultural qualities, and were sometimes interested in writing down the histories of individuals objects. Most of the Namibian collections of cultural artefacts from the 19th and early 20th century are not found in Namibia, but in the storeroom of museums overseas (Silvester & Shiweda, 2020). The Ethnological museum in Berlin, Germany, online catalogue currently had 1317 artefacts from Namibia. It contains almost 200 artefacts dating from the pre-colonial (before 1884) with many artefacts having been obtained prior to 1908. In the Berlin ethnographic museum, the largest Namibian group of objects are from Aawambo, Ovaherero, Aakavango and Zambezi regions. There are three objects of Aawambo material culture in the Ethnographic Museum custody which were restituted to Namibia on the 27th May 2022, namely; Omwele Gwoshipika, Triple Beaker (*Oshitenga*), and Fertility Doll (*Okanona okandunga*).

The first alleged recorded contact between Aawambo communities and European happened in 1851, when Sir Francis during the mid of the 19th century the European traders got their feet in Owambo from Mossamedes in the north and Walvis Bay in the South. The Finish missionaries were the first whites to settle permanently in Owambo in 1870. Shigwedha (2004) explained how the Finish missionaries' settlement in the north have affected indigenous people in diverse ways. The Finish missionaries did not only spread the European culture amongst Aawambo communities but have also discredited the communities' important socio-cultural principles by putting an end to them and changing the social systems that they found in practices. Shigwedha (2004) further reasoned that a good number of Aawambo cultural objects which were associated with traditional practices were taken to Finland, Germany and other European countries by missionaries and colonial officials who claimed that the objects were linked to evil spirits and supposed to be destroyed.

Harju (2019) clearly enlightened that both Aawambo elites and non-elites have participated in the exchange of cultural goods with the missionaries. Aawambo have directly affected the missionary's collection of objects by determining the objects that were appropriate to be given either as a gift or objects that could be sold. Some of the unique objects, such as a copper sheathed

knives (*Omwele Gwoshipika*) were considered as an appropriate gift of honour from the local royalty. Omwele Gwoshipika was acquired in 1909 from Namibia and sent to Germany during the Germany's governance over Namibia (Mwatondange, Nghishiko & Silvester, 2020).

2.5. Metallurgy and Aawambo Blacksmiths

In Aawambo communities, there were blacksmiths who were very skilled in creating Aawambo knives. Metal smelting was the most specialised craft among Aawambo (Siiskonen, 1990). Aawambo blacksmiths were mainly coming from Aakwanyama and Aandongga communities who made knives and sold them to the other communities (Ella, 1938 & Loeb, 1962). However, Ella (1938) indicated that Aakwanyama blacksmith were the most celebrated iron smith and produced better knives in comparison to those of Aandongga. Most work was being done in iron, copper, and brass. Iron and copper were used to make agricultural implements, blades for knives, axes, arrow hoes, picks, needles, spearheads, daggers, butcher knives, nuts, picks, arm and leg bracelets, iron beads, native piano and arrowheads and cooper legs knives (Vedder et al., 1966). Copper was used to manufacture the massive leg rings worn by women and bead ornaments.

Several studies Ella, 1938; Loeb, 1962; Gibson, Larson and McGurk 1981, corresponded in revealing that Aawambo blacksmiths used different tools which they purchased to come up with Aawambo knives which they manufactured and presently still sell to their target customers. Aawambo blacksmiths used tools such as a hammer (ohamala), tongs (Onato), anvil (Oshikilo) and bellow (Omupepo) as equipment to make Aawambo knives. Gibson et al. (1981) argued that in 1953, a hammer and anvil all together were worth one cow. In addition, tongs were being made or purchased as well. Spearheads were being sold for a price ranging from 1 cent to 35 cents, depending on the size. Hoe blades were being sold for 5 cents. While long knives were sold for a price ranging from 1 to 35 cents.

The consulted literatures have not researched much on other Aawambo communities and only concentrated on the two Aawambo communities, Aandongga and Aakwanyama as if they were the only one who had blacksmiths. The study would like to determine if other Aawambo subgroups were not manufacturers of Aawambo knives, especially, that the mentioned prices to purchase the tools used in the making of Aawambo knives, were based on the pricing index of 1953 of the Tsumeb,-based Aawambo men contract labourers.

In both two communities, Aawambo and Aakavango, only men could be selected to become blacksmith through a difficult initiation procedure (Gibson et al., 1981; Loeb, 1962, & Siiskone, 1990).

According to Gibson et al. (1981) a smith was a person chosen to learn the craft having first to become an assistant to a skilled ironworker. Then, after a few months' traineeship, the helper was given some iron to see if he knew how to handle it or whether he needed more training. In Aawambo communities, there were two types of blacksmiths; the common type (Omuleva) and the master blacksmith (Osivanda) who possessed not only the craftsman's art but also supernatural abilities (Siiskonen, 1990). In contrast, in the Aakavango communities there were three specialised processes and roles recognised in the smith craft: the smith who is the master and directed all operations, a helper who worked the bellows and another who hammered the iron (Gibson et al., 1981).

2.6. Aawambo Knives

One of the unique products Aawambo blacksmiths have produced were Aawambo traditional knives. Normally, Aawambo knives were often hung from the belts of Aawambo men, in some cases also from those of women and children. Aawambo traditional knife has double entendre used in reference to it. The knife is called Omwele in Oshindonga and Omukonda in Oshikwanyama ((Mwatondange et al., 2020). Omwele is an umbrella name of various Aawambo traditional knives, namely; Omwele Gwomalenga, Omwele Gwomolupagwa, Omwele Gwoshimbo, Omwele Gwomandengu and Omwele Gwoshipika. In the whole literature review, I would use the word Omwele and Aawambo knives interchangeably.

Ella (1938) explained that Aawambo knives were made and used by Aawambo and their neighbours who dwelled in the north and south of Owambo. Archival sources, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, (1942) have defined Aawambo knives as a home-made Aawambo knife (it is really a double-edged dagger in a wooden sheath) it is a much more dangerous weapon, compared to Ekatana (Panga) which is not used for stabbing. Ekatana was introduced into Owambo by the returning Aawambo from migrant labour contracts, and it was used for cutting bushes and shrubs to clear fields. Aawambo knives were special and unique in shape.

In March 1942, there was a proposal to introduce a law, which prohibited Aawambo labourers to carrying knives inside the police zone. In 1949, a legislation was passed, Section 10 of Act no.54

of 1949, which reads, “any person who is in possession of a dangerous weapon as hereinafter defined shall thereby guilty of an offence, unless he is able to prove that such weapon is required by him for a lawful purpose. Dangers, knives, pocketknives or any knives with 3.5 inches (which is equals to 8.9 cm) was considered as a dangerous weapon” and cited in the legislation. This implies that most of the Aawambo knives within the National Museum of Namibia ethnographic study collection, including Omwele Gwoshipika would have been regarded as dangerous in 1949, as all of them have blades longer than 3.5 inches. Interestingly, in the independent Namibia, according to the Namibian constitution ordinance 12 of 1956, Section 4 (3a-n) as amended, knives, including pocket knives, or any blade (part of a knife not constituting a shaft or handle) which exceeds three and half inches (about 8, 9 cm) and jumpers, crown bars or hammers exceeding three pounds (about 1.4kg) in weight are not allowed on a person (Nampa, 2019).

However, in 1941, based on the archival information NAN SWAA, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, (1942) some of the tribal headmen had opposed the legislation of prohibiting natives carrying knives within the borders of Owambo. The tribal headmen, at the time, considered the restriction of carrying knives very problematic. Knives were required as a means of protection against wild animals. Knives were also used in the preparation of baskets, skins, mat making and wood carving. The prohibition of carrying Aawambo knives were then, only limited to natives who did not yet reach the year of puberty (boys less than 12 years old). The prohibition also extended to the carrying of bows and arrows, for instance arrows with metal arrowheads. However, the young native child would be allowed to carry bows and arrows, which had wooden points only.

The restriction of carrying Aawambo knives were implemented due to the fact some of Aawambo contract workers seemingly used to threaten their bus driver when returning back to Owambo after their contract expired. In addition, carrying of knives was also prohibited by natives in Owambo, especially in instances in which assaults committed with fatalities appeared to have been on the increase, Native Commissioner Ovamboland, (1942).

Ella (1938) argued that Aawambo knives were placed into a wooden holder and in a wooden sheath. However, both the handle and the sheath were covered with cooper plating and in part wound round with copper wire. The wood used to manufacture the Aawambo knives handle and sheath were taken from Omwandi tree, which also treasured for its eatable fruits (Onyandi), (Silvester, Kautondokwa and Shikongeni, 2019). Other woods from Omupopo and Omukanga tree

were also used to make the handle, but not as common as Omwandi tree. Aawambo knives which Aandongo blacksmith made, differs in length from 20 cm, to 75 cm while Aawambo knives made by Aakwanyama varies in length from 48 cm to 73 cm with a breadth of 5cm to 7cm across the scabbard (Ella, 1938).

Aawambo knives were disseminated firstly over the whole of Owambo and spread from the north into Angola, where they were found among Aakwanyama communities. The Aawambo knives were also found among the Ovahimba, who were neighbours to Aakwanyama people to the west, on the north and west banks of Kunene. In the east, the Aawambo knives were found among Aakwangari people who resided in the bed of the Kavango River. Ella (1938) further argued that the shape of Aawambo knives have influenced the shape of Barotse knives who were living on the western bank of Zambezi. Loeb (1962) further argued that the Kunene, Kavango and Zambezi rivers have played a major role in the distribution of Aawambo knives through trading across Africa from the east. In Finland, Aawambo knives are found in the Provincial museum of Western Nyland, Tammissari.

2.7. Ordinary Aawambo Omwele

There are several types of Aawambo traditional knives. The ordinary ones with wooden handle and wooden sheath and the special knives with handle and sheath covered with cooper wire or cooper plating. The ordinary knives were worn on a thin leather strap, over the shoulder or on the left hip towards the back and were mainly used for everyday purposes for hunting, as a tool and as a weapon in fighting. Furthermore, Silvester et al. (2019) argued that Aawambo ordinary knives were carried by the wealthier members of the community, particularly when going to ceremonies such as the inauguration of a new homestead or at a gathering to mourn the death of somebody. Shigwedha (2006) and Nampala (2006) (*these are two different chapters in one book*) has outlined that it was a violation of Aawambo customs for a man to go out barehanded without carrying an object such as an ordinary knife of Aawambo. According to Loeb (1962) in Ondonga, it was not only men who had the ordinary Aawambo knives; women too carried knives, which had no sheaths as weapons of defence. However, based on Loeb (1962) Aakwanyama women were not carrying weapons such as knives because they were not in need of additional protection other than the severe laws of the king. It was alleged that the laws of the kingdom assured abundant protection for women, apart from wartimes.

In the National Museum of Namibia, there is an ethnographic collection, where there are four different ordinary knives of Aawambo. These knives date of collection ranged between 1925 to year 1982. The index card attached on one of the knives has information stating that one knife was collected in Oranjemund by Mr. Gierz. Other knives were collected by R. Dickman/A.C.Rogie. However, information about the place of collection is not provided. The four ordinary knives are different in shapes, blade size, sheath size and are labelled to have one common function, weapon. The information on the index cards of some knives stated that these particular knives were carried by men, serving as a defensive instrument. The photo in Fig. 2 shows all the Aawambo knives, which are in the care and custody of the National Museum of Ethnographic studies.



Figure 2: The picture above illustrates, different ordinary knives of Aawambo with dates of collection ranging from 1925 to 1985. Source; National Museum of Namibia, Ethnographic Collection Studies.

The above knives, apart from being weapons for self-protection, they also serve two special purposes `by a witch doctor (omulodhi) as an instrument to affect bewitchment of someone. The omulodhi (there is a difference between omulodhi and onganga) used the knives as a tool to invoke the magical spirit that could locate a suspect who wronged someone by means of stealing someone's possession or killed a relative of someone. Aawambo knives were then used by omulodhi to inflict punishment on the alleged suspect, either by killing him or by inflicting a generational curse on the whole family (*okutikia ezimo*). Ella (1938) works provided two different accounts about the usefulness of ordinary Aawambo knives to the witch doctors. The first function the witch doctor used the knives was to determine the holders of wicked spirits, wrongdoers and other culprits in the community. The witch doctor carried out the science of establishing the person who carried evil spirits in this way. The witch doctor seemingly places the knife in the fire until the knife is red-hot, with the edge facing downwards drawn across the palm of the witch-doctor handle. While the witch doctor is doing the art of seeing, the witch doctor pronounces several names. The action of calling out names has two end results. Result one, a person could be proven innocent. Results two, a person may be proven guilty of the allegation being suspected. Therefore, the witch doctor allegedly arrived to the conclusion of his/her magic act based on the two results mentioned above. On occasion, whereby the witch-doctor knife runs smoothly after a name of someone has been mentioned, and the knife does not stick or blister his hand, this is proof that the person concerned is innocent. However, when in the progress the palm of the hand is cut or burnt by the hot knife, the witch doctor jumps up, pointing at the last-mentioned man, confirming immediately him/her as the culprit. It was alleged that the witch-doctor's findings were accepted as final. Ella (1938) did not provide further information regarding what punishment were being imposed on the culprit if proven guilty and what happened if the assumed person was proven innocent.

The second special function of Aawambo ordinary knives was to curse people. Aawambo knives were used by a cursing witch-doctor (Omutikili) who allegedly had the power to cause generational death on a family from a distance by magic. For instance, it was alleged that certain people would visit Omutikili when they wanted to recover their stolen objects from someone or when they wanted Omutikili to kill the person who had their items, and they could not get hold of him/her. Omutikili carried out the science of cursing people as it is covered by Ella (1938) in the following way: Omutikili allegedly took a pot of water and placed the knife before him, holding the knife in

his right hand. Omutikili then looks constantly into the water and swiftly stabs the knife into the water with a striking blow. Omutikili would then take a container, cover it carefully and put it on one side. At this point, it's being assumed that people were taken into another place away from where Omutikili was carrying on the cursing magic to a temporary place and were served with food. Moreover, Omutikili would then take a little blood from some animal (animal name not mentioned) and put it into the water in the vessel. Omutikili would then go and call the people back to come where he/she is, while carefully exposing the pot, showing the people the blood-stained water, a certain sign for the people that Omutikili has got the person they are looking for. People who visited Omutikili apparently believed that Omutikili could see in the water, an image of a person they wanted to be killed and Omutikili could murder him/her directly.

2.8. Omwele Gwoshipika

Omwele Gwoshipika has a sheath helmet-shaped, metal blade, knife handle and sheath of red copper and red copper wire. The copper-covered knives were a sign of great importance and highest order amongst Aawambo (Ella, 1938). Omwele Gwoshipika was used as a ceremonial knife. Omwele Gwoshipika was used as a special token, signifying the outpost huts of the king. The copper sheathed knife served both Aandongga and Aakwanyama, as a symbol of authority. Omwele Gwoshipika were often the material good of the governing king and were also given as a sign of honour to persons admired by the king to be mostly skilled in matters related to loyal shepherds, loyal soldiers, and other valued men (Silvester et al., 2019).

According to Loeb (1962) only certain elites such as the kings and nobles owned Omwele Gwoshipika. One of the key special functions of Omwele Gwoshipika was the power of commands, which was attached to the knife. Loeb (1962) works has clearly spelled out the significance of Omwele Gwoshipika as it follows: when a person who owned Omwele Gwoshipika sent a message containing an order that he wished obeyed, he gave the messenger his copper-bound knife as a symbol of his presence and right to command. However, if a person who carried Omwele Gwoshipika passed on or is discredited by the king, then, the king must claim Omwele Gwoshipika back and give it to someone else considered worthy (Silvester et al., 2019). Omwele Gwoshipika's price value was equivalent to that of a cow.

The ethnographic section of the National Museum of Namibia houses two Omwele Gwoshipika, with different information on their index cards. The two Omwele Gwoshipika have different

sizes. The blade length, the sheath helmet size, handle, and collection dates are all different and were collected by different collectors. The bigger Omwele Gwoshipika looks exactly similarly to Omwele Gwoshipika which was in Berlin Ethnographic Museum was returned to Namibia on the 27th May 2022. It was collected in 1933/1949. It is catalogued as “wambo”. That particular Omwele Gwoshipika has no biographical information to specify which subtribes of Aawambo it came from or who manufactured it. There is no information about its uses and significance amongst Aawambo communities. Therefore, this study would endeavour to change the narrative on the knife being preserved with incomplete information on its significance to the source communities. Instead, the only information available is that of the collector Ranch/Logie, and the number subtitle: E2124 LN 20. The point of entry of the collection, mainly in the western museums are through the collectors, thereby elevating the collectors at the expense of the objects.

