

# Integrating Education and Culture: Towards A Community Immersion Framework for Enhancing Educational Utility in Mogoditshane Village, Botswana

Sikhangele Mcelelwa<sup>1</sup>, Happwell Musarandega<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Early Childhood Development, Baisago University, 11 Koi Street, Peolwane, Gaborone. Botswana.

<sup>2</sup> School of Geoscience, Disaster and Development, Bindura University of Science Education, Private Bag 1020, Bindura, Zimbabwe

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7012016>

Received: 13 November 2023; Accepted: 24 November 2023; Published: 29 December 2023

## ABSTRACT

This paper proffers a comprehensive framework that illustrates the integration of education and culture. Many African formal learning institutions have propagated generations of learners that have tripped off their cultural footing in pursuit of Western standards. However, sustainable education is that which is aimed at acculturating an individual. It must aim to preserve, transmit, and develop the societal culture, beginning at the early childhood development (ECD) phase. The study employed a qualitative study embedded in a case study design done based on Mogoditshane Village, Botswana. Data was drawn from the teachers who were willing to share their cultural experiences with various community settings in which they were deployed to teach. In-service teachers and school heads deployed in Mogoditshane were interviewed to explore the methods that they use to integrate the local culture in the teaching and learning process; including the challenges that they face in trying to cultivate a sense of cultural belongingness in the learners. Parent Teacher Association representatives (PTA) were drawn from selected early childhood settings. PTA members have a deep understanding of local community cultural values and traditions. They also represent various stakeholders including teachers, parents, community members and administrators thus making it easy to capture wide range of perspectives. Accordingly, in-depth interviews were conducted with purposively chosen respondents up to the data saturation level. A thematic content analysis approach was used to obtain opinion patterns and subsequent lines of inference. The findings revealed a broad range of cultural traits ranging from language, music, dance, games and traditional diets all of which are highly valued in the Mogoditshane Village. The study helped to pave way for the formulation of a teaching and learning framework that seeks to further submerge the teachers and learners into the prevailing system of norms and standards that Botswana has often cherished to develop over the course of several generations. The study recommends extended efforts by all educators and policy-makers to use the education of children as a medium of cultural perpetuation into the current and future generations.

**Key Words:** education, culture, early childhood development, community immersion

## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations fully recognises that culture is a fundamental enabler for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2018). Affairs (2015), buttresses that education is the foundation for development, responsible for sustaining the three pillars which are social, economic and environment. Cultural integration involves

educational programmes being rooted in respect for community values priorities, and practices (Oppong & Strader, 2022). This integration empowers learners to appreciate their own culture and that of others. Therefore, educators may use a number of techniques such as; instructional methods, teaching and learning materials, and community engagement among other factors. Cultural norms and values ought to manifest themselves in educational institutions and systems (Moalosi, Popovic, & Hickling-Hudson, 2004; Alhosen, 2022). To date, there is lack of an exhaustive implementation structure to guide educators on how this should be done.

Culture is defined as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs (Affairs, 2015). Like in many other countries, the challenge with the education system in Botswana is its failure to effectively integrate culture in teaching and learning including the approach in the current system (Moalosi et al., 2010). Given the broad diversity of cultures across the globe, there remains a question as to how a localised community such as Mogoditshane Village in Botswana can have its culture fused into the mainstream education system. Likewise, the paper targets to answer the question by providing an engagement framework that would facilitate educational enhancement of the community, using the local culture as an educational transformation vehicle. Learning and thinking are situated in a cultural setting (Ferguson, Ramos, Rudo, & Wood, 2008). In this view, culture determines how people think, believe, and behave, and in turn affects the teaching and learning process. Arguably, studies indicate that teaching is most effective when ecological factors, such as prior experiences, community settings and cultural backgrounds of students and teachers are included in its implementation (Steele, 2010; Gay, 2018). Therefore, educators need to adapt norms, values, traditions of the society to structure the teaching and learning process.

Effective education with capacity to foster development is therefore immersed in culture (Jack Mezirow, 1997; Altugan, 2015). The reason for the latter point is also backed by Moran & Stansbery (2017) who view parental and community engagement components in pre- primary education programme to form a critical foundation. Education should infuse the culture of the home, school peers and the larger community to bring about an individual who should fit in different cultural environments (UNESCO, 2018). Therefore, success or failure of any education system can be attributed to the quality of its programmes in relation to its predominant culture. It is now undisputed fact that education needs to be immersed culture in order for the beholders of that culture to see its essence. The immersion unfolds when local communities have their choices and practices taken on board (Moalosi et al., 2004; Kiende and Orodho, 2019; Altugan, 2015). The reality of culture is seen when society attaches value to it and value attachment emanates from the fact that the culture meets the needs of the people aligned to it (The Education Hub, 2019). The reason is that many African cultures reflect a strong sense of community support towards what is good for children (Mogan & Stansbery, 2017). Likewise, education serves as the vehicle through which the essential values are transmitted.

