



Crossing the River by Feeling Stones: Domesticating Christianity for Promoting Social Justice Competences in Lesotho's Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

There is a diversity of religions in Lesotho with Christianity being a dominant religion. The unique religious landscape along with pressing social justice challenges provide a backdrop for the study that explores an innovative approach to domesticating Christianity within the secondary school education system in Lesotho. The primary goal of this study is to foster social justice competences by adapting Christianity to address prevalent societal issues unique to Lesotho. Instead of teaching orthodox Christianity, the study suggests a process of domestication, promoting enduring competences that are relevant to the specific challenges in Lesotho. The study recommends an interfaith approach that accommodates all students while retaining their convictions. The study advocates for teacher training, community engagement, and a focus on universal principles of love, compassion, and justice, rather than specific Christian doctrine, to empower students to address real-world social issues while preserving religious and cultural diversity. In addition to presenting the proposed approach, the study highlights key considerations, including inclusivity and consultation with relevant stakeholders. These elements are essential to ensure the success of this innovative approach, which aims to harmoniously align Christianity with Lesotho's unique cultural and religious context while cultivating social justice competences.

Keywords: Christianity, social justice, competences, domesticating

1. Introduction

Lesotho is a small enclaved nation in Southern Africa. It is notable not only for its rich cultural heritage and religious diversity but also for its proactive pursuit of quality education, marked by a landscape of curriculum reforms under the Ministry of Education and Training (Selepe, 2016; Kurata, 2023a). Since the end of British colonial rule in 1966, there have been various attempts at curriculum and assessment reforms, albeit with limited success. The overarching goal has been to enhance the quality of education for national development, with a specific emphasis on social justice among others (Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], 2009). Notably, some positive outcomes of these efforts include the introduction of Compulsory and Free Primary Education (FPE) from 2000 to 2006 (Morojele, 2012). Additionally, the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy of 2018 (LIEP 2018) was formulated, grounded in the principle of inclusive education that recognizes and supports diversity in all respects (MoET, 2018). Certainly, these initiatives reflect Lesotho's commitment to expanding access to education for all Basotho and cultivating relevant competences, including social justice, at both the basic and secondary education levels.

Despite Lesotho's progressive endeavours in nurturing social justice competences, significant social challenges persist, undermining Lesotho's government's efforts to promote social justice within the educational sector and society at large. These challenges encompass low retention rates at primary and secondary levels, gender inequality, violence, bullying, limited access to education, inadequate school facilities, the burden of HIV/AIDS, and pervasive poverty (De Wet, 2007; Tlali, Mukurunge & Bhila, 2019; UNICEF Lesotho, 2021).

In response to these challenges, Lesotho drew inspiration from the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular emphasis on Goal 4, highlighting the importance of "Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education" (UNESCO, 2017). As elucidated by Stabback (2016), SDG4 encompasses the development of essential life skills and attitudes, some of which are closely associated with the pursuit of social justice. Moreover, Lesotho found guidance in Africa's Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020–2030, both of which advocate for inclusive and equitable quality education (African Union, 2015; SADC, 2020). The emphasis placed on inclusive and equitable quality education underscores the global determination to foster social justice competences to address pervasive social injustices.

Drawing inspiration from these international and regional frameworks, Lesotho implemented the Educational Sector Strategic Plan for 2016-2026, designed to align with the country's evolving needs, which include a focus on social justice (MoET, 2016). Furthermore, after numerous attempts to develop a curriculum that resonates with the nation's requirements, Lesotho eventually crafted a comprehensive Curriculum and Assessment Policy in 2009 (CAP 2009). Notably, among the categorized learning areas within the curriculum is the "Personal, Spiritual, and Social" learning area, wherein Religious Education (RE) is expected to play a significant role. One of the critical objectives of this learning area is the cultivation of skills and attitudes

related to social justice. In this context, the process of aligning Christian values, principles, and teachings with Basotho customs, culture, and traditions holds the potential to promote social justice competences and address contemporary social concerns effectively (MoET, 2009).