The other Omwele Gwoshipika in the custody of the National Museum of Namibia Ethnographic collection, is smaller in size. The knife’s handle, blade and its sheath helmet size are smaller compared to Omwele Gwoshipika mentioned above. The information on its index card shows that the knife came from Aakwanyama community, a subtribe of Aawambo ethnic group. The knife was collected in 1949 by Mr. S.I. Bowker. The index card attached to the knife has recorded the information about its function. That individual, Omwele Gwoshipika was specifically used “probably as a ceremonial knife”, with no other additional information. The Namibian museum was established under the same context, which was colonial, the time the collectors were acquiring some of the belongings such as Omwele Gwoshipika. Silvester & Shiweda, 2020 have established that in Uukwanyama, in the 1920s there was a knife of honour with other numbers of cultural objects (special garment worn whistle of the nation and the iron whistle of the nation) which were associated with the power of the ruler, and were passed from one leader to the next, this could be what they referred to. Both index cards on the two Omwele Gwoshipika within the National Museum of Namibia, have no information on how such knives should be kept. Therefore, the study would gather the views of Aawambo communities concerning Omwele Gwoshipika that is returned to Namibia from Berlin, on how such knives were kept and where it should be kept in the current context.



Figure 3. *Omwele Gwoshipika*, reference number E2124 LN20, date of collection 1933/1949. Source: National Museum of Namibia, *Ethnographic Collection Studies*



Figure 4. *Omwele Gwoshipika* which belonged to Aakwanyama community, reference number E359, date of collection 1949. Source: National Museum of Namibia, *Ethnographic Collection Studies*.

It was not only Aawambo who had ceremonial knives. The Ovahimba communities in northern Namibia also kept ceremonial knives, although the Ovahimba groups have no tradition of iron smelting or iron melting (Van Wolputte, 2003). The Ovaimba ceremonial knives played an important symbolic role in boy's circumcision. Thus, it was the circumciser's responsibility to take good care of the knife he used and supposed to maintain it well after circumcision, although

according to Van Wolputte (2003) the knife used in circumcision would not be used ever again. Like in Aawambo community, an Ovahimba ceremonial knife was carried by married men, especially by the elders of the patrilineage.

2.9. Restitution of Namibia's cultural objects

The question for restitution has for decades become a global debate for the intellectuals, artists and researchers (Nayeri, 2019). African nations have searched for the means to establish viable and authentic cultural identities, hence demanded the European governments to bring back art objects, archives and antiquities taken during the colonial era (Agorsah, 1977).

Restitution literally means to bring back an item to its legitimate owner (Sarr & Savoy, 2018). Agorsah (1977) argued that restitution of cultural objects should be considered as a war against incorrect information, and contamination of the African culture. Moreover, Farago (2019) asked interesting questions about African objects which are in European institutions, as to what could those objects mean to the young Africans who never seen them? What new meanings might these works of art accrue if they are returned to where they were made centuries ago? In November 2017, France President Emmanuel Macron made a speech at the University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, whereby he declared that African heritage should no longer be contained in European museums and that measures should be taken for its temporary or definitive restitution back to Africa (Bah, 2019). In Africa, countries such as Benin, Nigeria, and Democratic Republic of Congo among others have already claimed the return of their stolen materials (Bah, 2019).

In Namibia, the demand for restitution of Namibian artefacts started early after independence and continued with Andreas Guibeb a Namibian ambassador to Germany, who made the remarks about the returns of Namibian objects in 2018 in Germany (eNCA, 2018). Guibeb highlighted the importance of restitution, stressing that it would help to contribute to the reconciliation between Namibia and Germany. Restitution would also build confidence and deepen trust between Namibia and Germany. Also, in April 2019, the Vice-President of Namibia Hon. Nangolo Mbumba has also joined Guibeb requests for restitution by calling the returning of Namibia cultural objects that were collected during the pre-colonial times and now lie in foreign museums. Mbumba specifically demands for the return of Ondonga power stone which is in Finland (Simasiku, 2019). The Vice-President made the comments during the launch of a historic catalogue and mobile exhibition

museum “Oombale dhiihaka “a bond that cannot be broken” under the custodianship of Museum Association of Namibia (MAN).

Since Independence in 1990, several cultural artefacts of Namibia which were taken away have been brought back, such as Oukwanyama power stone which was returned from Finland in 1995, and the Ombalantu sacred stone returned in 2014 (eNCA-News, 2014). Moreover, the Linden museum in Stuttgart has returned the Hendrik Witbooi bible and a whip, which belonged to the leader Hendrik Witbooi on the 28 February 2019. The private objects of Witbooi had been plundered by the Germany forces after a surprise attack on his village at Hornkranz in 1893. The returned Hendrik Witbooi bible is housed at the National Archives of Namibia, and the whip is being preserved at the National Museum of Namibia. Moreover, in August 2019, the Germany history museum in Berlin gave back the cape cross that was erected on the Namibian coast in 1486 and removed to Germany in 1893. Therefore, the returning of Omwele Gwoshipika to the source community enhance cultural continuities and rapporteurs, it could also activate cultural revivals and debates within the descendant communities (Silvester & Shiweda, 2020).

The return of Omwele Gwoshipika to Namibia enables researchers to collect the accurate information attached to the object. It is very important for the descendant communities from where the objects are originated to be given time and space to consider the role of objects from the past when they emerged, and that return should include sustained collaboration with the source communities (Silvester & Shiweda, 2020). Moreover, Sarr and Savoy (2018) argued that the return of objects does not mean restituting them as they once were but re-investing/re-inventing them with a new social function. It is not about returning of the same, but of a different same. Therefore, restitution brings forth the addition and subtractions of the value within a different space in time. Additionally, restituting of an object can result in an object enjoying a new life, and receives new meaning in the communities. Saar and Savor (2018) further argued that certain objects would have little trouble rediscovering a function, even if it is somewhat reinvented, within the cultural landscape of the communities.

Many people in Owambo feel the need to define themselves culturally and revive a pride in aspects of their traditional culture, which have been buried under the layer of colonialism. Shigwedha (2004) stated that priority should be given to recovering objects of cultural significance. Shigwedha (2004) further proposed that assembling such objects, for instance the 23 Namibian

objects of material culture chosen to return back to Namibia, would serve to celebrate the unique traditions of the different kingdoms and contribute to nation building by increasing awareness of the cultural contributions and value of each kingdom. Therefore, restituting Omwele Gwoshipika will encourage cultural responsiveness and mutual understanding between different members of Aawambo group about the object.

At the commencement of 2019, some Namibian experts and German scholars met in Berlin museum to scrutinize more than 1 400 objects of Namibian material culture, which were taken from Namibia during the German colonial occupation of Namibia from 1884 to 1919 as a part of restitutions arrangements (NBC News-8, 2019). Most of the collections allegedly held in the Ethnological Museum, only a small number of items in the collections are well-structured and documented. Hence, their historical significance is unknown and had to be reconstructed and documented (Ethnological Museum Berlin, 2019). Ideally, the documentation of the objects must be done in the country of origin to allow the people with the knowledge to contribute. This would only be possible if the objects are returned to the source communities. Nayeri (2019) claimed that restitution would not leave Europeans museums empty of their African holdings because African countries and communities generally demand objects of special significance for their history and cultural identity. For instance, 1400 Namibian objects of material culture held in the Ethnological Museum, only 23 objects of special significance and cultural identity have been chosen and requested for restitution to Namibia that will be used in Namibia to advance research and knowledge of important aspects of our country's cultural heritage. Therefore, still leaving the Berlin Museum with plenty of objects of Namibian material culture.

Omwele Gwoshipika is one of the chosen 23 objects that have been returned to Windhoek in 2020 for scrutiny in their country of origin (Hickley, 2019). The 23 objects were selected under a project titled: "Confronting Colonial Posts, Envisioning Creative Futures". Ha-Eiros, a Namibian researcher, expressed that she believed the 23 objects can only be really defined by the people who used them. Therefore, restitution will help to shift the authority of interpretation from Germany to Namibia. Silvester and Shiweda (2020) argued that Germany has drafted a guideline for museums with collections which were acquired during Germany colonization. The guideline for museums with collections is crucial because it would be used as an instrument that provides the total numbers of collection acquired, provoke provenance research to determine the origins of the belongings in

the collections, especially those with no index information about its origin. Further, the guidelines are key, as it would be utilized as a tool to facilitate the restitution of the collections to their source's communities.

Nayeri (2019) also argued that Germany has embraced the notion of restitution and is returning objects back to the countries of origin, which were removed, from their source communities in a way that were illegal or morally unjustifiable today.



Figure 5: Shows Omwele Gwoshipika, the knife that was in the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, and has since been returned to Namibia in 2020. The photo is extracted from the document: *The final selection of 23 objects report*, page 31.

Therefore, the return of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia, allows its reintroduction to Aawambo communities, perhaps to create a possible resurrection of the object as part of a living culture.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological approach used to collect data on the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities.

3.2. Research Design

The study used a qualitative case study approach that focused on a single artefact, Omwele Gwoshipika, a prestigious traditional knife of Aawambo. Further, the study followed an interpretivist research paradigm. Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) argued that an interpretivist paradigm seeks to understand what the research participant is thinking and the meaning the participant is making of the context. The researcher applied the interpretivist paradigm to understand the participant's views, experiences, perceptions, and beliefs of Aawambo community holds towards the historical and modern significance of Omwele Gwoshipika.

This study employed a non-probability technique, which is snowballed to recruit the study participants. The researcher achieved the study's trustworthiness criteria by making sure that the study's findings about Omwele Gwoshipika collected from the sixteen (16) participants were credible, dependable, transferable, and confirmable.

The researcher is a young native Omuwambo man and a Namibian national who speaks the same languages and shares some social characteristics such as gender and ethnic group with some respondents. The interviews were conducted in Oshiwambo, a language mutually intelligible among all subgroups. Pelzang and Hutchnson (2018) argued that the ability to understand and speak the local language is considered important to take a culturally nuanced approach, which in turn would determine the credibility of the researcher according to participants and the data obtained. This implies that the researcher being an Oshiwambo speaking has the advantage of understanding concepts, proverbs and incorporating values and beliefs about Omwele Gwoshipika that carry particular cultural, social, and political meanings that could prove difficult to be capture through translation. Some interview took place in the royal setting, and it is not easy for a commoner to conduct a study in the palace due to the strict gatekeeping that one has to go through before accessing the participants, who are mostly royal or in the service of royalty. The reason the study took place in the royal setting is that, based on the available literature, the artefact being studied was an object of ohamba/omukwaniilwa. Therefore, it is significant for the researcher to

have asked questions to the ohamba/omukwaniilwa chief, and senior traditional leaders who have a close relationship with the palace.

The initial stage of the study began with a preliminary survey of the National Archives, National Library, UNAM Library, and National Museum resources related to Omwele Gwoshipika. This was aimed to gathering the information to distinguish Omwele Gwoshipika from the other ordinary traditional knives (Omwele) of Aawambo. This stage was necessary for investigating to determine if there was written information about Omwele Gwoshipika. Therefore, the preliminary survey helped the researcher to determine the social, cultural, and political discourse in the literature surrounding the material culture object of the study.

The second stage of data collection involved fieldwork and took place in the central-northern part of Namibia and in Windhoek. The entry process in the Aawambo communities follows a political structure with the elected or appointed senior traditional leaders and their traditional council members who administer and maintain the code of belief and cultural norms of their communities. Prior to the visit to the selected Aawambo kingdom's palace, I wrote letters to the gatekeepers working in the traditional authority offices as the point of entry before one is granted permission access the head of the kingdom.

The data were collected through oral field techniques in one of the local languages, Oshindonga. The interview guide covered three sections; the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika, the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika to Namibia, and the physical design of Omwele Gwoshipika. In addition to the interview guide, semi-structured questions (see appendix B) were used in the interview. During the interview, participants were also asked open-ended questions to allow them to express their personal views about Omwele Gwoshipika. The study data was collected using both one-on-one, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The interview questions were written out, and the researcher read all the questions verbally in the same sequence to all research participants. The purpose of asking the same questions in the same order to all the participants was to ensure that all the participants responded to the same set of questions in the same sequence, in order to avoid interview bias. One of the benefits of using semi-structured interviews is that the research questions were clarified. In addition, the researcher had an opportunity to build rapport with the respondents (Plooy-Cilliers, et al., 2014).

Based on the protocols in Aawambo palaces, a researcher has to schedule an appointment before being granted permission to go conduct a study in the palace. Prior to scheduling an interview appointment with the Aawambo traditional authorities where the study was conducted, the researcher, being a commoner had inevitably anticipated the challenges of securing the research interview date in the five palaces due to differences in power dynamics, this turned to be true as the researcher experienced difficulty in securing the interview date. This was eventually solved with the assistance of someone who was well-known in the circle of some of the traditional leaders in the kingdoms was secured. The letters (see Appendix C and D) and seeking permission with the sampled kingdoms to conduct the study interviews were finally sent.

A printed photo of Omwele Gwoshipika was shown to the participants at the beginning of the research interview to clearly indicate to the participants that the questions being asked were based on the artefact in a printed photo. In addition, the researcher used a Digital Voice Recorder, a notebook, and a digital camera to capture the data. The research data was accurately recorded on the participants who consented to be voice-recorded. A notebook was used for those who did not permit voice recording. The digital camera was used to capture various Omwele that are currently in Aawambo palace. The data of the study were transcribed in Oshiwambo and later translated into English.

3.3. Sample

A sample of five (5) kingdoms was selected from a population of eight (8) Aawambo kingdoms. The transferability was achieved in this study by showing that the sample of the study fairly represents the target population, as well as by presenting that the participants have the knowledge and experience necessary to provide the information that the discipline and the target population would find meaningful in regard to Omwele Gwoshipika. While, confirmability of the study is defined as the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participant's responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints (Cope, 2014). The researcher achieved confirmability in the study by providing rich quotes in the data analysis from the participants that depict each emerging theme about Omwele Gwoshipika.

The researcher sampled five kingdoms based on the following justification: Aandongga and Aakwanyama kingdoms were sampled for the study because of their historical blacksmith skills, who manufactured Omwele Gwoshipika as early as the 1800s (Ella, 1938). Aakwaluudhi and

Aangandjera kingdoms were sampled on the basis of having an undisrupted historical reign on their kingdoms. Aangandjera was one of the most powerful kingdoms in Owambo in the 1800s through superior military technology acquired from the Bushmen (Salokoski, 2006). In contrast, Aakwambi were sampled on the basis that they are a kingdom, and Omwele Gwoshipika was a prestigious object of the Chief (Ella, 1938). Finally, other Aawambo kingdoms, namely, Aakolonkadhi and Aambalantu were not sampled based on the historical narrative because they had no central power in the mid-1800s, and they were described as kingless or republica societies, although presently they have kingdom leaders in place (Salokoski, 2006). Sixteen (16) participants from four (4) kingdoms out of five sampled kingdoms (Ondonga, Uukwanyama, Uukwambi, and Uukwaluudhi) took part in the study. However, the fifth kingdom, which is Ongandjera did not take part in the study because the kingdom leader did not give approval for the researcher to conduct a study after several attempts to secure an appointment.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the key informant was ohamba, however, the researcher did not anticipate that the interview at Uukwanyama palace at Omhedi village would be conducted in a focus group discussion. Based on the protocol established within Uukwanyama palace, the interview ended up being conducted in a focus group discussion between the researcher, ohamba and two (2) senior traditional leaders of the kingdom. Silverman (2008) argued that focus group conducted within the community context promotes familiarity with the way research participants habitually talk, and the particular idioms, terminology, and vocabulary they typically used. In Uukwanyama kingdom, at the Omhedi palace, the residence of ohamba, the participants were assisting each other to understand the meaning of *Oshipika* (sheath). However, all three participants who formed the focus group discussion did not fully answer the research questions and concurrently referred the researcher to Ondonga kingdom because the participants argued that Omwele Gwoshipika was used by Aandongwa.

In Ondonga kingdom, the researcher first consulted a traditional councillor who works in the office of Ondonga traditional authority in Ondangwa. The traditional councillor is a gatekeeper to the omukwaniilwa of Ondonga. The researcher sought permission from the traditional councillor to interview omukwaniilwa of Ondonga as a key informant, however, based on the protocol of Ondonga traditional authority, omukwaniilwa does not participate in research proceedings. There are various committees established that deal with various matters, including research. Therefore,

the researcher was referred to one participant who dealt with History and Traditional Affairs (HTA) in the kingdom. The researcher then contacted one committee member who then agreed to take part in the study and scheduled the interview to take place at the participant's residence in Ongwediva. When the researcher and the research participant met in Ongwediva, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the research participant. The participant consented to be voice-recorded and was delighted to partake in the study about Aawambo material culture.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the key informant was the Chief. The Chief warmly welcomed the researcher, and successfully carried out the research interview. The interview between the Chief and the researcher was noted down, as he refused to be tape recorded.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the key initial participant was the king. However, due to the protocol established within Uukwaluudhi palace, the queen on behalf of the king recommended the researcher to contact the person responsible for cultural aspects in the kingdom. In a similar occasion, as happened in Uukwanyama kingdom, the researcher did not anticipate that the interview would be held in a focus group discussion. The focus group interview with six (6) participants was held in the Uukwaluudhi kingdom traditional house situated in Ondukuta village. The focus group discussion responses were written down in a notebook because the participants did not give permission to be voice-recorded. Despite that, a focus group has its potential limitations such as biasness, manipulation as well as false consensus (Silverman (2008), the researcher was able to collect the needed information for the study using a focus group as a secondary data collection technique.