Every society educates its children with a view to advance the interests of that society (Moalosi et al., 2004; Morotti, 2006). Debatably, it appears that no society educates its people to advance the choices and interests of another society. Thus, various communities, from remote indigenous ones to highly developed and sophisticated ones have peculiar interests which they seek to advance through the education system (Moalosi et al., 2004). Education should therefore be an extension of the societal expectations that young people are introduced to as they are born and bred (Affairs, 2015; Altugan, 2015; Kiende and Orodho, 2019). Accordingly, the education that learners receive at school should aim to jig- saw fit into the existing cultural domain of individuals in order for it to produce a self- worthy product for the society Effective teaching and learning are often impaired when there is cultural antagonism between schools and the local communities (Altugan, 2015).

This study was guided by the cultural identity concept. The concept asserts that learning is guided by surroundings of reference that in turn are principally an outcome of cultural assimilation and the characteristic influences of one's primary caregiver. (Altugan, 2015). The primary caregiver setting is the home, which in turn is situated in the community with a distinct cultural pattern. According to Morotti (2006), children are more rooted in their original cultural framing than that which they learn at a later stage in their life. When teachers introduce new problem solving techniques at school, these may be overshadowed by belief systems inculcated by the society where the learners come from. Likewise, the school system extends to the community system where learners come from. This implies that culture plays a significant role in shaping the teaching and learning process.

Studies on culturally responsive teaching, theory, research and practice by Gay (2018) indicate that targeting traditional sources of child rearing advice often grandmothers were successful in promoting the integration of education and culture in most African countries. Whereas, Maran and Stansberg (2017) argue that engaging families and communities to support early childhood development in Kenya shows that parents are invited as resource persons to share cultural activities through traditional stories and music. Such approaches place value on indigenous culture and bridge the gap between the school and the family culture. Children may further show respect to elders and feel obliged to maintain culture.

Prakash (1995:81) argues that,

*.....postcolonial culture is inevitably a hybridised phenomenon, involving a dialectical relationship between the grafted Western cultural system and an indigenous ontology, with its impulse to create or recreate an independent local identity.*

Therefore, this paper aims to connect the missing links between the Botswana government values, the diverse cultures of its people including the education of children. However, culture and conventional education have not been fully merged as they are deemed two different teaching and learning formats. Therefore, the goal of the study was explore the cultural interaction that prevails between the school system and the local communities.

The specific objectives were to:

- Identify the cultural traits of the Mogoditshane
- Identify challenges that the schools face in integrating community culture into teaching and
- Propose options for enhanced immersion of the teaching and learning process within their local

The following questions will provide direction to unpack the objectives:

- What is the importance of integrating education and culture in teaching and learning?
- What strategies do teachers use to integrate education and culture?
- What challenges do schools face in trying to integrate community culture into teaching and learning?

## METHODOLOGY

### Description of the study area

The study was executed based on Mogoditshane village, Botswana. Mogoditshane is the largest peri-urban village is located in Kweneng District of Botswana, about 8 km from Gaborone. It coordinates of 24°6'0"S and 24°55'3"E. There are different tribes in Mogoditshane village. The Bakwena tribe forms the greatest proportion of the Mogoditshane people. The suitability of the setting is premised on the fact that the village

and district are part of the Southern African regions with a unique and strong cultural heritage. The Mogoditshane people, like the rest of Botswana, strive to empower their children with education (Moalosi et al., 2010) whilst the dream of maintaining their cultural identity continues to suffice.

## Methods

This paper adopts a qualitative approach imbedded in a case study design. An inductive approach was used, where researcher immersion into the Mogoditshane community helped to unveil hidden insights with the guidance of the study thrust; that is to explore the cultural interaction that prevails between the school system and the local communities. The research benefit of drawing field notes was that the qualitative approach allowed participants to be studied in their natural settings thus exposing the natural reality (Eyisi, 2016). Using a predominantly qualitative approach, the study participants were purposively chosen to provide data for this study. The basis for the selection of participants was twofold; that they well-understand the local Mogoditshane culture and that they are part of the local school system. Since the study was predominantly qualitative, there were no fixed sample sizes as is the case with the quantitative research paradigm. Instead, data saturation was set as the limit for participants' engagement. Data saturation in qualitative research is a criterion set to discontinue further data collection (Saunders et al., 2017) since no new insights continue to emerge during field engagement (Goulding, 2005; Guest et al., 2006). Likewise, participants from the Mogoditsane Village were purposively chosen and interviewed based on an inductive approach where surfacing perspectives were used to generate knowledge.