This discussion primarily emphasizes the government's crucial role in nurturing social justice competences. However, it is important to recognize the deep historical impact of Christianity in Lesotho, especially within its education system. Basically, missionaries arrived in Lesotho in the 1830s with the aim of establishing schools to promote literacy and hasten the conversion of Basotho people to Christianity (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Phillips, 2023). These schools, affiliated with various Christian denominations such as Catholicism, Protestantism, and Afro-Christian Indigenous Churches, now represent about 90% of educational institutions in Lesotho (Khama, 2000). The process of conversion led by these schools and churches was far from a mutual exchange but rather a radical transformation that marginalized Basotho's cultural religious practices. Gill (1997) and Motaba (1997) noted that the educational focus on Christian values through Christian Education (CE) often disregarded other religious beliefs, including those of Basotho. This tension according to Mokotso (2015) and Asamoah and Kpalam (2023), persists today in Lesotho's secondary schools, leading to a perception that Religious Education (RE) predominantly centres on Christian Religious Education (CRE). This historical context shapes the current dynamics of RE, highlighting a need for a more inclusive approach that respects diverse beliefs and values while fostering social justice competences in education.

Today, there is a noticeable gap between the teachings of CRE and the pressing social justice issues unique to Basotho society. Despite the inclusion of RE in secondary schools, Lesotho still grapples with pervasive social injustices (UNICEF Lesotho, 2021). This gap can potentially lead to a deficiency in social justice competences among secondary school students. To bridge this divide, there is a compelling need to domesticate Christianity within the local context, a process known as "inculturation" (Akah, Obiwulu & Ajah, 2020). From the perspective of Akah, et. al. (2020), the inculturation process involves adapting Christian values, principles, and teachings to align with Basotho customs, culture, and traditions. The ultimate aim is to foster enduring social justice competences necessary for addressing contemporary social concerns, including pervasive poverty and inequalities. Notably, the concept of inculturation is not foreign to Lesotho's context. As argued by Mokotso (2015), there is observable evidence of such adaptation of Christianity, as seen in practices such as the prevalence of Afro-Christian Indigenous Churches.

This conceptual paper contends that Lesotho's educational system, profoundly influenced by Christianity across social and educational domains, possesses the potential to catalyse positive social change, particularly through Religious Education (RE) in secondary schools. The paper advocates for an RE approach that embraces inclusivity, equality, fairness, and accommodation for non-Christian beliefs. Furthermore, it asserts that the process of inculturation can lead to a lasting social transformation by instilling values of compassion, equity, and social responsibility deeply rooted in Basotho's culture among secondary school students. This approach can effectively address the pervasive social issues in Lesotho, including inequalities, violence, and poverty. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that the inculturation process is complex, as acknowledged by John Paul II (1990), and it requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including the government, the church, and society. Therefore, to comprehend this adaptive approach to harmonizing Christianity with traditional Basotho cultural values, the metaphor of 'crossing the river by feeling stones' becomes relevant. According to Jingzhong et al. (2010), this metaphor signifies the need for a thoughtful, gradual, and experimental approach to integrating Christianity with traditional Basotho cultural values, enabling an effective response to contemporary social challenges faced by Basotho.

2. The underpinning theory

The underpinning theory for analysing the study "Crossing the River by Feeling Stones: Domesticating Christianity for Promoting Social Justice Competences in Lesotho's Secondary Schools" is critical theory. Critical theory originated in the mid-20th century from scholars associated with the Frankfurt School and is premised upon the idea that there is no way of knowing the world better than by anticipating a better world (Stromquist, 2014). According to Horkheimer (1972), a critical theory is adequate if it questions power structures, and ideologies, and fosters social transformation. Critical theory was a useful framework to assess whether this initiative truly empowers all students, including those with differing beliefs, due to its commitment to questioning power structures and fostering social transformation.

3. The role of Christianity in Lesotho

Christianity occupies a central place within Lesotho's religious landscape, with an estimated 90% of the population identifying as Christian. The country is home to several major Christian denominations, including the Roman Catholic Church, Lesotho Evangelical Church, Presbyterian Church, and Anglican Church. Alongside Christianity, smaller segments of the population adhere to other faiths, such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous African belief systems (United States Department of State, 2017). It is worth noting that many Basotho, while identifying with Christianity, maintain connections to indigenous beliefs and practices, resulting in a syncretic religious landscape (Hinckley, 2023). This syncretism reflects the coexistence of Christianity with indigenous belief systems, significantly shaping the religious and cultural identity of the Basotho nation.

Christianity has long been regarded as a foundational source for instilling moral principles in Lesotho. Ngussa and Makewa (2018) emphasize the pivotal role Christianity has played in shaping the moral and ethical values of individuals and communities in Lesotho. The moral teachings and values propagated by Christianity, including compassion, forgiveness, and charity, have left a profound impact on the daily lives and social interactions of the Basotho people. Furthermore, Kurata (2023b) highlights the influence of Christianity on Lesotho's education system, where Religious Education is an integral part of the curriculum. This incorporation reflects the belief that education serves as a critical tool in combating moral decline and nurturing virtuous individuals who are not only well-versed in academic subjects but are also guided by ethical and moral principles.