In snowball sampling, the researcher only stopped when a data saturation point was reached. Research data saturation is a situation whereby no additional data were being found (Lapan & Quartaroli, 2009). In this study, the researcher stopped with the research interviews when the researcher was no longer getting new information and was being referred back to the participants who had partaken already in the study.

3.4. Data Analysis

For the researcher to transform raw data collected during the study's interviews into meaningful information, the researcher employed thematic data coding to segmentate, categorize, and relink the aspects of the data prior to the final interpretation following Creswell's data spiral approach (2013). According to Flick (2011) thematic data coding preserves the meaningful relationships

that the respective research participant dealt with in the topic of the study. Further, Creswell (2013) argued that a data analysis spiral is a system that offers a helpful perspective on how a qualitative data analysis should reasonably proceed (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Therefore, by using Creswell's approach, the researcher went through the raw data several times to understand the data collected and analyse the data by using the following steps:

1. After the study interview was conducted, all the audio was transferred from a Digital Voice Recorder into the researcher's laptop. The researcher created four folders, and each folder was named after a kingdom where the study took place. The interview audio of the participants was put in the folder for the kingdom where the participants came from. For example, all the participants from Ondonga kingdom, their interview audio was put in one folder. The researcher listened to all interview audio several times to understand the data collected and transcribed them into Oshiwambo. The researcher later translated the interview transcripts from Oshiwambo to English. The researcher read through all the data that was collected from the participants by means of jotting participants' responses down and putting the answers alongside the research questions. The researcher read thoroughly the entire data set several times to get a sense of what it contains. In the process of carefully reading through the whole data set, the researcher identified and wrote down the main themes, sub-themes, and categories that emerged from the data analysis. Thereafter, the researcher put the data into main themes, sub-themes, and assigned categories to the respective sub-themes. The researcher reviewed the themes to see if the themes are corresponding with the coded excerpt from the participant's responses and the entire data set that was generated through thematic data analysis.

The researcher classified each piece of data accordingly. At this point, the researcher already got a general sense of patterns and a sense of what the data meant about Omwele Gwoshipika. The researcher integrated participants' responses per question and summarized the data for the readers. The researcher presented participants' information, as well as the study's main-themes, sub-themes, and categories that emerged from the data in a table.

3.5. Research Ethics

The essential purpose of research ethics is to protect the welfare of participants. Therefore, this study followed all the ethical processes set by the University of Namibia to ensure that all

considerations relating to research ethics were addressed and adhered to during the pursuance of this study. Firstly, the researcher was cleared by the University of Namibia's ethical clearance committee. Secondly, the researcher sought permission from the chosen five Aawambo kingdoms' traditional leaders, and they granted the researcher a verbal agreement through the research assistant to collect the research data. All the study participants were provided with the research informed consent form, however, some participants preferred verbal consent. Silverman (2011) argued that in some cases of research, the researcher might accept oral consent if one is not dealing with children, pupils, and clients. The purpose of the study and how it would affect the participants were clearly explained to them. The participants were given the right to know that they were being interviewed. Participation in this study was voluntary, as no participant was forced to take part. Participants were also informed of their right to decline or withdraw from any given time they felt coerced or pressured by the study questions being asked. This was ensured by the researcher by informing the study participants to answer questions that they know or understand and not to worry if they would not have an answer to some questions being asked in the study interview. In dealing with sensitive information, the study participants were clearly communicated on issues regarding confidentiality and anonymity. The participants of the study were kept anonymous, and they were used in the thematic analysis of the study data.

3.5.1. Gatekeeping in the selected Aawambo kingdoms

The gatekeepers are compelling, since they assume the power to choose who gets an opportunity to see the King/Queen or Chief and who does not. Based on the protocols established within some Aawambo traditional authorities, the researcher could not have direct access to or communicate directly with the king/Queen or Chief. Therefore, the starting point is that a researcher first engages with a community elder or traditional authority council member and then informs the researcher about the procedures to follow, such as writing an email explaining to them the purpose of the visit and of the study. That is precisely what I did when I was trying to secure the research appointment on my own. I have attempted to schedule a research appointment with Ondonga and Uukwambi kingdoms. The two mentioned kingdoms I had the mobile number of their traditional council officers who work in the traditional authorities of each kingdom. Firstly, the traditional councillor I contacted through a telephone call for Ondonga traditional authority asked me to write an email to their traditional authority office. The traditional councillor for Ondonga traditional authority then sends to me their traditional authority email address in a mobile text message. I was so happy

to receive the email address and, in my mind, I thought the communication through the email would make the process to go to their palace without difficulty. I attempted to schedule research appointments with the Ondonga and Uukwambi kingdoms, but initially had difficulty getting in touch with the traditional councillors. Eventually, the research assistant was able to secure appointment dates for all three Aawambo kingdoms. I faced various challenges along the way, such as not being able to meet the king of Ondonga on their first visit and facing resistance from some traditional leaders in Uukwanyama who felt that the subject matter of the study was more relevant to Ondonga. Despite these obstacles, I managed to conduct successful interviews at each kingdom except for Ongandjera, which postponed their appointment multiple times. Overall, it seems that gaining access to these traditional authorities required persistence and assistance from well-connected individuals.

3.5.2. Dynamic of focus group discussion

In the Uukwanyama kingdom, the interview was conducted with the participation of the kingdom head, who is ohamba. However, there were challenges faced in answering questions as two senior traditional leaders were present and they influenced the answers provided. This highlights that it can be difficult to have a personal encounter with some of the kingdom heads due to trust issues and concerns about information sharing. In such situations, answers may be given to satisfy those present rather than address research questions. On the other hand, at Uukwaluudhi, despite several influential traditional leaders being present during data collection through focus group discussions, they freely expressed themselves and shared all relevant information on researched objects.

In conclusion, although fieldwork can be challenging and exciting at times, it provides an opportunity to learn new skills and gain valuable knowledge on cultural practices. Through this study, it was evident that all traditional authorities showed keen interest in preserving Aawambo stolen cultural artefacts, which emphasizes how important culture is for self-sustainability without threat of extinction if preserved well through preservation efforts including education initiatives for future generations.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study carried out in the central north-part of Namibia, in four of Aawambo kingdoms, Ondonga, Uukwambi, Uukwaluudhi and Uukwanyama. Further, some data was collected in Khomas region as a result of referrals. The results of the study are presented in accordance with the research objectives and include the information collected using the interview guide, which contained structured questions asked to the traditional leaders and other participants in the study. The main purpose of conducting the study was to find out their views on the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities, to harness their views regarding the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia, and to obtain their views about the physical and design structure of Omwele Gwoshipika. The data collected from the four Aawambo kingdoms through face-to-face interviews and a focus group interview are presented integrated together thematically.

Table 1. Presentation of the research participants

Kingdom Name	The number of research participants interviewed	male	Female	Age
Ondonga	3	3		60-80
Uukwambi	4	4		50-100
Uukwaluudhi	6	3	3	60-70
Uukwanyama	3	2	1	60-90

4.2. Biography of the research participants

A total number of sixteen (16) research participants from the four Aawambo kingdoms took part in this study. The overall number of research participants consisted of twelve (12) male and four (4) female research participants. The research participants who participated in the study were traditional leaders, experts in Aawambo culture and traditions, as well as cultural activists. The age range of the research participants who were involved in the study ranged from 50s to 90s. Therefore, the information gathered from the research participants is very historic and based on the wisdom and knowledge of the elders regarding the historic and contemporary usefulness of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities.

4.3. The historical and modern importance of Omwele Gwoshipika in Aawambo communities

(a) Knowledge of Omwele Gwoshipika

All the research participants were asked to explain how they understood Omwele Gwoshipika, and state if they knew, heard, or seen Omwele Gwoshipika. The photo of Omwele Gwoshipika was shown to the respondents by the researcher.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, three respondents concurrently answered in a focus group that they knew Omwele (*the ordinal knife*) but not Omwele Gwoshipika. They have responded by saying that “such kind of a knife is an old thing. We did not see it. We know Omwele but not like the one that you are showing to us. We have never seen such kind of sheath”. The respondents further wanted to know what “Oshipika is “?”

In Ondonga kingdom, respondents were interviewed face to face. The first respondent answered by indicating they knew Omwele Gwoshipika, and that it was manufactured for a specific purpose. The first respondent further continued that Omwele Gwoshipika is “structured like a hat or in a hat form”. The respondent added that Omwele Gwoshipika’s design and structure is decorated, perhaps to show the value of the knife. Additionally, the respondent stated that Omwele Gwoshipika was very significant because “It was one of the parts or weapons that would be given by a ruler when being coronated or given the power of the kingdom”. Moreover, the respondent emphasised that the ruler used to be given kind of weapons such as “Omwele Gwoshipika, bow with sheath, arrows with sheath, spear with sheath and knobkerrie with sheath”. The respondent concluded by stating that Omwele Gwoshipika was one of the things when given to a person to symbolise power, “to show power conferred to him traditionally”.

While the second respondent answered that he had heard about Omwele Gwoshipika only then, during our time I have been far away from it. However, in history, I have heard about it”. Whereas, the third respondent answered that “I have heard about it, but I did not see it”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the respondents were also asked in a face-to-face interview. The first respondent answered that Omwele Gwoshipika is in the bible. “This one, making reference to the photo of Omwele Gwoshipika the researcher showed to him, is Omwele Gwomolumpagwa”. Omwele Gwomolupagwa is one of the other types of Aawambo ordinary knife. The respondent continued narrating that he had heard about Omwele Gwoshipika biblically, and it used to be with

the angels”. The respondent, further added that there is a hymn book titled sing for the Lord (*Imbileni Omwa*) for Lutheran Church which has a song that says, “*nOmwele Gwoshipika ngo ogupikika (singing)*” translated as Omwele Gwoshipika very sharpened. In addition, the respondent stated that the researcher can go and get a clear explanation from the Bishop and Priest about the biblical Omwele Gwoshipika.

While the second respondent answered that he had heard of Omwele Gwoshipika. The respondent continued that he used to hear it from his forefathers, with its significance. Furthermore, the respondent said that he had also seen the pictures of Omwele Gwoshipika and specified that he had seen Omwele Gwoshipika at the museum in Tsumeb.

The third respondent answered that “myself, I have seen Omwele Gwoshipika. We found already Omwele Gwoshipika, taken away from the country”. While, the fourth respondent answered that “the really Omwele Gwoshipika I have heard about it”. The respondent further stated that there was a workshop in Ondangwa, but he was not sure in which year the workshop was held, whereby people were looking at the ancient artefacts that were collected by missionary Martti Rautanene. In addition, the respondent continued, stating that “I hope that there were people from Olukonda museum who might have Omwele Gwoshipika and I think they have shown it to me if I am not mistaken”.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the interview was conducted in a focus group. One of the six (6) respondents answered that “I have heard about it. Omwele Gwoshipika which enslaved you, to be a slave or restrictions which prevents you and rule over you”. The other five respondents concurrently agreed to the answer provided by one member of the group.

(b) Importance of Omwele in Aawambo culture

All the respondents were asked about their views on the significance of Omwele (the ordinary knife) in Aawambo culture.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, one of the three respondents answered that Omwele was “used to slaughter cattle; however, later people came to use spears”. Moreover, the respondent specified that slaughtering cattle is not for everyone. “There are those who do it,” said the respondent. The other two respondents in Uukwanyama kingdom who form part of a focus group agreed with the answer provided.

While in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent answered that Omwele has a great significance because “it shows the value of manhood”. The respondent further indicated that a man cannot walk empty-handed or not carry anything. The respondent also stressed that “Omwele is one of the weapons of Aawambo during ancient times. When a man is walking without Omwele, then he is being looked at as a coward, or being equated /compared to women”. In addition, the respondent emphasised that “Omwele one can use it to defend himself, one can use it to cut or cut meat in small pieces or to remove a thorn from his feet that have pricked him”. Moreover, the respondent continued stating that Omwele was having a lot of work. The respondent ended by saying that Omwele is a weapon, just like bows, and spears that are weapons and are used to fight.

Whereas, the second respondent answered that “Omwele has its significance, and it has its own functions, to maintain traditions, and to see what is needed or add value to what is being done”. The third respondent agreed with other respondents, who answered that Omwele is used to cut and defend oneself.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent concurred with the respondent from Ondonga kingdom by answering that Omwele is used for cutting. The respondent stated that the colonizer has found Aawambo having their own knives (Oomwele) using them for cutting and having otjitenzi as well. The respondent continued, emphasising that “Omwele is used to skin cattle and to cut the meat in small and string pieces. If there is no Omwele, one is unable to do anything; therefore, Omwele is the biggest instrument”.

Equally, the second respondent concurred with other respondents on the significance of Omwele in Aawambo culture. The respondent confirmed that Omwele is important in Aawambo culture. The respondent specified that Omwele has its significance when it’s being worn on the waist by a man or a boy. Further, the respondent continued, saying that “If a person has been attacked by a dog or lion, he can use the knife to stab. Omwele significance is that it is double-edged, it can stab and it cut on both sides. Therefore, Omwele is very honoured by all Aawambo people”.

Similarly, the third respondent agreed with other respondents from Uukwambi, Uukwanyama, and Ondonga kingdoms about the significance of Omwele by saying that Omwele is significant for self-defence, cutting, and protecting oneself with it. The respondent further stated that “with Omwele one can cut meat with it in small strips for drying. Besides, the responded continued stressing that with Omwele one was used for slaughtering before the use of spears. Additionally, with Omwele one can use for self-defence.

Correspondingly, the fourth respondent also concurred with other respondents by stating that Omwele is a weapon used to defend oneself, and it is a symbol of manhood. Moreover, the respondent indicated that Oomwele, (the ordinary knives of Aawambo) are not the same. The respondent articulated further that “Aawambo have their Omwele which is a weapon to protect oneself and defend oneself. Therefore, “during our time when we were growing up, the elders of the time used to walk around carrying Omwele on their waist. Hence, the carrying of Omwele in the waist symbolises that there is a man.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents indicated that Omwele is of great importance, and for that, there is no man who would not have Omwele. Therefore, Omwele is a great symbol that a man has become an elder. Omwele is also used to cut open dead cattle in the stomach. Whenever, a man went to herd animals, and cattle died at the grazing area, one has to cut open it in the stomach so that the air can come out. The dead cattle had to be emptied its air from the stomach because the air is believed to cause other cattle to die. Moreover, the finding emphasised that there was/is Omwele for the cattle and this specific Omwele is used to make knobkerrie. However, traditionally, Omwele is being used to perform magic. In Oshiwambo there is a phrase which says, “*Ngu wa valwa omumbanda kalye Omwele kilongo*”. Simply translated, whoever is scared should relocate to other kingdoms. The respondents concluded by saying that “the function of Omwele in life is a lot, and they are surrounding the humanity of a person.

(c) Worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past

All the respondents were asked to give their own understanding of the values of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, all the respondents did not provide an answer to the question. However, they have referred the researcher to go and ask at Ondonga kingdom, emphasising that Omwele Gwoshipika was a knife for Ondonga kingdom.

Similarly, in Ondonga kingdom, the first and second respondents also did not provide the answer to this question. However, the third respondent answered that they did not know.

On the other hand, in the Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “I am not speaking against it because I don’t know it”. Moreover, the respondent said that, that particular knife (giving reference to a knife that the responded knew that the responded alleged that it looks almost like Omwele Gwoshipika) used to be with the Namibian police officer (bayonet the police carry during parade), such a knife is now looking similar to Omwele Gwoshipika. In addition, the

respondent stated that “Omwele Gwoshipika is used by the angels, the messenger of God, or on other occasion when the President is returning from abroad and is being welcomed back by a military parade. The respondent is referring to the bayonet used in military parading as Omwele Gwoshipika. The respondent concluded by saying that Omwele is an object to punish people, “Otshima tsho kugela, owatetagulwa nomwele”.

The second respondent answered that Omwele Gwoshipika historically has a great value in the world of kings. The respondent continued that “firstly, Omwele Gwoshipika is considered as a proof of authority, indicating that persons are messengers of the king from a particular Aawambo community. The king has to choose the person who has to bear Omwele Gwoshipika. The person must be trusted and considered a good adviser. They could be even eight of them, the first one will be the leader of others when going to another kingdom who will bear Omwele Gwoshipika. These people will be easily recognised as bearing good news simply by carrying Omwele, the bearer of Omwele Gwoshipika. Omwele Gwoshipika would be placed on his heart where the heartbeat is. That itself is a symbolic message. The respondent concluded, stating that Omwele Gwoshipika has not yet lost its value and significance.