The study targeted in-service teachers deployed in 10 private primary schools in Mogoditshane. These respondents were interviewed to explore the nature of cultural interaction that prevails between the school system and the local communities. The most senior teachers were targeted as the basis for the selection of respondents since these were considered to better-understand the culture of the Mogoditshane community. One male and one female representatives were interviewed from each of the 10 schools. To ensure a gender balance was critical so as to unearth gender-sensitive perspectives from the teaching fraternity. The interviews were undertaken to source data on methods that the teachers use to integrate the local culture in the teaching and learning process including the challenges that they face in trying to cultivate a sense of cultural belongingness in the learners.

A total of seven (7) out of the 10 school heads from selected schools were reached out and interviewed. School heads were included because they are the custodians of what transpires within the entire school setup. Again, the basis for the selection of the heads was their duration of stay within the Mogoditshane community. Those who stayed longest were targeted since they know their community very well. Through their leadership and decision making role, the researcher could understand and gather data in relation to beliefs, values and strategies they use to integrate culture and education. Unlike mere teachers, school heads host routine meetings with Parent Teacher Association (PTA), meaning that they are appraised with in-depth opinions and perspectives of the local communities.

Respondents were also drawn from the Parent Teacher Association representatives (PTA) fraternity. A total of 7 out of 10 chairpersons from each primary school were interviewed. Their role was twofold. They represented the fraternity of the parents and general members of the community. Furthermore, they added sentiments to the study on activities and perceptions within the school setup. The essence of including sentiments from parents on the education of children is in line with the Ngwaru's (2014) advocacy. In addition, members of the PTA were easily accessible to the researcher hence could provide the much-needed data timeously and repeatedly during the data verification stage. Where new insights emerged from the interviews, the PTA was further probed up until no new insight continued to surface.

From the selected are 13 private preschools in Mogoditshane village, at least one most senior representative was interviewed. The study valued sentiments deeply rooted in the people of Mogoditshane. Likewise, a

snowball method was used to select at least 8 senior elders representing the three main tribes (four from Bakwena, two from Bakgatla and two from Bagwaketsi). Bakwena is the main tribe hence more participants were reached out than any other tribe.

To clean the data, field notes were scrutinised in a bid to remove cases of repeated entries and quotes. The collected data was coded into themes that were guided by the set objectives; the identified cultural traits of the Mogoditshane community, the categories of challenges that the schools face in trying to fit within the local Mogoditshane community. In cases where some responses contradicted on the same question, the data was cleaned using a triangular comparison of field notes from various data sources. Where inconsistencies were noted, field re-visits were organised in order to verify with respective participants. Following in-depth interviews conducted with purposively chosen respondents, a thematic content analysis approach was used to obtain opinion patterns and subsequent lines of inference which were later used to propose options for teaching and learning approaches that are more immersed into the community and local culture. Data was presented in the form of in-depth qualitative descriptions and citations.

## RESULTS

### Participants backgrounds

The data for the study came from various sources. Table 1 shows a summary of the sources from who the data was sourced.

**Table 1. A summary of the target participants for the Mogoditshane study**

Data source	Number reached out
Primary Private School Teachers	20
Primary Private School Heads	7
PTA Committee	7
Pre-school Teachers	13
Community leaders	8

The field interrogations did not begin with fixed numbers of respondents to be reached out. In all cases, the figures showing 'number reached out' represent the level at which data saturation was attained. This was in line with the selected inductive approach to explore extended views from the study participants. Therefore, the interrogations continued with a view to confirm that no new insights continued to emerge from the participants.

In order to understand the cultural background of Mogoditshane people, the various participant groups were asked to share their sentiments. Field notes were compiled and later analysed to extract key cultural components. Table 2 gives a summary of the cultural highlights of Mogoditshane people.

### Formal education background

The enrolment figures provided by the School Heads Committee Chairperson, who happened to be one of the interviewed heads, were summed up. A total of 20 private primary schools were reported. The population of learners from 5-6 years is 7000 which is about 8% of the total population of learners in Mogoditshane. There are 30 preschool centers in Mogoditshane with a total population of 3000 for the 0-4 year olds. Like in many other parts of Botswana, it is the dream of the local people to see their young



ones progress with their education, become gainfully employed while they continue to maintain the Mogoditsane cultural traits.

### Cultural background of Mogoditshane

A wide range of cultural attributes were drawn from the participants’ responses. During the interviews, participants were asked to give a description of the cultural aspects of the people of Mogoditshane which the locals cherish to see extended so as define their heritage. From the field notes, cultural themes were drawn which were narrowed down to specific attributes. Tables 2 shows a summary of the drawn attributes and a summary of the attributes’ details.