For Religious Education (RE) to be efficiently sustained, Adamo (2015) argues for a re-evaluation of biblical hermeneutics in Africa, aiming to contextualize the Gospel's truths and make them relevant to the African context. In this endeavour, the concept of "Crossing the River by Feeling Stones" becomes pertinent, signifying a gradual, experiential approach to promoting social justice competences, with domesticated RE serving as a cornerstone in this journey. It is vital to acknowledge that the syncretic nature of beliefs requires culturally sensitive RE that respects diverse belief systems to ensure that the promotion of social justice competences is inclusive and does not inadvertently alienate or marginalize those who do not adhere to Christian beliefs. Presently, the Ministry of Education and Training's inclusive education initiative has faced criticism for equating RE with Christian Religious Education (CRE) and not being fully inclusive of other religions (Ntombana & Mokotso, 2018).

Social justice challenges in Lesotho

3.1 Poverty

Lesotho faces a range of pressing social justice issues that significantly threaten the well-being of its nation. According to the Lesotho Poverty Assessment, the poverty rate in Lesotho fell from 56.6% to 49.7% between 2002 and 2017, driven by a reduction in inequality due to expanded social protection programs and increased wage incomes among the poor (The World Bank, 2019; Kali, 2020). Poverty remains a stark and persistent challenge, with a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line, struggling to access basic necessities like food, clean water, and healthcare. In the context of education, poverty has a profound impact on students, especially in the context of Lesotho. Many students from impoverished backgrounds struggle to access quality education due to limited resources, impacting their academic progress and opportunities (UNICEF-Lesotho, 2011). Furthermore, United Nations (2019) notes that due to poverty, students may lack access to nutritious food and healthcare can lead to malnutrition and health problems, hindering their ability to concentrate in school. In addition, students may lack of educational materials or even be restricted to pursue studies in higher education. As a result, students may perform badly in schools or suffer negatively affecting their school performance and sometime causes psychological and emotional distress.

The fight against poverty is central to the pursuit of social justice in the nation (International Monetary Fund, 2006). While the government has developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRS) with medium-term objectives and strategies to address poverty and other social justice challenges, (Kali, 2020) maintains that poverty remains widespread, particularly in rural areas, where four out of five poor citizens reside.

3.2 Gender inequality

Gender inequality is another prominent issue in Lesotho. Disparities between genders persist in various aspects of life, including education, employment opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes (Amnesty International, 2022). Within the context of Lesotho's schools, gender-based inequalities are particularly pronounced. Research conducted by The World Bank in 2019 highlighted the persistence of gender-based disparities in educational attainment. These disparities are evident in enrolment rates, completion of education, and access to vital educational resources. It is explicated that girls and young women often face formidable barriers to accessing quality education, potentially perpetuating cycles of gender inequality and constraining their future prospects. Admittedly, these disparities can lead to reduced educational and career opportunities for girls, limiting their prospects for a brighter future. In this regard, closing these gender gaps in education and promoting gender equality could be essential for achieving social justice and ensuring that all citizens have equal opportunities for personal and professional growth (Morojele, 2012).

Efforts to address gender inequality within Lesotho's schools are paramount for achieving social justice. The Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho together UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women, jointly launched an Education Plus initiative. This initiative focuses on empowering adolescent girls and young women (United Nations, 2022). Recognizing these challenges is not limited to education sector; it is also acknowledged by civil society organizations within Lesotho. Notably, the Lesotho Federation of Women Lawyers of Lesotho (FIDA – Lesotho) organization actively campaigns against gender-based abuse and various forms of discrimination rooted in gender (French Institute of South Africa, 2022). These dedicated efforts underscore the importance of addressing the complex issue of gender inequality for social justice.

3.3 Healthcare access

Healthcare access remains a serious challenge in Lesotho, and this issue also extends to the context of schools, particularly in rural areas. In these remote regions, the availability of healthcare facilities is often limited or entirely absent, which directly impacts the well-being of students and the overall education system. Students in these areas may face difficulties in receiving timely medical attention, which can affect their attendance and academic performance (The World Bank, 2018).