However, the third respondent answered that “In order for one not to be enslaved by another nation, and to protect oneself, one should then have Omwele Gwoshipika. Therefore, Omwele Gwoshipika is a sign of protecting and preserving the character of one’s kingdom. Omwele Gwoshipika is used to keep the fire of the kingdom burning. Kingdoms used to light the fire, such practice made them so powerful that whites were so scared of them. The kingdoms that did not used to light the fire did not have Omwele being talked about.

Conversely, the fourth respondent answered that “Omwele Gwoshipika is a symbol of a certain honour of promotion. The promotion even at work, mostly in the kingdoms because Omwele Gwoshipika is being linked with the kingdom”.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents answered that Omwele Gwoshipika has a very great value. Similarly, the respondents consented with other respondents from Uukwambi kingdom who said that Omwele Gwoshipika is used as a symbol of honour, and a trophy that is given by the king to a person who has done very well in war. In addition, the respondent emphasised that at the kingdom level, Omwele Gwoshipika has the value of protecting the community, just like the one,

which was with Nambula yAmukatha⁷. Besides, the respondents continued by saying that “sometimes, Omwele Gwoshipika is used as the belt that ties the kingdom together. Omwele Gwoshipika can also be used for curing, when someone is speaking things that do not make sense, mentally ill (*Tatumakanitha ehapu afa akwatwa komampilampila*)”. The respondents explained that Omwele is not only used to confine someone within the confines of their family, but also has a curative purpose by placing it on their cheek. They provided an example where if someone steals something from another kingdom, it will lead to conflict between the Omweles of the respective communities involved. In such cases, it is believed that the person’s spirit has diverted, and they are no longer in the right state. The solution would involve using blood or a stone on Omwele to reverse this diversion and free the person from evil influences.

(d) Authoritative instructions the king gives through Omwele Gwoshipika

All the respondents were asked to give their views on the kind of commands or orders the king would give through Omwele Gwoshipika.

In Uukwanyama and Ondonga kingdoms, all the respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

The second respondent from Uukwambi kingdom explained that Omwele Gwoshipika is used by the king to communicate instructions and guidance to the people. These instructions emphasize the importance of unity, love, good relationships and non-discrimination among individuals. The purpose is to maintain harmony and prevent conflict while ensuring the safety of everyone, including the king’s own children who may be in the forest or on their way to cattle posts or water pans. The respondent highlighted that Omwele Gwoshipika carries love and acts as powerful protection against any dangers encountered along the journey or in the forest. It is considered as the greatest form of protection for the people of the kingdom.

The third respondent from Uukwambi mentioned that Omwele Gwoshipika is used for protection and to uphold spiritual and traditional practices, both physically and spiritually. The fourth respondent stated that they were not aware of the specific instructions given through Omwele Gwoshipika but suggested seeking information from senior traditional leaders or those who have close ties with the palace.

⁷ Nambula yAmukatha was the Chief Priest of Uukwaluudhi kingdom who was having the responsibility to protect the kingdom and serves as an advisor to the king, guiding him on how he has to rule the Uukwaluudhi kingdom.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, respondents explained that the king used Omwele Gwoshipika to give instructions to royal soldiers for engaging in warfare, such as attacking other kingdoms or fighting for wealth and cattle. These instructions were typically communicated by the war general. Additionally, the respondents noted that certain families believed in rituals where if there is someone died, there is an object (*Omwele Gwoshipika for the family*) in the house that if found fallen it is a sign indicating that something negative is happening or about to occur.

Overall, these responses highlight various aspects of using Omwele Gwoshipika for protection, preserving traditions, communicating important instructions in times of conflict or war, and interpreting omens relating to events like death within certain family belief.

(e) Circumstances under which traditional leaders use Omwele Gwoshipika

All the respondents were asked to give their views about in what circumstances would traditional leaders use Omwele Gwoshipika?

In Uukwanyama and Ondonga kingdoms, the respondents did not provide the answer to this question. Whereas in Uukwambi kingdom, also the first respondent did not answer the question. However, the second respondent answered that “the circumstances the king can use Omwele Gwoshipika is to mediate between families in the event of murder. A spear and Omwele Gwoshipika will be presented by the elders and tobacco smoking pipe. Then the victim’s family will smoke on the smoking pipe of the perpetrator’s family, carried out by the elders wearing Omwele Gwoshipika. This is a resolution that there will be no revenge and no one who will follow the things that have been done in the past and that “peace must prevail”.

In addition, the third respondent answered that “the occasions when the king would use Omwele Gwoshipika is during the time of war when the kingdom is being attacked”. The respondent further indicated that “Aawambo believed that Omwele Gwoshipika can protect them spiritually, but physically it can also be used to protect oneself”. The fourth respondent did not provide an answer to this question”.

Whereas, in Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents said that “Omwele Gwoshipika can be used during the time when the king is sending the soldiers to war, and when the soldiers disobey the instructions of the king or have kept the war booty. The king can use Omwele Gwoshipika to spiritually reveal the soldier who did not present the war booty, and eventually presenting the booty to the king. Additionally, the respondents concluded stating that “on an occasion when the king

has trespassed, a person who the king chose and trusted to bear Omwele Gwoshipika has the power and is authorised to scold the king.

(f) Consequences of individual refusing orders passed through Omwele Gwoshipika

All the respondents were asked what would be the effects of an individual rejecting the power of commands through Omwele Gwoshipika.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, all the respondents referred the researcher to go ask the power of Omwele Gwoshipika to the Ondonga kingdom. In Ondonga kingdom, similarly, the first respondent opted not to be asked this question. While the second respondent answered that “the punishment lied with the king, who was the ruler of the kingdom at that time”. Moreover, the respondent continued, saying that “during the ancient times, life was not respected. It might be that a person can be given death as a punishment. That person did not obey the commands/instructions that came from the palace. So, a person is being punished either by death or by being chased out of the kingdom”. The third respondent also opted not to answer the question.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the respondents indicated that if a person refused the instruction from the king through Omwele Gwoshipika, there was punishment such as getting shaved bald locally known as “Otshipumpuka” such a person had to stand at the roadway junction so that the community can see him that he had disobeyed an order from the palace.

Moreover, the respondent continued saying that if it is a woman who refused the order through Omwele Gwoshipika, she would be punished by paying two or three weaving baskets. That particular house where such a woman came from would be punished by paying the containers of Omahangu millet. She will be encircling the pounding area of the palace four or three times”. Further, the respondent emphasized that “such kind of punishment has replaced the death penalty. On other occasion, mob justice was done called Ekumbu. This is when people come together to collectively beat up a person and eventually killing the person.

In addition, the respondent stated that “if there is one who is merciful to you, or the king himself feels pity for you, there will be someone who will come to throw a stone at you. They will throw a stone like putu-putu (*the sound of the stone when it hit the ground*) wherever, you could be”. The respondent explained that the throwing of a stone in the olden days meant, warning someone that you will be killed, so you have to flee from the kingdom immediately.

The third respondent answered by agreeing with the second respondent that some punishments were so harsh.

(g) Current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika

All the respondents were asked if they think that in the present-time Omwele Gwoshipika still possesses the same values and power of command it had in the past.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, one of the respondents answered by saying that “us Aakwanyama we did not encounter such a knife”.

While in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent opted not to answer this question. However, the second respondent answered by stating that “if we as a community are trying to revive and resuscitate some aspect of our culture and traditional practices. Then, we are longing to have some of our past cultural practices revived in the present times, such as the usage of Omwele Gwoshipika in the administrating and governing of traditional authorities as it was during the ancient time”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent did not answer this question. While the second respondent answered by saying that Omwele Gwoshipika even in the contemporally time has power. The respondent also continued stating that “Omwele Gwoshipika used to have the power to make people have love because it used to be carried at the heart. It also has the power to stab, if there is something that is fighting against the palace. Even angles, that angle Michael who is being spoken in the bible, when Satan fed people with lies, went with Omwele Gwoshipika to fight Satan so that people could no longer eat on the forbidden tree.

In contrast, the third respondent doubted the current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika. The respondent stated that the spiritual value aspect of Omwele Gwoshipika does no longer exist. The respondent explained that one should not look at Omwele in relation to its physical structure, but one has to look at it spiritually because it was aligned with the tradition of our forefathers. It used to prevent misfortune. Now you have asked what the value of Omwele Gwoshipika is when people are doing as they wish and do not consult the elders. The respondent concluded by saying that “The fire of the kingdom has been put down”.

Whereas, the fourth respondent answered that “the difficulty is here that some people never knew Omwele Gwoshipika, including some leaders. Therefore, it would not have the power it used to have in ancient times. If there are leaders who know about Omwele Gwoshipika, then they can

still use it the way it was used. The challenge might be that; people might not be even know how it was manufactured. Therefore, the attempt you are doing in researching about Omwele Gwoshipika is not only for intellectual advancement but also helping those who are also in the traditional authority. That information about Omwele Gwoshipika, should be given to the traditional authorities in their language”.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondent answered that “the knives are no longer used by the traditional authorities”.

(h) Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past

All the respondents were asked to tell the researcher how Omwele Gwoshipika was preserved in the past.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents did not answer this question. Whereas in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent indicated that “Omwele Gwoshipika according to the stories that he heard, was kept in the palace and was used to be well-kept in the arsenal of the kingdom (*Iikondjitho yoshilongo*). Together, with, bow with sheath, arrows with sheath, knobkerrie, and a spear of the kingdom.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “Omwele Gwoshipika is being kept in the church, in the temple”. While the second respondent gave a similar answer as the first respondent from Ondonga kingdom

Whereas the third respondent sarcastically indicated that “to keep Omwele Gwoshipika spiritually or physical, it should be kept at a place where Germany removed it, where the belt of the kingdom stays.

However, the fourth respondent answered that “I would not know how it is used to be kept. Again, such information needs to be searched from the palace. Realistically, in Oshiwambo there was an arsenal that could be the probable place to store it.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents all in agreement answered that “Omwele Gwoshipika was being kept at the arsenal and not everyone had access, not even the king’s wife, but only the one who was instructed to go there by the king.

(i) Carrying and usage of Omwele Gwoshipika by women

All the respondents were asked if women also carried Omwele Gwoshipika. If not, what would be the reason for women not carrying it?

In Uukwanyama no one responded to this question. In the Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent explained that historically, authority and administration were not associated with women. As Omwele Gwoshipika symbolised power and authority, it was not traditionally used by women during ancient times. However, if a woman was carrying a boy child on her back, she could carry an ordinary Omwele without facing social scrutiny or being seen as performing a taboo act. *“Ita talikwa ko ena oshipwe”*.

Whereas the third respondent answered that “Gwoshipika I do not know, but a woman is able to carry Omwele for her husband”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent did not provide clear information regarding whether women carried Omwele Gwoshipika. However, the second respondent explained that women do not carry Omwele Gwoshipika because they were considered to be merciful and traditional roles were limited to domestic chores such as pounding and cooking for men. Women could be present in the place observing how royals cooked, while young girls who had not yet menstruated would cook during the wartime. Elder women would stay near the room containing Omwele Gwoshipika, symbolising good fortune and serving as carriers of the kingdom's success. These elder women would check if pots were brewing inside or outside during cooking activities: a pot brewing outside indicated good luck and potential victories in battle, whereas a pot brewing inside indicated potential loss in the war. The respondent emphasized the importance of both Omwele Gwoshipika and in their cultural context.

Whereas, the third respondent answered stating that women would not carry Omwele Gwoshipika but were rather caretaker to prevent theft.

While the fourth responded similar to the one who indicated that women were not given authority, hence they would not carry Omwele Gwoshipika.

2. Returning of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia

(a) Views on the coming back of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia

All the respondents were asked about their views on the return of Omwele Gwoshipika from the Berlin Ethnological museum in Germany to Namibia.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents answered by saying that “we want Omwele to come back”. While in Ondonga kingdom the first respondent answered that Omwele Gwoshipika is part of our history, traditions/customs, and culture of our country or part of our Aawambo nations. Therefore, Omwele Gwoshipika must be returned back to the country because when it went to

“Deutschland” it did not go there in the right way, it went there unethically. Again, “our things are supposed to be owned by us, because now even our children like you, you are just hearing of Omwele Gwoshipika, but you do not know the item. If you happen to go to Deutschland to go, see what is in their museum galleries, you are paying”. You are paying money, but you are paying for your own belonging (*nde otofutu oshima shandjeni*). Instead of exhibiting it there, it must come to our museum, then those coming to see Omwele Gwoshipika have to pay to see it.

The second respondent agreed with the first respondent, that Omwele Gwoshipika should return and expanded that “some foreigners were traders, some came and brought us the information to preach the gospel, and some came with different and hidden agendas/aims. To accomplish their mission, they tried to lessen the value of our artefacts, especially those artefacts they thought to be so valuable. They have removed those valuable artefacts from us, and now we do not own them. They have taken away our things from us to go stay with them, although themselves they have their own things”. Whereas, the third respondent answered that “I am feeling very good that it is coming, but it is meaning I do not know”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “I am not really saying anything about it. The one I am saying it should return it is Omwele for my uncle Iipumbu⁸ which is in Finland (Suomi). Omwele Gwoshipika if it comes back to Namibia, it needs to go back to where it was taken from”. The respondent further asked where Omwele was taken from and how it got there (in Germany)? It needs to return, so the children will come to see it’. While the second respondent answered in a joyful mood saying that “In my own view, as a historian and a person who likes history and reconciliation, if people have regretted or apologized, love prevails for nations and nations. Returning, I am very happy. They have repented the knives should return”.

While the third respondent was not excited about the return of Omwele Gwoshipika. The respondent answered that “, even though, it is being returned now, it would not return it with its original character, it was removed with its character which was kept for that Omwele. Therefore, the spirit of our ancestors has been switched already. Today, even though you are returning it, the whites have destroyed us spiritually unless maybe traditionally knowledgeable men in the aspect

⁸ Iipumbu Ya Tshirongo was born in 1873 in Onatshiku, a settlement near Elim in Uukwambi traditional authority jurisdiction. He was the eighteenth king of the Uukwambi from 1907 succeeding king Negumbo Iya Kandenge. During his reign, he jealously protected the tribal area of Uukwambi from being encroached by the white settler. His palace was bombed with military aircraft by the South African apartheid troops. Iipumbu ya Tshirongo died on the 9th September 1959 in Otshikuku

of Aawambo culture that can restore its significance. (*atiligane oyalwa nale olugodhi lwawo lomule*).

Moreover, the respondent continued stating that even though Omwele Gwoshipika is returning, the locals are converted to Christianity and now just believe in God. If one boycotts the character of his/her ancestors, then that means one is imprisoned by western ideologies. In the Uukwambi kingdom, the fourth respondent expressed a strong desire for the return of Omwele Gwoshipika. He emphasised the importance of people being able to see and learn from it. The respondent questioned why such important cultural items were taken away and stressed that Omwele Gwoshipika was traditionally given to the king, highlighting its significance in reviving their culture. He also mentioned the need to understand how it was manufactured, including materials used and the blacksmiths involved.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, respondents simply stated that Omwele Gwoshipika should be returned as they expressed a general sentiment of wanting their cultural artefacts back, this includes Omwele Gwoshipika in order to preserve their cultural heritage and revive traditional practices associated with it.

(b) Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika now that it is returned

All the respondents were asked where they would want Omwele Gwoshipika to be kept.

All the respondents have expressed a strong desire for Omwele Gwoshipika to be kept in one of the museums of Aawambo traditional authority. The respondents emphasised that the museum is very convenient as it gives equal access to both children and adults to go and see the artefacts. Further, the findings indicated that if Omwele Gwoshipika would be placed in the palace, it would disadvantage the large number of the community due to the implications of strict protocols in place with regard to accessing the palace in the Aawambo traditional authority. Therefore, many people would not get a chance to see the artefact.

(c) What else should be done to the returned Omwele Gwoshipika?

All the respondents were asked what more they would want to be done with the returned Omwele Gwoshipika.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents answered that Omwele Gwoshipika needs to come to the owners. The respondents further continued, answering that “we need it to come so that we see it and Germany must pay”. Whereas, in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent answered that “what else I want is for Omwele Gwoshipika to come back to Namibia as soon as possible. Then the public should be informed that Omwele Gwoshipika has returned. It should come back without

any delays”. While the second respondent answered that Omwele Gwoshipika should be well-kept and looked after, it should be kept in a safe place. The respondent further said that “the place where Omwele Gwoshipika is preserved should be made public, and its power should be regained. It should be like a very special item, well-kept and looked after”. Whereas, the third respondent answered by that “Omwele Gwoshipika should go in academic settings, and the search for nowadays blacksmith must be launched so that they duplicate the ancient Omwele Gwoshipika and modernize it.

The second respondent has the same tone as the Aakwaluudhi. “What I want to be done is that a big feast must be held. A very big feast must be hosted to welcome Omwele Gwoshipika. The feast must be held by the President, with his ministers, all the elites, and those who will be singing songs. After a big feast is held, then the kingdom will follow by singing their own songs and traditional dances honouring Omwele Gwoshipika. Even spiritual songs or national songs, jumping, singing, and dancing because power has returns, peace, and love”.