**Table 2. A summary of the cultural background of the Mohoditshane people in Botswana**

ATTRIBUTE	DETAILS
<b>Tribal background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tribe-Bakwena</i>– dominates the Mogoditshane people with <i>Kwena</i> as their totem which is an appropriate symbol for their strength and callous nature to other tribes.</li> <li>• <i>The Bakgatla</i> – a minority tribe</li> <li>• <i>Bagwaketsi</i>– a minority tribe</li> <li>• <i>Apart from the listed the village has a are number of other minority groups.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Setswana</i> – the major language in Mogoditshane and Botswana in general</li> <li>• <i>Sekwena</i> – a minority language</li> <li>• <i>Segatla</i>– a minority language</li> <li>• <i>English</i> – the medium of communication used in schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Major diets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Seswaa</i> – a tasty dish of pounded cooked meat which is slow-cooked beef stew made using bits from every part of a cow and is often served at funerals, weddings and other celebrations.</li> <li>• <i>Dikgobe</i> – comprises beans, corn, and lamb. Bean mixture is cooked over low heat while the lamb is roasted. The product is mixed in a single dish to be served with sprig of parsley.</li> <li>• <i>Morogo wadinawa</i> – cooked bean leaves served as vegetables.</li> <li>• <i>Bogobe jwa lerotse</i> – a melon porridge made by chopping melons into pieces, boil it with added sorghum meal and sour milk.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Traditional dances</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Tsutsube</i> – performed for entertainment whilst in the real sense its meant to celebrate the first kill by hunters; puberty, marriage and trance for those engaged inhealing sessions guided by ancestors.</li> <li>• <i>Phathisi</i> – complemented by drums, a whistle and a set of rattles. Used tocelebrate vital events like weddings, funerals, and other cultural rituals in order to passon cultural values and beliefs to the next generation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Traditional games</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Semerika</i> – played on a wooden board or tree bark with a series of holes. Players begin by putting small stones into each of the holes on the board in turns till one player has captured all the stones from their opponent’s side of the board, or until one player is unable to make his/her next move.</li> <li>• <i>Morabaraba</i> – played on a board with 12 holes with each player having 12 pieces. The goal is to move one’s pieces around the board and form three pieces in a row called ‘mills’, after which a player can remove one of their challenger’s pieces. The game continues until</li> </ul>
<p>one player has only two pieces left or cannot make any more moves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Diketo</i> – played by two players with small pebbles on a flat ground surface marked with a circular boundary. Players take turns to throw the stones into the air and pick another stone whilst the first one is inair. If a player successfully catches all the stones, they continue their turn. Failing to catch all stones meanstheir turn ends.</li> </ul>	

**Green light for cultural integration in education**

Sentiments from the study participants clearly showed the room for the fusion of local culture in formal education. PTA members concurrently mentioned the so-called *Kgotla*. The latter is a public meeting administered by a selected community council. *Kgotla* also serves as the traditional law court of Batswana people lead by traditional village leadership. The members of the local community are entitled to meet at the tribal court (*Kgotla*) to deliberate on various local issues and make decisions for the benefit of the community. At times, members simply meet for the purpose of information sharing.

In support of the need to fuse cultural practices into education, the interviewed study participants echoed the call to inculcate local livelihood practices in the young people. Mogoditshane is associated with pastoral practices where many households keep cattle, donkeys and goats. Evidence from the observation done during the study also revealed the existence of craft as a key community practice. One community leader interviewed after attending a *Kgotla* meeting had this to say:

*Here in Mogoditshane, we are proud of our cultural practices. We are happy to see these undertaken by our own children. The local schools must incorporate these in the teaching and learning of our children because they help us to survive. We do not want the culture to die. We are even ready to assist the schools with skills and artefacts such as the boards and wood barks used to play games such as *Semerika* and *Morabaraba*.*

**The same sentiments were echoed by one interviewed school head who said:**

*We might not be doing these but our teachers are expected to do these. The national teaching and learning strategies as prescribed by the curriculum require teachers to do so. Music and dance enables learners to be good listeners and takers of instructions, which are critical pre-requisites in teaching and learning. What*

*is lacking is an exact framework on how this can be executed on the ground including the skills to do so.*

When asked to indicate whether the heads were ready to engage local communities, the majority of them showed their interest to see it happen.