The government of Lesotho, along with international organizations and NGOs, is working diligently to improve healthcare infrastructure and accessibility, especially in rural areas, to provide a healthier environment for students and other social justice challenges (Schwitters et al, 2022). However, the challenge still persists. There is a need for comprehensive healthcare reform to enhance the well-being and academic success of the student population, aligning with the broader efforts to address the pressing social justice issues related to healthcare access and health outcomes in Lesotho.

3.4 Education disparities

Despite efforts to improve access to education, Lesotho continues to face educational disparities. Seotsanyana and Maitetso (2019) note that one of the key challenges in the Lesotho educational system is the disparity in the quality of education offered to students in different regions of the country. Marginalized and remote communities often face a shortage of qualified teachers, inadequately equipped schools, and a lack of educational resources. One would concur with Moshoeshoe et al., (2019) that the likely result of these disparities is that students in these areas may receive an education that falls significantly short of the standards seen in more affluent and urban regions. In addition, these students may also experience higher dropout rates. This implies that some students are better prepared for the future while others are held back by inadequate educational opportunities. This therefore limits other students' chances to break free from the cycle of poverty and contribute to ongoing social inequalities (United Nations, 2022). These disparities in education require a more reliable remedy to improve access to education and ensure that the quality of education is consistent across all regions.

3.5 Political instability

Lesotho has faced the challenge of maintaining political and economic stability, which has implications for social justice and the overall well-being of its citizens. This view is supported by Mokotso's (2019) assertion that even the optimised political and institutional reforms underway may not bring a perennial solution to Lesotho's political instability. Basically, Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy, ruled by a king as Head of State and a Prime Minister as Head of Government. A 33-member Senate and a 120-member National Assembly govern Lesotho. Lesotho has a long history of political instability largely related to disputes among factions of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) and the politicization of the military (Sejanamane, 2016). Political and economic stability are crucial for promoting social justice and ensuring the well-being of Lesotho's citizens. Addressing political instability and economic hardships is essential for creating a more equitable and just society in Lesotho.

Understanding the concept of domesticating Christianity

Understanding the concept of domesticating Christianity, particularly within the context of secondary education in Lesotho, holds significant importance in shaping the nation's educational and social landscape. Byaruhanga-Akiiki (2013) underscores the need to adapt and integrate Christian values into the African culture to create a lasting impact. This concept is equally relevant in Lesotho's secondary schools, where the aim is to foster social justice competencies through Christian Religious Education (CRE). Mokotso (2021) emphasizes the necessity of rethinking how Christianity is taught in schools, as the current approach heavily reflects colonial influences and struggles to align with the local culture. This misalignment can lead to a loss of relevance and meaning, particularly in the context of promoting social justice competencies.

The process of domesticating Christianity encompasses inculturation, which entails the harmonious coexistence of Christianity and Basotho cultural heritage. This coexistence is essential for the sustainable development of social justice competencies. Metuh (1996) defines inculturation as the process of incorporating Christianity into a specific culture, while Moywaywa (2020) highlights the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine to align with the thought patterns of the people, thus making Christianity feel at home in diverse cultures. Inculturation involves adapting and integrating a foreign religion, Christianity in this case, into the local culture in a way that it becomes a natural part of that culture. This approach aims to maintain the core beliefs and values of Christianity while making it more relatable and relevant to Lesotho.

This approach of inculturation differs from syncretism, which often implies the merging or blending of two or more belief systems, potentially resulting in a new, hybrid belief system. While elements of Christianity may be integrated into local beliefs through syncretism, the focus is on creating a fusion of beliefs, rather than preserving the core of Christianity as a distinct entity. This approach is vital for fostering a sense of belonging and cultural pride. It challenges the current perception that Religious Education (RE) is synonymous with Christian education for all learners, regardless of their religious beliefs (Mokotso, 2021)

The rationale for domesticating Christianity in the context of Lesotho

3.6 Religious Landscape

In Lesotho, a significant portion of the population identifies with Christian beliefs, with the Roman Catholic denomination being the largest (Khama, 2000; Kurata, 2023b). The introduction of Christianity through missionaries in the 1830s has deeply intertwined it with the cultural identity of the Basotho people, shaping their way of life. As Phillips (2023) notes, Christianity in Lesotho often merges with traditional beliefs and practices. An example of this coexistence is the practice of ancestor worship alongside Christianity. Wilbert (2023) emphasizes that Christianity has played a pivotal role in shaping societal norms and providing educational opportunities, particularly through church-owned schools. Therefore, domesticating Christianity within Lesotho's education system aims to align Christian teachings with students' values and principles, reinforcing the importance of social justice within both religious and cultural contexts. This approach fosters religious cohesion, creating an environment where students from diverse religious backgrounds can relate to and appreciate the Christian faith within their cultural context. It promotes unity and shared values among students, contributing to greater inclusivity, where social justice becomes a prevailing ethos.