Whereas, the third respondent answered that “I am just looking at it (Omwele Gwoshipika) as a useless item brought in Namibia. I want people at higher institutions, youngsters like you to be told that Omwele has returned. When you are told that Omwele has returned, let us reproduce it, so we keep it the same way our forefathers kept it. Now you are saying Omwele has returned, however, Omwele’s core value has been broken and switched”. The respondent further explained that the power of Omwele Gwoshipika can be felt only when again the young generation start to listen and obey their elders.

Whereas the fourth respondent answered by saying that “when Omwele Gwoshipika comes back to Namibia, it should be explained to people and a profound meaning about Omwele Gwoshipika must be offered. The in-depth explanation about who used to make them and from which family they originated. Moreover, the respondent continued, saying that “our things are based on families. How was Omwele Gwoshipika was carried? Those kinds of information must be given how, where and who manufactured it.

(d) Putting an artefact in use after a long time of absence in the communities

All the respondents were asked if it is possible to re-introduce cultural artefacts back into their societal and social environment of origin to see them reclaim their proper function and use, after such a long absence.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents did not answer the question. Whereas, in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent emphasised that “you have to look at the ancient ways of ruling the kingdom and compare to see if it’s the same as today. Then it is very clear that its value would not be similar as it used to be in the past. Its significance for us is to have it in the museum so that it would be seen by the future generation. Because if you do not know your own history, it is very clear that you are being likened to a person embarking on a journey but does not know where he is going”.

While the second respondent provided the mixed feelings by explaining that “Omwele Gwoshipika has been made for culture, culture is the same, and it does not change. He gave a parable that if one is an expert, cannot skin a cattle starting from its back, one has to start it in the stomach. Even if people might tell you that, you can skin the cow from its back. Because people were already made to believe that it is so valueless, so they will remain with such belief that the knife is so valueless”. Whereas, the third respondent did not answer the question.

While, in Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “Firstly, people of the ancient times they do no longer exist. Today, we do not know the value of it. We just want our object to come back, maybe in its place we have already put an alternative knife. It should come back, so we compare it with the Omwele we have so, we determine if it has value”. While the second respondent answered that “. I have spoken about it, *edhina ekogidho* translated that a name is a link, it represents love. Still, it will have value to those who have it and use it. If the child is mishandling the knife, it will cut him. If he is touching the tip of the sharp object, it will stab him. If he is handling it with love, it will love him”.

While the fourth respondent answered that “you have to think that some things do not ever need to travel, to go somewhere, as they are meant to be confined in the house and get taken care of in the house. Therefore, the fact that Omwele Gwoshipika was taken from its natural setting whereby, it had a specific function. It implies that Omwele Gwoshipika does no longer have the ancient

value in the contemporary time. The respondent gave an example of a traditional custom in Aawambo about a married woman, when going to a house where she is married, she goes with an artefact (*okayaga/okapulupulu*), that is kept in the sleeping room. Even her husband will not remove or touch it. If he touches it, if he touches it the wife will divorce, such kinds of rules can be compared to Omwele Gwoshipika”.

Whereas, in Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondent answered that “if they have not done anything about them, then it still has value, but if they have done something about it your artefact could be depowered”.

(e) Where should Omwele Gwoshipika be maintained.

All the respondents were asked if they think the values of Omwele Gwoshipika should be preserved in their original context among Aawambo communities or in the local museums.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents answered that “it should be kept among Aawambo communities”. While in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent answered by saying that Omwele should be kept in the local museum. The respondent continued further, saying that “the museum should have a connection with the people in the community. That means its value is to be in the museum. If Omwele is only kept in the museum, and no one goes there, its value will not matter within the community. The purpose of putting it in the museum should make it valuable. Its value accumulates when people are coming to view, know and add knowledge for the development of Aawambo community”.

While the second respondent answered that “I understand that the value of Omwele Gwoshipika should be kept among Aawambo communities where it was taken from, so that the ancient purpose can be maintained”. Whereas the third respondent answered that “I do not know, there is no one who knows its value”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “firstly, the people that exist now do not know it. “You do not put a value on something that you do not know how it looks like”. Countless things have changed, and it is difficult to quantify the value. Omwele Gwoshipika must go in the museums that are in the kingdom”. Whereas, the third respondent hold the same sentiment. He further added that good thing it might with such as obedience, orderliness and cultural practices of our forefathers. While the fourth respondent answered that Omwele Gwoshipika should be in both the museums and the palaces, where it is direct link it, although that might be risky. Culturally, the palace is the ideal place to keep Omwele Gwoshipika due to it being

historically evidently linked with the palace. However, there will be challenges regarding accessibility for the public to go, and see Omwele due to the protocols associated with going to the palaces. In addition, if Omwele should be kept in the traditional authorities' museums, there are limitations of museums among the traditional authorities. Some traditional authorities have no museums and would be disadvantaged. The respondent concluded by saying that, "when it returns from Germany, it should not be kept in Windhoek; otherwise, there will be no reason of returning if it does not go where it came from; it must go to the owners; otherwise, it is good as robbing the owner".

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents support the idea of putting in the museum.

(f) Aawambo artefacts in foreign countries

All the respondents were asked about their views on other items of Aawambo material culture that are still in foreign countries.

In Uukwanyama kingdoms, the respondents did not answer this question. Whereas in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent answered by saying that "they should return, they should return without delay because we do not have other people's artefacts". While the second respondent would like the artefacts to be returned because they are not an abomination and taboo and every significant and the value of individual artefacts must be treated separately (*kehe shimwe tashitalika ngele oshina oshilonga noshangwana okwipila ombiga yaasho*). The artefacts were disposed for Christianity to be maintained. So, the artefacts should come back. While the third respondent answered by saying that "the artefacts must come back so further research can be conducted.

Whereas, in Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent indicated that to show the history before the western history and influence, we have been having our own objects that we were manufacturing and used. While the second respondent answered that the artefacts were taken away without any agreement, perhaps stolen, to put it light. There will be no ill feeling, if the item is returning in a good faith and peace just like Omwele Gwoshipika being carried at the heart, where there is love. We need to take heart and forgive each other. That means the items should return. (*Aye Omitima ota dhilumbakana ashike nde emwenyo tadhi mumwe nde tatudhiminathana po*). While the third respondent echoed the same sentiment, extending that the return must include the skulls, Ndemufayo's father, Mandume himself, Shaula sha Amadhila, the sixth king of Ombalantu Mvula ya Alweendo among many other whose remains were taken to be studied.

While the fourth respondent echoes the sentiment of returning artefacts, which include materials such as literature and photos.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents equally indicated that all things must come back as they carry a lot of our wealth that was taken away without our will. They terrified us by saying that we are pagan and they have devalued our kingdoms.

3. Creating the shape of Omwele Gwoshipika

(a) Production of Omwele Gwoshipika in the ancient times

All the respondents were asked how Omwele Gwoshipika was manufactured in the past.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents did not answer the question. Whereas in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent indicated that “in life things change. During the ancient times, our forefathers used tools such as bellow to manufacture Omwele Gwoshipika. However, during our time, the blacksmith is using new tools to manufacture Omwele. The respondent further emphasised that if the current blacksmith is asked to duplicate the ancient Omwele Gwoshipika they might be able to manufacture it”. While the second respondent answered that the design and structure of Omwele Gwoshipika was formed up by the blacksmith from their kingdom. The blacksmiths are locally known as *aahambudhi* or *aakwaanga*. They hit metals and bells, transforming them in the shape of anything they want to manufacture. In addition, the respondent emphasised that the blacksmith must be given the power to do their work and manufacture their own things”. Whereas the third respondent answered that “it gets lost, there is nothing”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “*owadha ike Omwele opo gwazimo* translated as you just found Omwele recently taken out. The sheath is not the same. Therefore, nowadays Omwele is manufactured in modern ways”.

While the second respondent answered that “Omwele Gwoshipika was not owned by everyone. Nowadays Omwele (ordinary traditional knife) everyone owns one. Some are long, some are short. Therefore, Omwele Gwoshipika as that one in the picture it is possible to manufacture, and duplicate through the guidance of the elders. However, it is not every one that would manufacture Omwele Gwoshipika,

Whereas, the third respondent answered that “to manufacture Omwele we have an inheritance from generation to generation. People are there, at Ewale, the San in Ombandja and some are in Onkumbi. Aawambo have learnt how to manufacture Omwele from some mentioned above.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents answered that “there is a difference. Nowadays, the Omwele they have is manufactured from the stick of Omupopo, sharpener or a panga and do not break easily. While, Omukanga tree is used to manufacture Aawambo traditional cup”.

(b) Materials used in the ancient times to manufacture Omwele Gwoshipika.

All the respondents were asked if people still use the same materials as it were used in the past to design Omwele Gwoshipika.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents did not answer the question. While in Ondonga kingdom the respondents indicated that technology is advancing, therefore, the current blacksmiths are using the new technology to manufacture the ordinary knives of Aawambo only and not necessarily Omwele Gwoshipika. The respondents further emphasised that some blacksmiths still employ the traditional way of using the bellow, material from Omupopo and Omwandi tree to manufacture the ordinary knives of Aawambo.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered that “the bellow still exists, it has not died”. While the second respondent answered that “a bellow has a very important use and power. The bellow is used by the senior bellower to spiritually call back home the cattle that went missing. Further, a person who went missing or been in imprisonment for a long time could also be called back home through the usage of a bellow. “*Tshanika pukupuku Tshanika* comes back home *pukupuku* (demonstrating how the bellow owner will call back someone from prison) the person might come back. In addition, a bellow can be used to bewitch a person who has stolen items that belonged to someone else.

Whereas the third respondent answered that “*Hamukwaya mokapa oko nge eli natango*”. My Omwele is only that is at home in the north (*kowambo*), else I could have shown it to you. However, they are using the bellow similar to the ancient time bellow. How could you use the bellow if it has been replaced by the new technology, asked the respondent? Technology has replaced the bellow completely. The bellow used to contain many things, one being to bewitch people. If you heard that a certain family is dying, it has been bewitched. They used to have a deep spiritual fight (*olugodhi lomuule*) for them to conduct such things”.

However, the fourth respondent answered that he was not sure about the materials used to manufacture Omwele Gwoshipika, but other Omwele, they used Omupopo tree where they take pieces that make the sheath. The respondent emphasised that the blacksmith is the one who knows what they use.

In Uukwaluudhi kingdom, the respondents answered by reiterating that still people are using the bellow, and sharpener to manufacture Oomwele.

(c) Rituals associated with the making of Omwele Gwoshipika

All the respondents were asked if there are any aspects of intangible heritage surrounding the manufacturing of Omwele Gwoshipika.

In Uukwanyama kingdom, the respondents did not answer the question. Whereas in Ondonga kingdom, the first respondent answered that he did not have the information and had not heard it before”. While the second respondent answered that “those things are supposed to be known by the manufacturers because they are the creator of the artefact. The respondent gave an example of a clay pot maker, who knows when she is making clay pots in the underground clay pot factory (*monzimbogo*). However, if she is going to burn the clay pot at the burning place of the clay pot (*Oshootho*), then she knows she would wake up early in the morning before she greets any person. Further, if a person passes by and wants to greet her, she would not respond back to the greeting”. However, the third respondent answered that “I do not know”.

In Uukwambi kingdom, the first respondent answered by indicating that this question is best answered by a blacksmith. Unfortunately, the one who was in his community had passed away. Whereas, the second respondent indicated that “Omwele Gwoshipika itself was embedded with the spirit of the elders, and it would not be carried by anyone unless there is an occasion of forgivingness. There are intangible heritage aspects related to manufacturing knives. On the morning of manufacturing a knife, a blacksmith will rise before sunrise, and he should not be seen by anyone until he starts.

While the third respondent answered indicated that a blacksmith would not just be anyone, it would be someone with certain characters.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS.

5.1. Introduction.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, presents what the study contributes to the literature, and suggests recommendations. The chapter also explains how the study addressed the objectives of the study and shows how the findings are connected to the existing literature.

5.2. The historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika in Aawambo communities

5.2.1. Knowledge of Omwele Gwoshipika.

The result indicates that many participants are aware, have heard, read about or have seen Omwele Gwoshipika in Tsumeb museum. The study established that Omwele Gwoshipika's physical design is structured like a hat or in a hat form, and it is given to the elites and traditional leaders as a symbol of honour. The findings correspond with Ella (1978) and Silvester et al., (2019) who found that Omwele Gwoshipika has a sheath helmet, a metal blade, a handle and a sheath of red copper and red wire. The findings provide the awareness that the knowledge of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities is still known and could be passed on to the future generation through oral history. This means that Aawambo communities still know and have information about Omwele Gwoshipika although in contemporary times such a knife is no longer in circulation and use. The word okupika has dual meaning. One version means that okupika is to designate and to choose whom to carry the knife. Okupika (*enslaving someone because the knife restricts the person bearing it from doing certain things*). Another version of okupika means to field someone, for example, to pick a player to go on the field in a soccer match. In relation to Omwele Gwoshipika the one picked will be at the same time get enslaved/restricted by the limitations. After all, the 'enslaved' get picked.

Further, Ella (1938) found that Omwele Gwoshipika was a sign of great importance and highest order amongst Aawambo. However, this study refuted Ella's (1938) arguments because some traditional leaders amongst Aawambo communities (Uukwambi and Uukwanyama) are not aware of the importance and highest order of Omwele Gwoshipika. Further, the finding of this study refuted Ella (1938) argument, which stated that Omwele Gwoshipika served both Aandonga and Aakwanyama, as a symbol of authority. The findings from Uukwanyama kingdom refuted such claims, suggesting that the Omikonda/Omwele they know is not similar to Omwele Gwoshipika, and they did not use such a knife during their lifetime in governing their communities. The refuting

of Ella's (1938) finding is significant because Ella's study, which was conducted 84 years ago, might explain the notion of treating Aawambo as a collective group and based on a no care was paid to the diversity of the people. That means the primary people who used Omwele Gwoshipika at the time were not consulted to provide primary information on the items taken. This signifies that care should be taken when studying the inventory and accession in European institutions, and to emphasise the importance of including source communities when dealing with collections in various western institutions to avoid the similar recirculation of wrong information.

The findings of this study in Uukwanyama obtained from sources community although never used and currently do not use Omwele Gwoshipika they provided the information based on the oral history passed on about Omwele Gwoshipika from their forefathers and mothers who had primary knowledge and experience of Omwele Gwoshipika.

Moreover, the findings established that Omwele Gwoshipika is a prestigious knife that was used to preserve the power of the kingdom and prevent a particular kingdom not to be enslaved by other nations. Omwele Gwoshipika carries the characters of the kingdom, and it was spiritually used to keep the kingdom fire burning. These were the key functions of Omwele Gwoshipika in Aawambo communities. Therefore, the findings provide new insight into the significance of Omwele Gwoshipika amongst Aawambo communities, which was not covered in the previous studies about Omwele Gwoshipika conducted by Ella (1938), Loeb (1962), Silvester et al., (2019). Further, the findings of this study bridged the gap in pieces of literature about Aawambo material culture and provides a sneak peek version of information from various sources including the source community, which historically made and used Omwele Gwoshipika. In addition, the findings, especially from the source communities, provide new information that will be used to add to the existing information on Omwele Gwoshipika and help the museums to have a piece of detailed and possibly accurate information about Omwele Gwoshipika.

5.2.2. Importance of Omwele in Aawambo culture

The findings indicated that Omwele in Aawambo culture is a tool that is used to perform various functions such as slaughtering cattle, making knobkerries, used in the preparation of food, a symbol of manhood, a weapon to defend yourself, an object to punish people and as a cutter to cut meat into small pieces. Another function of Omwele the findings established is that it is used to

cut palms, skin cattle, remove a thorn in a person's body and stab dead cattle that died at the grazing area to empty the stomach air because the air is believed to cause other cattle to die.

The findings correlate with Ella, (1938), Loeb (1962), and Silvester et al., (2019) who claimed that Aawambo traditional knives (*Oomwele*) were generally used for self-defence against unforeseen assaults, in hunting trips for killing and skinning animals and for everyday use. The findings provide a familiar perception regarding the importance of Omwele in Aawambo culture and its usage is still relevant amongst Aawambo communities.

Further, the findings indicated that Omwele was used to perform magic and to put a curse on people. The findings indicated that a bellow one of the tools used to manufacture Omwele is essential and is enmeshed with magical power that can call back a person who has stayed away from home for so long. The power in the knife can cause such a person to return.

Another finding about the knife is the ability to bewitch a person who has trespassed and is not remorseful. In addition, a bellow was used to cure a person who had been bitten by a dog, to blow the dog's hair out of a victim's body. The finding corresponds with Ella (1938) who found that Ordinary knives (*Oomwele*) serve special purposes to a witch doctor. The first function a witch doctor use Omwele is to determine the holders of wicked spirits, wrongdoers and other culprits in the community. Another function was that the witch doctor used Omwele to curse people and allegedly cause the death of someone living at a distance by magic. People being cursed could be because they have stolen objects from someone, and the owners would request the witch doctor to kill the person who had their items and could not get hold of them. The findings offer new insight into the significance of the bellow owner.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that that based on Aawambo culture, a man cannot walk barehanded without carrying a protective object such as Omwele and those who do so, are regarded as cowards. The findings correlate with Shigwedha and Nampala (2006) study, which outlined that it was a violation of Aawambo customs for a man to go out barehanded without carrying an object such as Omwele. The findings provide a familiar understanding of Aawambo culture, which still maintains that a man should not walk barehanded without carrying a protective object such as Omwele.