In this study, it was considered that the majority of today's teachers and school administrators are affiliated to Christian lifestyles and therefore may shun deep-rooted cultural practices. Evidence from the study proved that in each of the schools studied, there are representatives ready to work with learners to enhance the fusion of cultural practices. One interviewed school head was quoted saying:

*To impart cultural education is an expected development in our country. This is in line with the Botswana Policy on Education and Culture. Our teachers are expected to use various forms of cultural expressions when they teach. Kids should participate in arts culture when they learn and play. It allows the children to relate to their community expectations through arts and culture. Games such as Morabaraba and Semerika enable learners to think and improve their mathematical skills.*

The sentiments were echoed by another outspoken member of the PTA who reiterated that it is not an evil move by a teacher to monitor learners as they participate in various traditional practices because it is part of the job requirements.

### **Prevailing challenges**

Using thematic content analysis approach, the various sentiments were coalesced into sentiment themes which were summarised as is shown below.

### **Culture integration challenges**

- Time
- Staff development
- Limited culture artefacts within
- Language
- Religious
- Staff supervision

### **Summary of the thematic ideas on challenges of culture integration by schools Mogoditshane Village**

Despite the symbiotic relationship that prevails in Mogoditshane, teachers and members of the communities still face a myriad of challenges as a result of their coexistence. The following challenges were indicated; limited resources and time to incorporate culturally relevant materials and activities, lack of enough training or staff development on how to effectively integrate education and culture, language barrier among others challenges. The school principal from one schools had this to say:

*Our time table is overcrowded with a number of subjects and curriculum demands. It becomes difficult to incorporate cultural activities that demand more time and resources. Already, the schedule of activities is keeping our teachers busy all the time.*

Although responses from participants clearly indicate that they understood the benefits education and cultural integration, they were not aware of any training or workshops to support the concept. One of the participating teachers was quoted saying:

*We have had so many workshops, but none of these were related to culture and education. Our teacher training programmes covered the need to incorporate culture into education but here there is nothing meaningfully done. There were very limited cases of trainee teachers being practically immersed into this*



*cultural activity, which makes it difficult for us as teachers to effectively integrate the skills.*

The pattern of the above response was echoed by other interviewed participants. The school heads also confirmed the sentiments which showed that cultural fusion in schools was highly possible. In further explaining the challenges faced in schools, the need to give incentives to teachers was repeatedly mentioned as a solution to the challenge of time constraints. When incentives are in place, teachers can go an extra mile to create space for extra-curricular activities. The salaries that the teachers are getting are not sufficient to them, given the huge amount of work that they do. Therefore, it was stated by teacher participants that there is a need by various school authorities in liaison with their respective PTA committees to incentivise the implementation of extra-curricular practices.

At preschool centres, the majority of the children come from elite families. The majority of such families prefer to use see their children use English as the language of communication during the teaching and learning process. Sentiments were drawn from several day care centres with one teacher saying:

*In this class, the kids prefer English and not the local Mogoditshane languages. English is associated with development and success unlike the vernacular languages. The mastery of indigenous languages is very critical if our learners are to participate in traditional dance, music and games.*

The sentiments were echoed by another school head who said:

*There are some parents who come here and demand to see the teachers who teach and groom their children. They prefer fluent English speakers to mind their children. A good English language background is critical because that is the language used to communicate in many other subject areas.*

However, some PTA member and school heads defended the use of local languages, saying that local area examples even in the teaching of scientific concepts are better-understood if they are taught in vernacular languages. Interviewed community leaders were also bold to defend their Mogoditshane culture. It was vehemently reiterated that the propagation of the Western cultures at the expense of the local ones is a discriminatory act. Rather, the locals prefer a balance to be drawn in the teaching and learning process through the fusion of local cultural practices into the school curriculum.

### **Proposed culture enhancement framework**

Having put together the diverse range of perspectives on education and culture within studied communities, the paper suggests a framework to enhance extended community immersion of the teaching and learning process. Moran and Stansbery (2017) critique Botswana's Early Childhood Education system on the basis of its weaknesses which include its lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, insufficient support for positive parenting/care-giving and less recognition of their critical role as primary caregivers in the first 3 years of their child's life. Likewise, the perspectives emerging from the various interrogations permitted the formulation of a framework that serves to marry the local cultural traits with the formal education system. The framework falls in line with item 6.2 of Botswana National Policy on Culture (2001) which clearly states that:

*“Education in every society is an institutionalised means of acculturation or cultural transmission*

*..... The curriculum of the education system must be based on the*

*Botswana culture and provide programmes and facilities aimed at teaching skills of culture centred disciplines.”*

Thus, the framework seeks to connect schools to the cultural setting in which they exist. Figure 2 shows a

summary of the key culture integration concepts.