3.7 Religious Landscape

Lesotho faces several pressing social justice challenges, including poverty, gender inequality, and healthcare disparities, as previously highlighted (Kali, 2020). Despite government initiatives to reduce poverty, the poverty rate only decreased slightly, from 56.6% to 49.7% between 2002 and 2017, as per

The World Bank Group (2019). In addition to this, Lesotho grapples with one of the world's highest rates of HIV/AIDS prevalence, at 23.4%. Furthermore, there are reports of human rights abuses and violence by security forces (US Department of State, 2022). These challenges underscore the need to domesticate Christianity within Lesotho's education system, empowering students to understand both Christian and cultural values to address these social injustices. This approach can make Christianity relevant in addressing real-world issues and promote a sense of responsibility for creating a just society.

3.8 Cultural identity

Lesotho's cultural identity is deeply intertwined with both Christianity and traditional Basotho customs, making the domestication of Christianity a viable approach. The concept of Ubuntu or Botho, prevalent in many cultures, also exists among Basotho. It promotes values like empathy, compassion, and communitarianism (Higgs & Van Niekerk, 2003; Lephoto, 2023), which are essential in encouraging mutual support and social justice. Basotho also practice letsema, where community members come together to help one another with various tasks, fostering social cohesion, shared responsibility, and equitable distribution of resources and labour. These practices are crucial in addressing social issues in Lesotho.

Basotho culture places a strong emphasis on sharing and caring for one another, ensuring that no one in the community goes without essential support during times of need (Chitando, 2007). By acknowledging these customs and values alongside embracing Christian beliefs, this approach has the potential to cultivate social justice competences relevant to addressing real-life issues. It helps students gain a profound appreciation for both their cultural heritage and their Christian faith, promoting social cohesion and a harmonious society.

Strategies for domesticating Christianity in Lesotho's context

3.9 Interdisciplinary Approach

One valuable strategy for the successful domestication of Christianity in Lesotho's secondary schools is the adoption of an interdisciplinary teaching method. This method involves the fusion of traditional educational concepts to create new approaches or explanations, particularly in the context of domesticated Christian education (Mat et al., 2023). By utilizing this approach, students are encouraged to explore the intersections between their faith and the real-world social justice issues they encounter (Bandy, 2011). This approach enables a holistic understanding of how Christian values can be applied to address societal challenges.

3.10 Culturally responsive teaching

Another effective strategy is the implementation of culturally responsive teaching. This approach aims to ensure that students from diverse cultural backgrounds receive fair and equitable treatment in education. It incorporates their cultural values and beliefs into the educational content (Yücel, 2022). In the context of domesticating Christianity, this strategy is highly relevant as it guarantees that Religious Education (RE) respects and integrates students' cultural references throughout their learning experience. By following this approach, teachers can create an inclusive and equitable classroom environment. As Gay (2000) suggests, it encourages teachers to use course content and teaching methods that resonate with the cultural diversity of their students.

3.11 Teachers' Professional Development

Training teachers to effectively integrate domesticated Christian values is a crucial strategy for the success of this educational approach. The readiness and competence of teachers play a pivotal role in curriculum implementation (Tafai and Tsakeni, 2022). Teachers need to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach and promote social justice competences through domesticated Christianity. Professional development programs can be designed to provide teachers with a deep understanding of the specific cultural and religious dynamics at play in Lesotho. This empowers them to effectively convey Christian values in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner.

3.12 Community engagement

Community engagement is a vital aspect of implementing domesticated Christianity within Lesotho's educational system. This strategy involves forming partnerships with local Christian organizations such as the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) and other relevant entities (Bandy, 2011). These partnerships provide students with experiential learning opportunities in real-world contexts, allowing them to develop essential community engagement skills. By collaborating with local organizations, schools can directly involve students in projects addressing social issues, thus applying the principles of domesticated Christianity to tackle real-life challenges. This approach fosters a sense of responsibility and active participation among students, aligning with the goal of promoting social justice through their faith.