5.2.3. Worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.

The findings suggest that Omwele Gwoshipika holds significant historical value within the Aawambo kingdom, where it was regarded as a symbol of honour and promotion by the Aawambo king to those who have performed well in the war, especially if they return with war booty. Furthermore, the findings, concurred with the study by Ella (1938) and Silvester et al. (2019) that revealed that Omwele Gwoshipika served as a distinctive symbol that the Aawambo king would bestow upon his messengers whenever they were dispatched to other Aawambo communities. This symbol was intended to make it easy for the messengers to be recognized as emissaries of the king. In addition, the findings specified that the king would carefully select an individual whom he trusted and deemed as possessing valuable advice to be responsible for carrying Omwele Gwoshipika from the king's palace to the destination kingdom where they were to deliver a message.

Moreover, the study uncovered that Omwele Gwoshipika held significant spiritual significance by bestowing power, safeguarding the kingdom's character, and defending it from potential invasions by neighbouring kingdoms. Furthermore, the findings indicated that Omwele Gwoshipika served as a means to prevent the kingdom from falling into enslavement by other nations and symbolized the preservation and vitality of their realm. It was seen as a symbolic torch, perpetuating the kingdom's heritage.

Additionally, the findings suggested that Omwele Gwoshipika also had a utilitarian role as a belt of the kingdom. In a spiritual context, it was employed to cure mysterious diseases and to define the boundaries of an individual within their community or family, further emphasizing its multifaceted importance within the Aawambo culture.

The findings of this study offer valuable new insights that significantly contribute to the existing literature concerning the historical significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities. It is worth noting that this information was notably absent from prior research from the cataloguing within museums where Omwele Gwoshipika is currently preserved.

These findings present a unique opportunity to incorporate community-based knowledge and perspectives into the description and documentation of Omwele Gwoshipika within museums and other institutions. This approach offers a decolonized version of information that can serve to

rectify any previous misinformation or gaps in the understanding of the significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities.

In light of this, it is essential to disseminate this enriched and comprehensive information about Omwele Gwoshipika to all museums that house this artefact. By doing so, we can ensure a more accurate representation of its historical and cultural importance, allowing for a deeper and more authentic understanding of its role within Aawambo communities.

5.2.4. Authoritative instructions the king gives through Omwele Gwoshipika.

The study has uncovered significant revelations about the role of Omwele Gwoshipika within the Aawambo culture. It was found that the king conveyed authoritative instructions to individuals through Omwele Gwoshipika, particularly in the context of cattle herding and warfare. These instructions carried important messages, including, unity as men were instructed not to quarrel and not to discriminate against each other during their journeys to the cattle post. In responsibility for cattle, men were directed to seek food for the cattle and protect them from being preyed upon by lions.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the king used Omwele Gwoshipika to issue commands to his soldiers for warfare. Beyond these official functions, the study also revealed that Omwele Gwoshipika could be used at a family level as a spiritual ritual to predict forthcoming events. For example, a family might possess an object akin to Omwele Gwoshipika, and its orientation could provide advanced signals about potential occurrences. If such an object were to fall, it was seen as a foreboding sign.

This study bridges a notable gap in the existing literature, as prior works by Ella (1938), Loeb (1962), and Silvester et al. (2019) did not provide specific information about the authoritative instructions that the king communicated through Omwele Gwoshipika, aside from recognizing it as a symbol of authority with the power to command. Thus, the findings of this study serve to enrich our understanding by detailing the precise instructions the king conveyed through Omwele Gwoshipika, illuminating its multifaceted significance within the Aawambo culture.

5.2.5. Occurrences traditional leaders use Omwele Gwoshipika.

Omwele Gwoshipika was used as a symbol of peace to appease and reconcile the two families and restore the peace between the victim's family and that there would be no revenge in the event of murder. Moreover, the findings established that a king can use Omwele Gwoshipika during the

time of the war to give instructions to his soldiers when going to war and when the kingdom is being attacked because Aawambo believed that Omwele Gwoshipika can protect them spiritually. Further, the findings indicated that the king can use Omwele Gwoshipika on an occasion whereby the soldiers have gone beyond the instructions of the king or have stolen the war booty. The king can use Omwele Gwoshipika spiritually to reveal and recover the stolen war booty. Besides, the findings found out that on an occasion, whereby the king has trespassed, a trustworthy person who has been entrusted to bear Omwele Gwoshipika, as a messenger of the king, has the power to scold the king. Further, a carrier of Omwele Gwoshipika can use it in self-defence on an occasion when provoked.

5.2.6. Consequences of individual refusing orders passed through Omwele Gwoshipika.

The findings of the study shed light on a crucial aspect that was previously unexplored in the works of Ella (1938), Loeb (1962), and Silvester et al. (2019) regarding the consequences of refusing orders conveyed through Omwele Gwoshipika. The study revealed that the punishment for disobeying instructions transmitted via Omwele Gwoshipika was determined by the ruling king of the Aawambo kingdom at the time. These punishments could be severe, including; death penalty when individuals who disobeyed the palace's orders through Omwele Gwoshipika were subject to the ultimate punishment, execution, or being chased out of the kingdom. Shaving bald (*otshipumpuka*), another form of punishment involved shaving an individual's head, a clear and public sign that they had trespassed and defied the palace's commands. Additionally, the findings highlighted that women faced distinct punishments for non-compliance, which included payment of two or three weaving baskets (*imbale*) to the palace; circumambulation around the pounding area (*oshini*) in the palace three to four times.

At the household level, a house that defied the palace's orders could be penalized with the obligation to provide bags of mahangu millet. Importantly, this study revealed that such penalties, like providing bags of mahangu and encircling the pounding area, have replaced the death penalty, reflecting a shift towards less severe consequences.

Moreover, the findings indicated that the consequences for disobeying an order through Omwele Gwoshipika might also include mob justice whereby a culprit would be subjected to a collective beating by a group of men known as "*ekumbu*" which could result in the death of the disobedient

individual. Mental distress or insanity, as refusing the order, was associated with grave consequences.

This detailed examination of the consequences associated with refusing orders delivered through Omwele Gwoshipika provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics within the Aawambo culture and the significance of this symbolic artefact in ensuring obedience and preserving traditional norms.

5.2.7. Current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika.

This study indicates mixed feelings among the participants regarding the current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika. The findings that speak in favour of Omwele Gwoshipika current worthiness, established that even in contemporary times, Omwele Gwoshipika has power. The findings justified that in an attempt to reverse their culture and tradition to the way things used to be in the past, belongings (*ininima yetu*) such as Omwele Gwoshipika must be returned. Further, the findings found out that if there are traditional leaders who know and can still use it as in the past, then Omwele Gwoshipika must be reintroduced into the community.

The finding of this study support the argument by Silvester and Shiweda (2020) who argued that the return of an artefact to the source community would allow cultural continuities; it could also activate cultural revivals and debates within the descendant communities. Therefore, this implies that the source communities who feel that Omwele Gwoshipika still has the ancient value if re-introduced in the governing structure of the communities, would want to culturally revive pride in aspects of their traditional culture which have been buried under the layer of colonialism. Therefore, some Aawambo people argued that Omwele Gwoshipika still has value and would still adhere to the power of commands attached to it if re-introduced in the contemporary time in the communities. Therefore, Sarr and Savoy (2018) support the findings by arguing that restitution of an object in the community brings forth the addition and subtractions of the value within a space of time.

On the other hand, there are participants that discredit the current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika and extended that it will be of no value when returned because the character that used to function has been broken down and disappeared. The findings further found that it is very difficult to differentiate between Omwele Gwoshipika the king used in the ancient time and the modified Omwele Gwoshipika that was not used by the king. The findings also revealed that

Omwele Gwoshipika is no longer there to govern the communities in the traditional authorities. This is so because currently, traditional authorities govern their communities through traditional authority structures, like offices and official stamps, which authenticate that the communication is coming from the king. Moreover, the findings of the study found that at the family level, perhaps there are still those families using Omwele Gwoshipika to manage their family affairs.

Sarr and Savoy (2018) support the findings by emphasising the worthiness of artefacts such as Omwele Gwoshipika in contemporary times might not mean resituating them as they once were, but re-inventing them with a social function is not about returning to the same but of a different same. This implies that Omwele Gwoshipika's ancient social function and value might not be the same as they once were. This is because the primary traditional leaders who used Omwele Gwoshipika are no more in existence and the current traditional leaders are not convinced because the character that gave Omwele Gwoshipika its power, such as moral, respect for elders and orderliness is ruined. Currently, there are numerous moral decays in the community, and it is therefore deemed difficult to return the worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika in contemporary times.

5.2.8. Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.

This study revealed valuable insights into the historical preservation and significance of Omwele Gwoshipika that Ella (1962) and Silvester et al. (2019) did not. The findings of the study indicated that Omwele Gwoshipika used to be kept in the arsenal in the palace. An arsenal is a vital room in the palace where other weapons such as bows with sheaths, arrows with sheaths, arrows, knobkerrie, and spears of the kingdom are kept. Further, the findings established that other items that were kept in the arsenal alongside Omwele Gwoshipika are calabash, knives, carriers and bow of the palace. Only individuals who have been instructed by the king are allowed to enter the arsenal, and this privilege was not extended to everyone, including the king's wife.

5.2.9. Usage and carrying Omwele Gwoshipika by women

The findings of the study indicated that women did not carry Omwele Gwoshipika because the traditional authority and administration was a male-oriented, it excluded women in their authority structure, by implication, women would not carry Omwele Gwoshipika. Silvester et al. (2019) support the findings about Omwele Gwoshipika being a male-related item by arguing that Omwele Gwoshipika was given to a person admired by the king to be most skilled in matters related to loyal shepherds, loyal soldiers and other valued men.

Additionally, the findings revealed that women did not carry Omwele Gwoshipika because women were considered to be merciful and were made to concentrate on domestic chores such as food preparation. The findings also established that Omwele Gwoshipika was not given to cowards, and the term coward (*omukatalume*; is referred to men only) is used in reference to men only. However, it is established that a woman could carry the ordinary Omwele for her husband or if she is carrying a baby boy on her back. On such occasion, a woman would not receive public judgement and scrutiny. Aakwanyama women did not need to carry weapons such as knives because they did not need additional protection other than the severe laws of the king.

Further, the findings indicated how women were involved in the affairs of Omwele Gwoshipika, as physical and spiritual caretakers to ensure safeguarding the physicality of the knife and the spirituality of the community.

5.3.1. Views on the coming back of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia.

The study found that there were mixed feelings regarding the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika to Namibia. Some participants from the four Aawambo communities are very excited about the return of Omwele Gwoshipika, while one felt that restitution is not worth it.

Those in the favour of the return of Omwele Gwoshipika are of the position that the belonging is part of the Aawambo nation and their country's history, traditions/customers, and culture. The wishes for the participants for Omwele Gwoshipika to return back correspond with Shigwedha (2004) argument that objects returning back to Namibia would serve to celebrate the unique traditions of the different kingdoms and contribute to nation-building by increasing awareness of the cultural contributions and value of each kingdom.

Further, the study found out that Omwele Gwoshipika was not ethically taken. The findings are being backed by Mwatondange et al. (2020) who argued that Omwele Gwoshipika was acquired in 1909 from Namibia and sent to Germany during the Germany's governance over Namibia. Although, there are no documentations regarding how Omwele Gwoshipika was acquired, from which kingdom and who authorised it. The period it was taken was very problematic, given the then just ended 1904-1909 Ova Herero/Nama/Germany war.

Additionally, the desire to return the belongings is backed by the wishes to expose them to the young generation. This corresponds with Silvester et al. (2020) who argued that the returning of

an object to the source community would activate cultural revivals and debates within the descendant communities and for the young community to know about it. This corresponds with Farago (2019) who asked an interesting question about African objects which are in European museums and what that would mean to the young Africans who never seen them? What new meanings might these works of art accrue if they are returned to where they were made centuries ago? Further, the findings found out that the participants want Omwele Gwoshipika to come back to Namibia because they felt that if one happens to go to Deutschland to go see what is in their museum gallery, such a person would pay just to see the items that are theirs in the first place. Also, the participants feel that the return of Omwele Gwoshipika would add economic value because once put in the Namibian museums, people would pay to view it.

The findings further found out that the source communities wish the National Museum of Namibia to facilitate the return of Omwele Gwoshipika to resuscitate their culture. Although the emphasis should always be placed on what the source community want; taking this route might be problematic even when the artefact is returned back to Namibia. Source communities may not be adequately represented in the museum governance, leadership, or decision-making processes. This lack of representation limits their ability to influence the management and treatment of artefacts.

Although the returning of Omwele Gwoshipika would not revert the original character of the knife. As the spirit of the ancestors have probably been switched already and have destroyed the spiritual powers, there are some participants that would like to see it returned.

5.3.2. Storing of Omwele Gwoshipika when returned

The findings indicated that the source communities would like once returned to Namibia, Omwele Gwoshipika must be kept in the local museums, particularly the traditional authority museums and in the palace. The findings of this study are very crucial as it gives direction and reveals community wishes on how they want Omwele Gwoshipika to be kept. Therefore, this study has facilitated a dialogue within Aawambo communities about the appropriate home for Omwele Gwoshipika that is returning to Namibia. The implication of keeping Omwele Gwoshipika in the museums located in the palace is that the belonging would be preserved very well and accessed to local community who do not need to travel to Windhoek to see their belonging in the National Museum of Namibia. The challenge would be that if the belonging (*Omwele Gwoshipika*) is kept in the arsenal of the

palace. That means, many people would not have access to it due to the strict protocol established regarding accessing the palace.

5.3.3. When the Omwele Gwoshipika is returned.

The findings insist on the returning of Omwele Gwoshipika to the owners, without any delay, and the public must be informed about its return. The return must be accompanied by a big feast led by the President and his Minister to welcome Omwele Gwoshipika. It must be celebrated with songs and dances. Further, the finding revealed that Omwele Gwoshipika should be studied again, and the search for nowadays, blacksmiths must be launched so that they can be traced and copy the ancient Omwele Gwoshipika and modernize it.

In relation with the previous study by Ella (1938), Loeb (1962) and Silvester et al. (2019) about Omwele Gwoshipika, their findings did not cover from which families the blacksmiths who manufactured Omwele Gwoshipika were coming from. Further, the findings from the previous studies did not cover if there were rituals involved when one was being given the honour of Omwele Gwoshipika. In addition, their findings did not provide any information about the rituals that were involved when safeguarding Omwele Gwoshipika. Therefore, the findings of this study revived the participant's knowledge about Omwele Gwoshipika, which were not documented in the previous study.

5.3.4. Putting an artefact in use after a long time of absence in the communities

There are mixed feelings among the participants regarding the reintegration of an artefact in use after a long time of absence in the communities. The findings revealed that some felt that it was not possible, while others felt that it was possible. The mixed feelings of participants about the reintegration of Omwele Gwoshipika back in the communities is supported by Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin (1988) who argued that questions on whether object undergo changes in context, style, use and meaning would depend on the technology, production, progress and skill and a movement towards forms of indigenous knowledge that are local and embedded in social and historical context. Therefore, the mixed feelings from participants is fuelled by aspects such as how Omwele Gwoshipika acquired its meaning, the roles it played, its production, and the position of progress and change.

The findings from those who felt that it is possible to reintegrate an artefact in the communities after a long-time absence revealed that Omwele Gwoshipika was made for culture, and culture is

the same, it does not change. Further, the findings established that if the Germans have not disempowered Omwele Gwoshipika, then it is still having its ancient value and power. In that case, it is possible to integrate Omwele Gwoshipika into the community setting after a long absence. The findings are supported by Saar and Savor (2018) who argued that certain objects would have little trouble rediscovering a function, even if it is somewhat reinvented, within the cultural landscape of the communities. Therefore, this implies that Omwele Gwoshipika might not have challenges in rediscovering its past function if the community are welcoming its re-integration back into the community. This is possible because it is the community that gives an object meaning and power and if the community feels that the object can re-claim its function back in the community without any objection, then Omwele Gwoshipika will be successfully re-integrated back in Aawambo community after a century of absence.

The findings from those who felt that it is not possible to integrate Omwele Gwoshipika in the present time as it was used, have considered the following factors: whether ruling style and structure are still the same. Otherwise, Omwele Gwoshipika's significance will be kept in the museum for the current and future generation to see and learn about it.