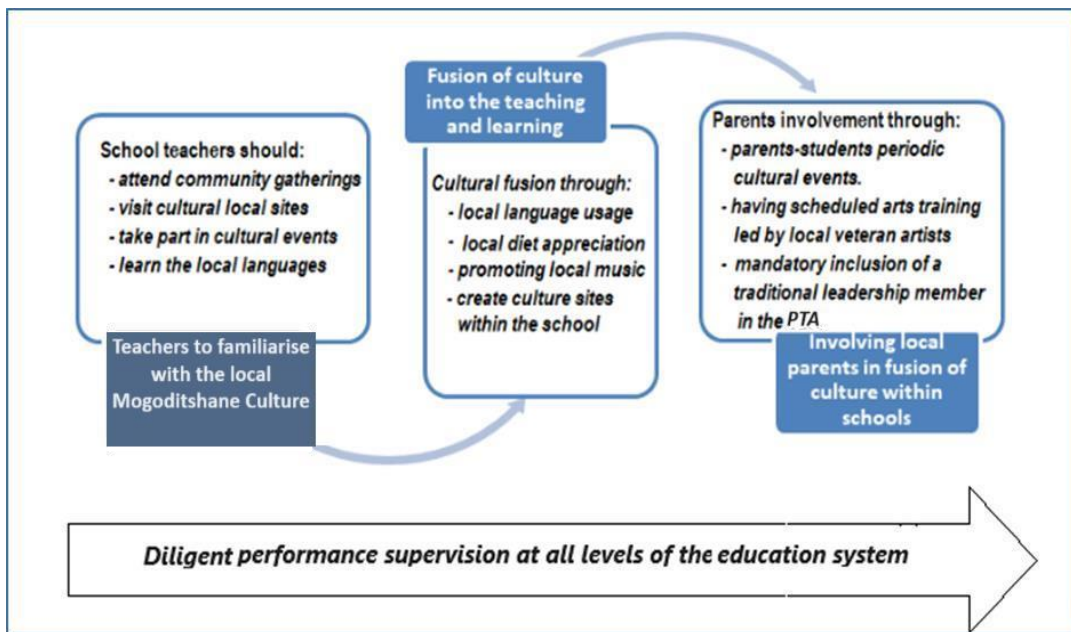


Figure 2. Framework to summarise the key possible stages in acculturating the local education in Mogoditshane Village

Teachers should begin by positively conceptualising the cultural setting out of which their learners hail. For instance, it would be difficult for teachers to effectively teach English language in Mogoditshane without having an appreciation of Setswana, Sekwena and Segatla among other languages spoken in Mogoditshane area. The call for teachers to adopt local languages may not necessarily require their prior fluency in local language speaking. Rather, it motivates the learners to use vernacular languages and not shun them.

Teachers ought to interact as much as possible with members of the community by attending local events in Mogoditshane such as functions organised by traditional leaders. Such events as rain making ceremonies pave way for the teachers to familiarise with the indigenous knowledge of the Mogoditshane people. To partner with communities will help teachers to understand social, cultural, economic and political challenges confronting the local communities including the locally driven measures that they have adopted to deal with the situation. To avoid cultural bias and discrimination, teachers won't be forced to attend community events. Those who volunteer to take part will be given full support by the administration to do so. On the other hand, those who feel that their Christian or other religious values may be compromised will at least create room for their learners to join culture clubs and participate in various activities. In other words, the framework is not a discriminatory instrument. It simply opens the door for the local culture to be taken on board. In fact, to bar learners from participating in local cultural practice is an equally discriminatory option that sounds similar to the mandatory pushing of all learners to partake Christian practices in the school system. Therefore, the framework allows teachers to give learners freedom to choose what to do while their duty is to simply guide them.

Going further, the cultural fusion continues within the school environment as teachers give respect to what the learners know about their own culture by providing timetable slots for the learners to exercise their cultural rights. This occurs when teachers give their learners enough time to explain concepts using examples drawn from the local cultural experiences, where possible, orthodox scientific concepts can still be explained based on indigenous language and examples that the learners are quick to understand.

To ensure that culture is embraced within the teaching and learning programme, supervision should be

brought on the mainstream. Performance supervision affects all levels of operation; that is for teachers, senior teachers, School Heads, District officers, Provincial Officers and Head Officers. The purpose of supervision is to ensure that all regulations on education and culture are diligently adhered to by all practitioners.

## DISCUSSION

The relationship between education and culture has been confirmed in a wide range of other studies (Jack Mezirow, 1997; Altugan, 2015; UNESCO, 2018; Alhosani, 2022). Formal education structure exists within specific cultural settings which cannot be separated from the teaching and learning process. Accordingly, it is hardly possible for school systems to exist outside of cultural settings. Learners use their first language to develop additional languages (Caballero, 1953; Makgadbo and Niipane, 2022). Nurhadi (2019) goes further to argue that getting to understand and to practice Indonesian will be more effective if Indonesian language and culture are integratively learnt. Thus, to separate language and culture is meaningless. Language is a cultural trait. Likewise, it would be hard for teachers to effectively teach English language in Mogoditshane without having an appreciation of indigenous languages spoken in Mogoditshane area.