Aligning domesticated Christianity with "crossing the river by feeling stones"

The metaphor "crossing the river by feeling stones" is often used to illustrate the process of taking cautious and adaptable steps (Jingzhong et al., 2010). In the context of education, this metaphor beautifully encapsulates the adoption of new learning concepts and the development of competences, particularly social justice in Lesotho's case. The process of domesticating Christianity within Lesotho's educational system can be likened to the careful navigation of a river by feeling the stones beneath one's feet (Xiaoqin, 2012). In this analogy, the strategies for domestication serve as metaphorical

stepping stones, guiding both students and teachers on their journey across the river of developing social justice competences to address societal challenges. Just as one takes each step with caution and adapts to the terrain, the strategies ensure that Christian teachings are carefully aligned with local Basotho customs and traditions. This harmonization results in a generation of students deeply connected to their faith and culture while actively engaged in promoting social justice within a united and harmonious educational environment. Much like a traveller feels the stability of each stone before proceeding to the next; this approach ensures that the process of domesticating Christianity is deliberate, well-considered, and culturally relevant. It allows students and educators to embark on a transformative journey of aligning Christian values with their cultural heritage, ultimately paving the way for a more just and harmonious society.

Factors for Consideration in the Domestication of Christianity

To ensure the successful domestication of Christianity within Lesotho's education system, several crucial factors must be considered. These considerations are essential to guide the process effectively:

3.13 Respect for diversity

Respect for diversity stands as a fundamental factor to consider. Lesotho is a nation with a rich tapestry of religious beliefs and traditions, and it is imperative to acknowledge and respect this diversity. The United States Department of State (2016) notes that approximately 90% of the population in Lesotho identifies as Christian, with a smaller number of Jews, Muslims, and practitioners of indigenous religions. Many Christians in Lesotho also incorporate traditional indigenous rituals into their faith. Moreover, Lesotho comprises diverse communities and cultural contexts, each with its unique characteristics. Therefore, the domestication of Christianity should be inclusive, recognizing and respecting other religious and cultural perspectives. It should not be a one-size-fits-all approach. This perspective aligns with the view of Mokotso (2015), who emphasizes the importance of teaching Religious Education (RE) that addresses cultural alienation and ignorance of traditional beliefs among Basotho youth. It is essential to ensure that the domestication process takes into account the rich tapestry of cultural and religious contexts, avoiding the marginalization of any belief system. The fear, as expressed by Mokotso (2017), is that if Christian education persists and diminishes other religious perspectives, it might lead to the removal of the subject from the curriculum.

3.14 Consultation of relevant stakeholders

Consultation is a crucial aspect of decision-making processes, especially when addressing matters that impact a community or a group of people. It involves seeking input and feedback from stakeholders who are directly or indirectly affected by the decision (Rijal, 2023). This approach ensures that decisions are informed by the collective wisdom of the community and considers the diverse perspectives and needs of different groups. In the context of domesticating Christianity in Lesotho, consulting with relevant stakeholders is vital. This includes the church, community leaders, religious leaders, parents, and students. Their input can help identify the unique cultural elements and traditions that should be integrated into the curriculum alongside domesticated Christianity. This consultation is crucial, as it addresses concerns within religious institutions, such as fears of syncretism or dilution of core beliefs (Nathaniel, 1994). Consulting stakeholders fosters a sense of ownership and collaboration, ensuring that the process is culturally sensitive and respects the values and beliefs of all involved.

Conclusions and recommendations

The importance of domesticating Christianity within Lesotho's secondary schools cannot be understated. This approach is seen as a sustainable way to promote the development of social justice competences among students as it aligns well with the cultural and religious norms of Basotho. It serves as a metaphorical bridge that connects the rich cultural and religious heritage of Lesotho with the pressing need for social justice. It further, instills in them a strong ethical foundation and a profound understanding of their faith within the context of their community (Elraphoma, 2021; Samalukang, 2021). However, it is important to ensure that this approach is inclusive and respects the diverse religious beliefs of students not only Christians.

The recommendation is that there should be an adoption of an interfaith approach that incorporates teachings and values from various religions present in Lesotho can foster unity and understanding among students. According to Ali Shah and Ranjha (2019), peace is rare among religions if dialogue does not exist among religions. It is therefore vital to adapt Christian teachings to align with local customs, and traditions, to promote social justice competences for addressing the pressing social justice challenges that Lesotho faces. Furthermore, the development of teacher training programs could also be vital in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills required to effectively teach for the promotion of social justice competences focusing on universal principles of love, compassion, and justice.

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