The findings are being supported by Saar and Savor (2018) who argued that the return of objects does not mean resituating them as they once were, but restitution brings forth the addition and subtractions of the value within a different space in time. Therefore, this implies that restitution will bring forth the subtraction of the value of Omwele Gwoshipika due to a different space in time whereby the current traditional leaders are no longer using Omwele Gwoshipika in their administration of the community. Moreover, the current traditional leaders are now governing their communities from the traditional authority office where they are using official stamps and letter heads which demonstrate the originality and authenticity of the message that it is indeed coming from the king. Therefore, that justified that Omwele Gwoshipika would not be introduced back in the community to perform the role authenticating the authority of the king.

Additionally, the findings indicated that the people of the ancient times who used Omwele Gwoshipika are no longer in existence and the current traditional leaders do not know Omwele Gwoshipika's value. Therefore, if Omwele Gwoshipika is returning, it would just come so that the people can compare it with other Omwele that the traditional leader has, to see if it has value. Equally, the finding revealed that some things do not need to travel, to go somewhere because

some things are just supposed to be confined in one place, just being taken care of in that specific place. This analogy is Aawambo custom regarding married women, when going to a house where she is married, she goes with a piece called (*okayaga/Okapulupulu*), kept in the sleeping room and no one should touch it, including her husband. On occasion whereby, the husband touches it, the wife will divorce. Therefore, such examples can be extended to Omwele Gwoshipika.

5.3.5. Omwele Gwoshipika value should be preserved in local museums or communities

The findings indicated that the value of Omwele Gwoshipika must be preserved in Aawambo communities in the local museums situated at the palace or traditional authority museums. Further, the finding suggested that Omwele Gwoshipika should be kept in the museum so that the young generating can go and see and learn about Omwele. The findings are corresponding with Woodward (2007) who argued that material culture study is concerned about the relations between people and objects. Therefore, this implies that the community want the value of Omwele Gwoshipika kept in the traditional authority museum so that the relationship between the people and the object is created.

Additionally, the findings urged that the return of Omwele Gwoshipika would resuscitate the spirit of their forefathers such as obedience, cultural practices and orderliness that are the cornerstone of the communities. The findings correspond with the findings by Woodward (2007) who argued that material culture objects have to do with what traditions people put on objects and what objects do for people and to the people. Therefore, this implies that for Omwele Gwoshipika initial value to return, people should return the traditions and good mannerism.

5.3.6. Aawambo artefacts in foreign countries.

There is a strong feeling regarding the Aawambo artefacts in foreign countries that they must come back to Namibia without any delay. Further, the findings revealed that the artefacts that are in foreign countries contain the spiritual powers of Aawambo. The findings correspond with the Agorsah (1977), which argued that African nations have searched for the means to establish viable and authentic cultural identities. Hence, the demands towards European governments to return art objects, archives and antiquities taken during the colonial era. Therefore, this implies that the demand for restitution started a long time ago and Aawambo people are within a bigger context as they demand the return of Aawambo artefacts in foreign countries.

In addition, the findings discovered that the artefacts must come to reinstate the history and heritage practised before the western influence to Namibia. This is to debunk the impression that Africa had no civilization before the arrival of the Europeans. The findings correspond with Farago (2019), which argued that restitution of cultural objects should be considered as a war against incorrect information, and contamination of the African culture.

It is evident that the artefacts that are in foreign countries have pained the participants. Therefore, it needs to come back so that the youngsters will come to see them. The findings correspond with Silvester and Shiweda (2020) who argued that it is crucial for the descendant communities from where the object is originated to be given time and space to consider the role of objects from the past when they re-emerge in the present and that return should include sustained collaboration with the recipient communities. This implies that the young generation should be taught the historical role and worth of Omwele Gwoshipika and that such material wealth must be kept nearer and accessible to the source communities.

5.4. Comparing the physical design structure of Omwele Gwoshipika within the selected Aawambo communities, if there is any, with Omwele Gwoshipika that has been restituted from Germany, Berlin ethnographic Museum.

5.4.1. Production of Omwele Gwoshipika in the ancient times.

Not all Aawambo kingdoms that were the focus of this study had and used Omwele Gwoshipika in their respective kingdoms. In the ancient times, Omwele Gwoshipika was being manufactured by a blacksmith locally referred to as *Aahambudhi* or *Aakwayanga*. The findings refuted Siiskone's (1990) study, which found that Aawambo blacksmiths were mainly coming from Aakwanyama and Aandonga communities, who made knives and sold them to other communities. The findings provided a different perception of blacksmithing. Further, the findings indicated that the skilled blacksmiths were mainly San locally referred to as *Aahambudhi* or *Aakwayanga*. It has been established that currently it is difficult to locate the local blacksmith.

The production process involves a blacksmith hitting the metals and bells and then transforming the metals into the shape or design of his choice. The material used by Aawambo to make knives was iron, copper and brass (Ella, 1938 and Loeb (1962).

The findings established that Omwele Gwoshipika was being manufactured under the guidance of the elders, in that way, the knowledge was passed on to the young generation. The areas famous for the manufacturing and production of Omwele Gwoshipika which were not covered by other researchers such as Loeb (1962), and Sylvester (2019) are identified to be Ewale, Ombandja and Onkumbi who used to sell Oomwele to the communities under study.

5.4.2. Materials used in the manufacturing of Omwele Gwoshipika in the past.

The findings of this study indicated that the materials used in the manufacturing of Omwele Gwoshipika are the bellow, sharpener, panga and metals, which were imported from the area which was under the jurisdiction of Ondonga kingdom, but now in the area of Tsumeb. Other materials were from a plant, known as *Omupopo*, from the same area. The findings correspond with Ella's (1938); Loeb's (1962) and Gibson, Larson and McGurk's (1981) studies who found that Aawambo blacksmiths used different tools such as a hammer (ohamala), tongs (Onato), anvil (Oshikilo) and bellow (Omupepo) to come up with Aawambo knives which they used in the process of making Aawambo knives.

5.4.3. Rituals associated with the making of Omwele Gwoshipika

The findings indicated that Omwele Gwoshipika is embedded with the spirit of the elders/ancestors and therefore not everyone would carry Omwele Gwoshipika due to its character, the physical and spiritual character. There were only exclusive manufacturers that could produce it. The production process involved several rituals or restrictions associated with its production, such as the blacksmith must rise from his sleep before the sun rise and must not be seen when going to the place where he makes Omwele Gwoshipika.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study dug into the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika within Aawambo communities, uncovering various facets of its role and importance. The study found that many participants possess awareness of Omwele Gwoshipika, often passed down through oral tradition, biblical references, or encounters in museums. Its core functions revolve around preserving the kingdom's power, protecting against enslavement by foreign nations, and serving as a symbol of honour conferred upon elites and traditional leaders. Omwele serves as a versatile tool with multiple functions, including cattle slaughtering, crafting knobkerries, food preparation, symbolizing manhood, self-defence, and for meat cutting. It's also used for skinning cattle, removing thorns from the body, and puncturing dead cattle's stomachs, as well as in healing practices performed by witch doctors.

Historically, Omwele Gwoshipika played a crucial role in protecting cultural traditions, conveying important instructions during conflicts or wars, and interpreting omens, especially related to family beliefs and events like death. It served as a symbol of honour, typically bestowed upon loyal shepherds, soldiers, and elites. Additionally, Omwele Gwoshipika had various curative applications.

The study revealed that Omwele Gwoshipika served as a channel for the king to issue instructions to royal soldiers for warfare, whether it involved attacking other kingdoms or pursuing wealth and cattle. These instructions emphasized unity, love, good relationships, and non-discrimination among individuals to maintain harmony and prevent conflicts. Omwele Gwoshipika was considered a potent protector during journeys and in the forest, safeguarding the king's children and promoting spiritual and traditional practices.

There are various circumstances of traditional use of Omwele Gwoshipika. The king employed Omwele Gwoshipika to mediate in cases of murder within families. It was used to spiritually reveal a soldier who stole war booty, compelling the return of stolen items. In rare cases, individuals chosen and trusted to bear Omwele Gwoshipika could even have the power to scold the king.

Disobeying instructions through Omwele Gwoshipika could lead to severe consequences, including death penalties or banishment from the kingdom. Other penalties included shaving a

person's head (*otshipumpuka*). Women might be punished by paying two or three weaving baskets (*imbale*) or walking around the pounding area (*oshini*) in the palace. Households could be penalized with the payment of bags of mahangu millet, replacing the death penalty as a form of punishment.

Participants had mixed feelings regarding the current worthiness of Omwele Gwoshipika. Some believed it should be returned to preserve culture and tradition, especially if traditional leaders still possess the knowledge to use it. Others argued that its character has been lost and that traditional authorities govern through different means, using official stamps from the king.

Historically, Omwele Gwoshipika was stored in the arsenal of the palace and women did not carry Omwele Gwoshipika, but they were responsible for safeguarding it to prevent theft.

Participants expressed mixed feelings about the restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika to Namibia. Some supported its return to preserve cultural heritage and revive traditional practices, and the return will be essential for preserving Aawambo history and countering Western influences. Others were sceptical, doubting its return with its original character intact.

If Omwele Gwoshipika were to return to Namibia, participants suggested it should be stored in local museums or the palace's arsenal and proposed a significant celebratory event to welcome its return. Although, opinions varied on the possibility of reintegrating an artefact into the community after a long absence. Some believed it could be reintegrated, emphasizing its cultural value, while others thought it would not be possible, given the changing times.

The study also included a comparison of the physical design, production, materials, and rituals associated with Omwele Gwoshipika within Aawambo communities and the restituted artefact from the Berlin Ethnographic Museum. It highlighted the historical significance of this artefact within Aawambo culture.

In summary, this research delves into various aspects of Omwele Gwoshipika, from its traditional uses and consequences on contemporary considerations of its worthiness, restitution, and preservation in local museums. It also compares Omwele Gwoshipika in Aawambo communities with the restituted artefact in Berlin, shedding light on its cultural and historical importance.

6.1. Recommendations

In the context of the study and in consultation with the source communities, the following are recommended.

It has become evident that some of the source communities request that Omwele Gwoshipika is returned so that it can be transformed again. This process of heritagisation in which historical artefacts are turned into objects of display and exhibition, with a notable impact on the present, where the young generation can learn about them or can use that to influence, for instance, their creativity. Hence, they are requesting the preservation, and presentation of Omwele Gwoshipika, to be kept in local museums and palaces to create a sense of heritage and history.

Some source communities have recommended the reinterpreting of the cultural significance of Omwele Gwoshipika where it can go through a deliberate process of changing or shifting its original cultural values to turn it into something else, such designing replicas, that might be used for the original purpose, but it can be sold to generate income for the source communities.

The source community under study recommended that all the seven Aawambo kingdoms (Uukwambi, Uukwanyama, Ongandjera, Ombalantu, Uukwaluudhi, Uukolonkadhi and Ombandja) should have a research committee in a place like Ondonga kingdom has, to attend to various research topics about Aawambo culture and traditions. This will smoothen and facilitate the research processes and avoid the delays through gatekeeping.

The source community expressed interest in having further research conducted around Omwele Gwoshipika to continue extensive exploration of the other topic/area that were not covered in this study.

This will allow the documentation of the information surrounding the creation, use and keeping in accordance with Aawambo culture among others of the Omwele Gwoshipika.

The study recommends the institution of high education to recognise the contribution of source communities who are well versed in the aspect of culture and tradition in their respective communities. They should be regarded as the authorities on their culture and heritage. In that regard, the source communities will not have their cultural knowledge and practices dismissed or marginalized. This will avoid the position taken by the researchers, especially from the west, who

often are considered as experts in the curation, preservation, and study of artefacts, which can reinforce their perceived expertise and legitimacy in discussions about the artefacts.

The source communities in this study have initiated the use of *iinima yetu*, our belongings, to refer to the artefact. This is a powerful and meaningful approach to curation and engagement. This approach emphasizes the key principles of cultural respect and recognition. By using a terminology that reflects the artefacts as "belongings" or "our things," the source communities acknowledge the cultural significance of these objects to the source communities. As such, the terminology fosters a personal and emotional connection between the source communities and the belonging. It emphasizes that these items are not just historical objects but an integral part of the community's identity and history. The source communities are empowered to feel a sense of ownership and stewardship over these items. This can lead to increased interest, engagement, and a commitment to preserving and sharing their cultural heritage. This approach encourages active participation and collaboration and interaction between the items/belongings and source communities. It recognises that the source communities are stakeholders in the interpretation, use and care of these belongings. The use of this terminology makes the *iinima yetu* more relatable and understandable to a broader audience. It humanizes the items and helps bridge the gap between the communities and the items.

This brings crucial aspects of active engagement for the source communities in decision-making processes, including naming and interpreting artefacts, to ensure that the terminology and approach are respectful and meaningful to those who have a deep connection to the objects. This practice can lead to more inclusive and culturally sensitive practices.

7. Reference list

- Afrikaans-Deutsche Kulturgemeinschaft. (1980). *The population groups of South West Africa*. IDAF documents: A.D.K. booklet; 2-3.
- Agorsah, E. K. (1977). Restitution of cultural material to Africa. *Africa Spectrum*, 12. (3), 305-308. Retrieved from <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/black-studies-fac>
- Aksan, H., Kisac, B., Aydin, M., & Demirbuken, S. (2009). Symbolic interaction theory. World Conference on Educational Sciences. *Procedial Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (2009) 902-904.
- Becker, H. (2006). New things after Independence: Gender and traditional authorities in post-colonial Namibia. *Journal of Southern African studies*. Volume 32, Number 1. University of Western Cape.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism. Perspective and method*. University of California. Collections Trust. (2020). Restitution and Repatriation. Retrieved from <https://collectiontrust.org.uk/cultural-property-advice/restitution&repatriation>
- David. M. (2020, August 19). Little boy accused of murder. *Informante*.
- Dragon, I. & Isaic-Maniu. (2013). Snowball sampling completion. *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences*. Volume 5, Number 2, pp-160-177.
- Ella, S. (1938). Ovambo knives. *Annals of the South African Museum*. Vol. 24.
- eNCA-News. (2018). *Namibia calls for the return of cultural artefacts from Germany*. Retrieved from www.enca.com
- Kivunja, C. & Kuyini, A. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education* 6 (5): 26-41. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v6n5p26>
- Kenya National Archives. (2020). *Traditional weapons*. Retrieved from <https://www.artandculture.google.com>
- Menges. W. (2005, May 208). Knife stabbing spree suspect found guilty on triple murder counts. *The Namibian*.
- Mbembe, A. (2021). *Out of Dark Night. Essay on Decolonization*. Columbia University Press
- Mumbula. M. (2004). Namibia: Decontaminating the Namibian past. *New Era*
- Mwafangeyo. J. (1980). Namibia Arts and Crafts symposium. Guide to exhibits. Art Ultra Press.
- Mwatondange, R., Nghishiko, J. & Silvester, J. (2020). *Final Object selection: Project committee meeting, 20th January 2020*. Gerda Henkel Stiftung.
- Nzewi, U.S. (2014). *The art of weapons selections from the African collection*. Hood Museum of Art. Retrieved from <https://hoodmuseumdartmouth.edu/>

- Reucher, G. (2019). *German museum returns stolen colonial era artefacts*. Retrieved from <https://p.dv.com/p/3EE.k>
- Salokoski, M. (2006). *How Kings are made. How kingship changes. A study of rituals and ritual change in pre-colonial and colonial Owamboland, Namibia*. Academic Dissertation. University of Helsinki.
- Sarr, F., & Savoy. B. (2018). *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a new relational ethics*. Ministere de la culture. Retrieved from <https://www.about/africa-de>
- Sheetheni, A. (2015). *A missio-cultural understanding of death and death rituals of the Oshiwambo tribe and response of the ministry and mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)*. University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- Shigwedha, V. (2000). *The material culture of the seven kingdom*. History facilitator. UNAM Northern Campus, Oshakati.
- Shigwedha, V. (2000, July 21). *The meaning of a necklace: Oshinyenye & Ondiwi. The Namibian*. P. 4
- Shigwedha, V. (2004). *Pre-colonial costumes of the Aawambo: Significant changes under colonialism and construct of post-colonial identity*. Windhoek, Namibia; University of Namibia.
- Sileyew, K., J. (2019). *Research Design and Methodology*. Dol:10.5772/intechopen.85731.
- Silverster, J. & Shiweda, N. (2020). *The return of the sacred stones of the Ovambo kingdoms: Restitution and revision of the past*. Dol: 10.29311mas.v18i1.3236.
- Silvester, J., Kautondokwa, N. H., & Shikongeni, P. N. (2019). *Oombale dhi ihaka "A bond that cannot be broken"* Museum Association of Namibia.
- Simelane-Mnisi, S. (2018). *Ensuring Research Integrity and Ethical Management of Data. Role & Importance of ethics in research*. Retrieved from Dol:10.4018/978-1-5225-2730-5.ch001
- Simiyasa. M. (2016, November 6). *Man dies after stabbed at Otjiwarongo. Nampa*. Retrieved from www.nampa.org
- The Open University (2019). *An introduction to material culture*. Retrieved from <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-art/visual-art/introduction-material-culture/content-section-o>
- Van Why, B. (2020). *Research design and methods part 1*. University of the Western Cape.