Games, dance and other cultural practices have since been proved to be critical in improving learners' psychomotor and cognitive development (Madondo and Tsikira, 2022). The development of intellectual, cognitive, fine and gross motor skills manifests (Mukela, 2013; Altugan, 2015). Therefore, to include *tsustube*, *patisi*, *semerika* and *morabaraba* is by no means a mistake because these practices help to build an effective foundation for the teaching and learning process. To engage in gaming, music and other activities also helps the learners to relax in an atmosphere outside the four walls of the classroom where they are often restricted to boundless formalities conducted through conventional communication means that they are not familiar with.

The need for schools in Mogoditshane to immerse themselves into their local cultural systems is imperative. Schools have culture and this refers to all the attitudes, expected behaviours and values that impact how the school operates. However, school culture cannot be separated from community culture because schools exist within communities. Sustainable education is that whose curriculum serves to build communities today and in future (Maddahian and Bird, 2004; UNESCO, 2018). Clearly, when teaching practices fail to respond to the cultural context, learning outcomes are compromised. Some students may not portray attentiveness and enthusiasm in the academic learning process. The latter development could be due to the learners' inability to clearly understand some new academic concepts including the problem solving methodologies being used. However, if culture is introduced within the school curriculum; the students grow remarkable motivation towards the learning of new academic concepts.

It is worthwhile to create a plausible teaching and learning atmosphere for learners. Learning and skills development is a 'catch them young' scenario. Smith (1996) argued that the goals of ECD are determined by cultural requirements rather than child development, and children should construct their cultural understanding in the local context. In this sense, learners learn fast. When the learners join the school, they acquire new knowledge, which simply be an additional package to what they already have from their cultural upbringing (Mezirow, 1997; Conkbayir and Pascal, 2016). The new knowledge comes in the form of academic concepts, creative and extra-curricular activities (Smith, 1996). Therefore, one's culture plays a pivotal role to learn academic concepts and several other activities meant to promote one's effective growth and development (UNESCO, 2018). Accordingly, it is imperious to facilitate a smooth cultural transition from local culture to a hybrid culture of local and western culture.

Teachers are expected to understand the cultural environment in which they operate (Maddahian and Bird, 2004). Subsequently, they should use these as enablers to advance teaching and learning of indigenous

values in their schools (Perso and Heyward, 2020) rather than allowing letting the local identities to become cultural museums (Weber et al., 2021). When teachers understand the culture of the setting in which they teach, they can help their learners to integrate this for the ease of conceptualisation of some curriculum notions. They can as well motivate other learners to help those learners who hail from other cultural backgrounds to fit into the new culture (Caballero, 1953). On the overall, it is the flexibility of the teachers, school authorities and members of the community communities with regard to culture tolerance that allows the teaching and learning process to flow smoothly.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mogoditshane study revealed that there are vital cultural practices within the community which locals wish to see extend into the future through the education of their children. There is room for the fusion of local cultural practices based on the expectation of the community, the national policy on education and culture as well as the availability of supportive members of the community. In a number of instances, schools fail to fit effectively in the community system due to language constraints, dress patterns and behavioural traits of some teachers and learners. Accordingly, the paper advances the following recommendations:

- Schools should create opportunities for local communities to share the long-term cultural expectations for their own children with the school staff.
- Schools should build partnerships with local communities in order to raise awareness, secure resources and garner support for school development committee initiatives as a way of promoting cultural
- The Ministry of Education should design policies that will make community stakeholders such as teachers and parents be viewed as key partners in promoting the integration of culture and ECD education.
- More training and resources should be provided by the government to help teachers understand the cultural back grounds of their students.

## REFERENCES

1. Affairs, S. (2015) 'TST Issues Brief : Education and Culture 1', pp. 1–8.
2. Alhosani, N. (2022). The influence of culture on early childhood education curriculum in the UAE. United Arab Emirates University. Sage.
3. Altugan, A. S. (2015). 'The Relationship Between Cultural Identity and Learning', *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 186, pp. 1159–1162. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.161. Caballero, J. (1953) 'The Importance of Culture-Based Education', pp. 5–6.
4. Conkbayir, M. & Pascal, C. (2016). *Early childhood theories and contemporary issues: An introduction*, London. Bloomsbury .
5. Eyisi, D. (2016). The Usefulness of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and Methods in Researching Problem-Solving Ability in Science Education Curriculum. *Journal of Education and Practice* 7(15), 91-100.
6. Ferguson, C. Ramos, M., Rudo, Z., & Wood, L. (2008). *The school-family connection: Looking at the larger picture. A review of current literature*. Austin, TX: SEDL, National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools.
7. Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally Responsive Teaching, Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
8. Goulding, C. (2005). Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: a comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research. *Eur. J. Mark.* 39(3/4), 294–308.
9. Government of Botswana. (2001). *National Policy on Culture*. Approved by Cabinet on 4th April 2002 Directive No.CAB 17/2001. <https://ocpa.irmo.hr/resources/policy/> Botswana National



