

# **How Teachers Understand, Respond to, and Implement Values Education in Kenyan Schools**

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## Summary

My study brings to the fore the individualistic and contextual nature of values and values education. The variance, as is largely argued in this study, is embedded in deep-rooted beliefs and experiences, and the environment that the respective teachers find themselves in. Values and values education has been a sticky issue since time immemorial. The challenge continues to surround the questions of definition, whose values, which values, and how best to promote them.

This study specifically investigates the seemingly sensitive political/religious, but critical question of how teachers, in the midst of a complex and non-homogenous society, respond to values. The study, through a retrospective analysis of the development curve of values education in Kenya, unearths the dilemma that teachers and policy makers experience as they attempt to get to grips with the concept of values and appropriate pedagogical methods to apply in the promotion of such values.

Through a broad based literature review combined with primary data collected in Kenya, I attempt to explain the intricacies of the stark and stubborn disparity that exists between policy stated aims and actual practice. This disparity, I argue, is largely because issues that affect teachers' personal lives have not featured adequately in the policy arena. The findings suggest that such issues are considered "messy" and inappropriate for scientific analysis. Secondly, they are delicate convictions, belonging to the private realm, and thus a challenge to unravel as scholars fear intruding on the personal lives of teachers.

In order to unearth the intricacies of teacher beliefs and practices, I adopted a participatory approach in this study. The direct contact and discussions with teachers enabled me to untangle the web surrounding the meanings teachers attach to values as a concept. Through observation sessions, I began to appreciate how teachers negotiate these meanings simultaneously with their hectic classroom practice.

This study contributes to the discourse on values education by confirming a subtle framework used by teachers. Previous studies have identified two mindsets that teachers use in their professional practice; i.e. rational and emotional. In this study, I add that there is a subtle consideration that teachers constantly refer too, which I call the "survival framework". I found that teachers, due to the loss in the paternalistic pattern of home, school and church

with regards to values, have less confidence in deciding what values to promote. Due to the volatile emotions that values can elucidate, teachers have devised individual ways of interpreting values whilst ensuring that their professional assignment is not jeopardised. It is due to this individualistic approach, that experiences in values education were manifold.

I conclude the study by stating that the “survival” interpretive framework confirms three basic principals. Firstly, values will constantly be in a state of construction and reconstruction. Secondly, there is no direct correlation between holding a value and acting upon it; and lastly, values education efforts can only hope to reduce the gap in interpretation and implementation, but will never accomplish a standardised democratic system across the board.

### **Key words**

Values, curriculum, education, Kenya, teachers, understanding, interpretation, practise, morals, beliefs.

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## **Declaration of originality**

I, Maggie Okore, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work, and has not been submitted previously for any degree at any university.

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**Maggie Okore**

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# CHAPTER ONE

“CAN VIRTUE BE TAUGHT?” (Aristotle)

## 1 An introduction to the study

The purpose of this study was to determine how teachers make sense of values education in the curriculum. The study specifically investigates how teachers understand, respond to, and implement values in the basic Kenyan education curriculum. The focus was limited to the proclaimed curriculum policy goal of “Sound Moral and Religious Values”.

Values education in Kenya, as in other countries, has been riddled with controversy, and in successive education review processes the subject has come under intense scrutiny by the public and education experts. The main bone of contention has been that the purported results of values education do not seem to have borne any significant results since society continues to experience escalating moral challenges. What this has meant for values education is that the strategy of implementation has continued to change.

However, it is important to recognise that underlying these controversies is a shared conviction across the board that schools have, and should, play an important role in the character formation of students. This conviction is grounded on what scholars like DeVries and Zan (1994) have clearly asserted; schools are not value-free or value-neutral and non-academic inputs such as discipline techniques, expectations, and classroom control mechanisms strongly affect children's development. Otiende *et al.* (1992) makes the case that all educational systems, purposefully or not, transmit certain values.

This research was problematic due to the widespread policy assumptions that teachers would naturally accept the new values-based curriculum introduced in 2002, make sense of this complex concept in theory and practice, and thus mainstream such values in all school subjects. Such policy expectations, as explained in more detail in later chapters, is the backdrop for the fact that values education has not been clearly defined and has always been a contentious issue.