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: UNAM-DEC-HSS/09/04/2021 **Date:** 31/05/2021

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralised Research Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the DEC's at the Faculty/Centre/Campus/Unit.

Title of Project: A STUDY ON HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORALY SIGNIFICANCE OF OMWELE GWOSHIPIKA AMONG AAWAMBO COMMUNITIES

Nature/Level of Project: MASTERS (NON HEALTH)

Researcher: NDAMIAN NGHISHIDIMBWA HANGULA

Student Number: 201101812

Supervisor: DR. M. AKAWA- SHIKUFA & MR. GOODMAN GWASIRA

Faculty: HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Take note of the following:

- (a) Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the DEC. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
- (b) Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the DEC and the CRP.
- (c) The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the DEC (through the Chairperson of the Faculty/Centre/Campus/Unit Research Ethics Committee) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by DEC and the CRP.
- (d) Approval is valid for a period of one year from the date of issue.
- (e) A mid-year report to be submitted to DEC (where applicable), thereafter to the CRP
- (f) The DEC retains the right to:
 - (i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - (ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.
 - (iii) *Cognizance and the observation of Namibian's Research Science and Technology Act of 2004 which makes it compulsory for Non-Namibian Based researchers to obtain the compulsory Research Permit from the National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) FIRST, BEFORE the research can commence.*

The DEC wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Kalusopa", with a small flourish at the end.

Prof. T. Kalusopa, DEC Chairperson - FHSS

Ndamian N Hangula
Student Number: 201101812
Cell: 0816031749
Email: damianngshidimbwa@gmail.com
26 January 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

Approved research title: A study on the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele/Omukonda Gwoshipika among Aawambo community.

I am Ndamian Nghishidimbwa Hangula, a student at the University of Namibia pursuing a Master of Art degree in History material culture. My research topic is focused on Omwele Gwoshipika a prestigious knife of Aawambo. As per the requirement of my study, I am mandated to do an interview with the five selected Aawambo kingdom traditional leaders. The five-selected kingdom for the study are Ondonga, Ongandjera, Uukwanyama, Uukwaluudhi and Uukwambi. My research interview will mainly focus on Aawambo traditional knives specifically Omwele Gwoshipika.

Therefore, I would like to make an appointment with your Kingdom leader so we engage through an interview about my research topic.

Kindly assist me to schedule an interview with the Kingdom/Chieftom/Queendom leader in February 2022.

Thank you so much for your co-operation

For enquiries

Kindly consult my research supervisor Dr. Martha Akawa
Cell: 0813509170
Tell: 0612063845

Yours Faithfully

Ndamian N Hangula

Student

 26/01/2022

Annexure A: Ombapila yeyindilo

Ndamian N Hangula
Onomola yomulongwa: 201101812
Onomola yongodhi: 0816031749
Email: damiannghishidimbwa@gmail.com
26 Januari 2022

Omusimanekwa

Oshipalanyolo shapitikwa okuninga omapekapeko: Omapekapeko kombinga hesimano lyOmwele Gwoshipika pandjokonona nopethimbo lyongashingeyi mokati kAawambo.

Edhina lyandje ongame Ndamian Nghishidimbwa Hangula, omunasikola koshiputudhilo sha UNAM, andilongo oshilongwa shondjokona minima yomithigululwako gWAawambo ponkantu hondongo ho Master Degree. Omapekapeko gandje ogatala kOmwele Gwoshipika, Omwele ngoka gwasimana mokati kAawambo. Pampango yelongo Iya UNAM, ongo ndili omunasikola onda pumbwa opo ndininge omapekapeko momalelo geli gatano gAawambo opo ndi pule Aaleli yopamuthigululwakalo kombinga yesimano lyomwele Gwoshipika. Omalelo gopamuthigululwakalo ngoka nda pumbwa ndipulemo uyelele shi nasha nOmwele Gwoshipika ogo ne, Ondonga, Ongandjera, Ovakwanyama, Uukwaluudhi nUukwambi. Omapekapeko gandje ogeli gatala unene koombele dhopamuthigululwakalo gWAawambo, unene tu Omwele Gwoshipika.

Onkene ota ndi indile nesimaneko enene, opo wukwathelendje Omusimanekwa, ndiye kombala yeni yeledo lyopamuthigululwako, opo ndiye ndipule uyelele kombinga yesimano lyOmwele Gwoshipika, tandi shiningi pamukalo gonkundathana naleli yopamuthigululwakalo.

Nesimaneko enene, neyifufupiko, ota ndi ku indile opo wukwathelendje opo ndiye tukundathane nomukwanilwa/Nelenga Enene/nOhamba yomoshitopolwa shoye mu April 2022.

Tangi unene kelongelo kuumwe lyoye.

Omapulo shi nasha nomapekapeko ngoka ta ndi ningi,
Kwatathana nomutaleli gwandje gomapekapeko, Omundohotola Martha Akawa.
Onomola yongodhi: 0813509170
Otelefona: 0612063845

Gweni
Ndamian N Hangula
Omunasikola

Annexure B: Interview Guide-English

Topic: A STUDY ON HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORALY SIGNIFICANCE OF OMWELE GWOSHIPIKA AMONG AAWAMBO COMMUNITIES

1.3.1 Historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika

- (a) What is your understanding of Omwele Gwoshipika? Do you know or have you ever heard of Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (b) What is your view on the significance of Omwele in Aawambo culture?
- (c) In your understanding, what values did Omwele Gwoshipika had in the past?
- (d) Aawambo Traditional leaders (king) in the past had exercised the power of commands through Omwele Gwoshipika: What kind of commands or order would the king give through Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (e) In what circumstances would the traditional leaders use Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (f) What would be the effects of an individual resisting the power of commands through Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (g) Nowadays, do you think Omwele Gwoshipika still possess the same values and power of commands as it had in the past? If it possesses different values, what would be the current values?
- (h) How was Omwele Gwoshipika being preserved?
- (I) Do women also carry Omwele Gwoshipika? If not, what would be the reason for women not carrying Omwele Gwoshipika?

1.3.2. Restitution of Omwele Gwoshipika back to Namibia

- (a) At the moment Omwele Gwoshipika is housed in the Berlin Ethnological Museum in Germany and supposed to have returned to Namibia: what is your view on the returning of Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (b) Where would you want Omwele Gwoshipika to be kept?
- (c) What more would you want to be done with Omwele Gwoshipika when it returns to Namibia?

- (d) Is it possible to re-introduce a cultural artefact back into their societal environments of origin to see them re-claim their proper function and use, after such a long absence?
- (e) Do you think the values of Omwele Gwoshipika will be preserved in its original context among Aawambo communities or in local museums?
- (f) What is your view on other items of Aawambo material culture that are still in foreign countries?

1.3.3. Physical design structure of Omwele Gwoshipika

Note: the third objective data will be obtained by comparing the image of Omwele Gwoshipika that is in the Berlin Ethological museum, in relation to Omwele Gwoshipika that is available (if there is one) in the selected Aawambo communities.

- (a) What changes occurred in the manufacturing of Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (b) Do people still use the same material to design Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (c) It is designed by special black smith?
- (d) Are there aspects of Intangible Cultural Heritage surrounding the manufacturing; what are they if any?

Annexure C: Interview Guide-Oshindonga

Oshipalanyolo: Omapekapeko kombinga yesimano lyOmwele Gwoshipika monakuziwa nomethimbo lyongashingeyi mokati kAawambo.

Elandulathano lyomapulo

1.3.1 Esimano lyomwele Gwoshipika pandjokonona nopethimbo lyongashingeyi

- (a) Omwele Gwoshipika owuguviteko ngini? Omwele Gwoshipika owugushi nenge oweguva nale?
- (b) Pamayiyuvo goye Omwele oguna esimano lyashike pamuthigululwakalo gwAawambo?
- (c) Patseyo yoye mwene Omwele Gwoshipika oguna ongushu yashike monakuziwa?

(d) Aaleli yopamuthigululwakalo gwaawambo monakuziwa oya kala nokugandja oonkondo nenge omalombwelo okupitila mOmwele Gwoshipika. Omalombwelo geni ngoka Omukwanilwa havulu okugandja okupitila mOmwele Gwoshipika?

(e) Opompito dhini Omukwanilwa havulu okulongitha oonkondo dhOmwele Gwoshipika?

(f) Egeelo lyashike kwali ha li pewa omuntu ngoka ta ndi elombwelo ndoka kwali ha li ningwa okupitila mOmwele Gwoshipika?

(g) Methimbo ndi lyongashingeyi, Omwele Gwoshipika natango oguna nga ongushu noonkondo dhelombwelo ndi kwa li guna monakuziwa? Nongele methimbo lyongashisheyi oguna oonkondo dhimwe dhi ilile, oonkondo nenge ongushu ndjono oyini?

(h) Omwele Gwoshipika okwa li hapungulwa ngini?

(I) Omeme nayo oyali hayahumbata Omwele Gwoshipika? Nongele ihayahumbata omolwashike ihayahumbata Omwele Gwoshipika?

1.3.2. Egalulo lyOmwele Gwoshipika ko Namibia

(a) Pethimbo ndi lyongashingeyi Omwele Gwoshipika oguli gwapungulwa ko Berlin Ethnological Museum ko Germany nogwapumbwa okugalukila ko Namibia. Pamayiyuvo goye oto ti koshike kegalulo lyOmwele Gwoshipika koNamibia?

(b) Omwele Gwoshipika openi guna okukala nokupungulwa?

(c) Oshike ishewe shoka wahala sha ningwapo kombinga yomwele Gwoshipika shi tagugalulilwa ko Namibia?

(d) Ota shi shiwa nga Oshinima shopamuthigululwakalo shi galulilwe moshigwana shina ongushu yasho ndji sha li sha nuninwa konima yethimbo ele lyapitapo shi kwali shakuthwamo moshitopolwa?

(e) Pamayiyuvo goye Ongushu yoyene yOmwele Gwoshipika nayikalekwepo mitopolwa yAawambo nenge omesuem?

(f) Pamayiyuvo goye oto ti ko shike kinima yopamuthigululwakalo yAawambo mbyoka yili natango kilongo yopondje

1.3.3. Okutholomwapo kOmwele Gwoshipika

Tsey: Elalakano etitatu lyomapekapeko, uyelele ota wu monikwa mokupitila mokuyelakanitha omathano gOmwele Gwoshipika ngoka guli koBerlin Ethological museum, mokufathanitha nOmwele Gwoshipika ngoka guli muwa yomitopolwa yAawambo mbyoka yahogololwa ngele Omwele Gwoshipika omo nga guli.

- (a) Eyoloko lyashike lyeyapo mokunduluka nenge mokutholomapo Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (b) Natango Aantu oha longitha nga inima yafathana nambi yomethimbo lyonale paku etapo Omwele Gwoshipika?
- (c) Omutholomo gOmwele Gwoshipika oha gu etatwopo kahambuli yeni?
- (d) Opena inima yimwe hayiningwapo shi omuntu te etapo Omwele Gwoshipika? Oshiholelwa, ihopopitha omuntu una omuntu ta tholomapo Omwele Gwoshipika? Ngele opena sha olyini?

ANNEXURE D: INFORMED CONSENT

UREC Annex 5F: Informed Consent for Qualitative Studies

INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Informed Consent for Traditional Leaders, and expertise in Aawambo cultures who I am inviting to participate in a research, titled "A study on the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities".

Name of Principal Investigator:	NDAMIAN NGHISHIDIMBWA HANGULA
Name of Sponsor:	GERDER HENKEL FOUNDATION

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (this section, to share information about the study with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you choose to participate)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.

PART I: INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

I am NDAMIAN NGHISHIDIMBWA HANGULA, working for the National Archives of Namibia, pursuing a Master's degree in History, Material Culture at the University of Namibia. I am doing a research on Omwele Gwoshipika which was a very prestigious object of historical status in the social and political structure of Aawambo communities during the 19th and 20th centuries. I am going to give you information and invite you to be part of this research. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in the research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to stop as we go through the information and I will take time to explain. If you have questions later, you can ask them of me or of another researcher.

Purpose of the Research

Omwele Gwoshipika is an object of historical status in the social and political structure of Aawambo communities. Unlike other Aawambo traditional ordinary knives, Omwele Gwoshipika excelled as a tool for the king to exercise political and social authorities in Aawambo subjects. We believe that you can help us by telling us what you know about the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika. We also would like to know the historical power of commands attached to Omwele Gwoshipika in the socio-political context of Aawambo communities and establish if Omwele Gwoshipika still holds the same decree of commands in the modern Aawambo communities. I would like to know how Omwele Gwoshipika was being preserved and how it's being preserved today. Further, I would like to know if the local blacksmith still manufactures Omwele Gwoshipika and hear your views regarding the returning back of Omwele Gwoshipika from Germany.

Type of Research Intervention

This research will involve your participation in an interview that will take about one hour.

Participant Selection

You are being invited to take part in this research because I feel that your experience as a traditional leader can contribute much to my understanding and knowledge of the material culture of Aawambo communities. Moreover, as a traditional leader you are at a good position to refer for me the respondents who you think they are fit and capable of answering the research questions.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose to participate, you have all the right to decide if you would like to be recorded or not. You are guaranteed fully anonymity and your name will not be mentioned. You are free to withdraw from the study at any given time during the interview session. Nothing, will happen to you if you refuse not to participate in the study.

Procedures

We are asking you to help us learn more about the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities. We are inviting you to take part in this

research project. If you accept, you will be asked to participate in an interview with Ndamian Nghishidimbwa Hangula.

During the interview, I will sit down with you in a comfortable place at [location of the interview]. If it is better for you, the interview can take place in your home or a friend's home. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but I /the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The information recorded is confidential, and no one else except [Dr. Martha Akawa-Shikufa and Mr. Goodman Gwasira (Supervisors) and Mr. Jeremy Silverster, representing the sponsor.] will access to the information documented during your interview. The entire interview will be recorded, but no-one will be identified by name in the recording. The recording will be kept at Museum Association of Namibia and at National Archives of Namibia.

Duration

The research takes place over one months in total. During that time, we will visit you for interviewing you and each interview will last for about one hour each. The interview process will stop when the researcher acquired sufficient information about the study.

Risks

The discussion is on opinions on Aawambo community beliefs, and in general no personal information is sought. "There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. However, we do not wish for this to happen. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided any incentive to take part in the research. However, we will give you [provide a figure, if money is involved] for your time, and travel expense (if applicable).

Confidentiality

The research being done in the community may draw attention and if you participate you may be asked questions by other people in the community. We will not be sharing information about you to anyone outside of the research team. The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a code on it instead of your name. Only the researchers will know what your code is and we will lock that information up with a lock and key. It will not be shared with or given to anyone except [Dr. Martha Akawa-Shikufa (supervisor), Mr. Goodman Gwasira (Co-supervisor) and Dr. Jeremy Silvester (MAN, representing Gender Henkel foundation the sponsor)].

Sharing the Results

Nothing that you tell me today will be shared with anybody outside the research team, and nothing will be attributed to you by name. The knowledge that I get from this research will be shared with you and your community before it is made widely available to the public.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not wish to do so, and choosing to participate will not affect your job or job-related evaluations in any way. You may stop participating in the [discussion or interview] at any time that you wish without your job being affected. I will give you an opportunity at the end of the interview/discussion to review your remarks, and you can ask to modify or remove portions of those, if you do not agree with my notes or if I did not understand you correctly.

Who to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact [Ndamian Nghishidimbwa Hangula, Cell: 0816031749, email: damiannghishidimbwa@gmail.com].

This research has been reviewed and approved by the relevant Ethics Review Committee at the University of Namibia, which is a committee whose task it is to make sure that research participants are protected from harm. The committee reports to the University's Centre for Research Services. If you wish to contact this Centre, please call +264 61 206 4673 or send an e-mail to research@unam.na.

You can ask me any questions about any part of the research study if you wish to. Do you have any questions?

PART II: CERTIFICATE OF CONSENT

I have been invited to participate in research about the historical and contemporary significance of Omwele Gwoshipika among Aawambo communities.

(This section is mandatory.)

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked, have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

.....

Name of Participant (print)

.....

Signature of Participant

.....

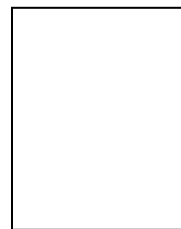
Date (day/month/year)

If illiterate

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

.....

Name of Witness (print)



Thumb print of Participant

.....

Signature of Witness

.....

Date (day/month/year)

Statement by the Researcher/Person taking Consent

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

.....

Name of Researcher/Person taking Consent (print)

.....

Signature

.....

Date (day/month/year)

If Assisted by an Interpreter: Statement by Interpreter

I have accurately interpreted the information sheet to the potential participant in (insert name of target language), and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done.

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been interpreted correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

I declare that I will not divulge any information that I interpret during this research intervention to a third party outside this study.

.....
Name of Interpreter (print) Signature

.....
Date (day/month/year)