CulturalPolicy-en.pdf

10. Guest, G., Bunce, A., Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods* 18(1), 59–82.
11. Jack Mezirow (1997). ‘Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice’, *New Directions for Adult and Continuing education*, (74), pp. 5–12. Available at: <https://www.ecolas.eu/eng/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Mezirow-Transformative-Learning.pdf>.
12. Kiende, M.K & Orodho, J .A (2019). Role of Community in Enhancing the Welfare of Early Childhood Education Centres in Meru South County, Kenya. *Greener Journal of Educational Research*, 9(1): 36-44, <http://doi.org/10.15580/GJER.2019.1.032719056>
13. Madondo, F & Tsikira, J. (2022). Traditional Children’s Games: Their Relevance on Skills Development among Rural Zimbabwean Children Age 3–8 Years, *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 36:3, 406-420,
14. Maddahian, E. and Bird, M. (2004). ‘Conceptual Framework for a Culturally Relevant and Responsive Educational Model.’ *Online Submission*, (178).
15. Makgabo, M.C., & Niipare, A. K. (2022). Pre-Service Teachers’ Interaction with Learners Using Their Mother Tongue in Linguistically Diverse Classes in Namibian Schools, *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 10(4), pp. 496-507. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33394/joltt.v10i4.6026>
16. Mukela, R. M. (2013). The role of indigenous music and games in the promotion of cognitive development in Zambian children in Senanga and Shangombo Districts of Western Province. Unpublished master’s thesis. University of Zambia. <http://dspace.unza.zm/handle/123456789/3284>
17. Moalosi, R., Popovic, V. & Hickling-Hudson, A. (2004). Socio-cultural factors that impact upon human-centred design in Botswana. In Redmond, J., Durling, D. and De Bono, (Eds.), *Proceedings of Design Research Society International Conference*, Futureground, Monash University, Melbourne
18. Moalosi, R., Popovic, V. And Hickling-Hudson, A. (2010). Culture-orientated product design. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 20(2), 175-190.
19. Moran, M. A., & Stansbery, P. (2017). Engaging Families and Communities to Support Early Childhood Development: The African Experience. *YC Young Children*, 72(4), 24–30. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/90013701>
20. Morotti, A. (2006) ‘Integrating Culture into Education’: Self-Concept Formation in Alaska Native Youth., *Forum on Public Policy Online*, 2006(1), pp. 1–24.
21. Ngwaru, J. M. (2014). Promoting children’s sustainable access to early schooling in Africa: Reflections on the roles of parents in their children’s early childhood care and education. *New directions for child and adolescent development* (146), 61-76.
22. Nurhadi, D.Z. (2019). Culture based teaching and learning for Indonesian as a foreign language. Indonesia, Yogyakarta state university.
23. Oppong, S. & Strader, S. (2022). Interventions that matter start with local cultures: Issues and strategies in early childhood care and education interventions in Africa. An ECCE Project Supported by Spencer Foundation/Boston College.
24. Perso, T. & Hayward, C. (2020). Teaching Indigenous students. Cultural awareness and classroom strategies for improving learning outcomes. London & New York, Routledge
25. Prakash, G. (1995). After colonialism: Imperial histories and postcolonial displacements. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
26. Stelle, C.M. (2010). A treat in the air: How stereotype shape intellectual identity and performance of African Americans. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5)797-811
27. Smith, A.B. (1996). The early childhood curriculum from a socio cultural perspective. *Early child Development and care* 115(1):51-64.
28. The Education Hub (2019). Principles for culturally responsive teaching in early childhood education <https://theeducationhub.org.nz/category/ece-resources/>.
29. UNESCO (2018). Issues and Trends in Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO Publishing. Available at: <https://www.bic.moe.go.th/images/stories/ESD1.pdf>.



30. Weber, A.M., Diop, Y., Gillespie, D., *et al.*(2021). Africa is not a museum: the ethics of encouraging new parenting practices in rural communities in low-income and middle-income countries. *BMJ Global Health* 6: e006218. DOI: 10.1136/ bmjgh-202 006218