I therefore postulate that challenges facing the teacher are formidable in an environment where the factors of a pluralist society, as manifested in ethnicity, religion, social class, and global influences, are rife.

My study was an inquiry into teachers' interpretive frameworks. I sought firstly to investigate how a teacher's beliefs and perceptions determined meanings that they attached to the values education curriculum; and secondly, whether there was a correlation between the meanings they themselves hold and the teaching practice as expected by the SMRV policy.

I decided to focus on the last two years of the eight years' of primary and the first two years in secondary schooling. This stage of schooling was selected based on the findings from the theories of moral growth as promulgated by Piaget and Kohlberg (1976), who claim that at this stage, i.e. between the ages of 7 and 11 years, learners start to use logic in their moral reasoning. It was therefore important to observe how teachers at this level are able to accommodate the changes in the growth of learners into their practice.

In this first chapter I will give a description of the context within which this study unfolds, i.e., profiling the challenging policy and political context in Kenya as the country sought to introduce values into the national curriculum. A description of the context will enable a clearer appreciation of the analysis and unfolding results that the study elaborates on in later chapters. Additionally, I will present the intellectual argument, the key research question that guided this study, and the scholarly rationale for the study; i.e. the basis for this inquiry, drawing on what is already known and from the research literature on values education. I will then provide a brief outline of the theoretical assumptions within which this study is embedded, followed by a brief description of the methodological plan for the study, identifying the limitations I encountered during my study period. I conclude the chapter by drawing attention to the theoretical, methodological, research and practical significance of the study.

## **1.1 Context of the study**

The current education system in Kenya consists of eight years of primary schooling, four years of secondary schooling, and four years of University education; an arrangement known in local parlance as the 8-4-4 system. Kenya is a diverse society, both in terms of religious beliefs and ethnic orientation.

The country comprises approximately 42 different ethnic communities, with pockets of some ethnic groups still holding onto their traditional values and others rapidly adapting to modernity. This multiethnic and multicultural context has meant that values education has always been a contentious issue. Added to this has been the fact that the values curriculum has changed with each successive political administration. In wave after wave of education reform pursued through the instruments of commissions into the education system in Kenya, there have been numerous changes in the country's education system. The alterations in the values education curriculum has largely been tilted towards the dominant culture, beliefs and ideology of the ruling elite, rather than reflecting the diversity and educational goals needed to address prevailing issues in the country.

Reports of the major commissions have progressively treated values education as a second class subject. Academic and technological excellence aimed at attaining industrial development has formed the cornerstone of decisions regarding the direction the education system should take. It is important to note that all the commissions have had their key mandate to review and recommend a system that is most relevant to the country at that particular period. The major commissions that have been carried out over the years include immediately after Independence the Ominde Commission (1964); the Gachathi Report (1976); the Sagini Report (1981); the Mackay Report (1981); the Wanjigi Report (1983); the Kamunge Report (1988); the Ndegwa Report (1991); the Mungai Report (1995) and the Koech Report (1999). I will proceed by profiling a summary of different political periods in recent Kenyan history, and the impact they have had on values education.

### **1.1.1 Phase one - The Jomo Kenyatta era (1963-1976)**

In the period 1963-85 the teaching of ethics, i.e. Moral Education (ME), was part of Religious Education (RE) - a system inherited from the colonial government. In this period, the independent government was more inclined to a system of character development geared towards developing a sense of national unity as outlined in the Ominde report of 1965.

This lasted until 1986, when Social Education and Ethics (SEE) was launched as a separate course. Religious Education was firmly established as the vehicle for the moral guidance of the learner and was offered either in Christian Religious Education (CRE) or Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Churches, as major contributors to the development of education

during this period, had great influence on what was taught in schools. As is well documented in the history of Africa, missionaries were the first to build schools in Africa, and they were sponsored by their respective churches from abroad. Thus the churches determined the curriculum which automatically had a bias towards a faith based approach to learning. After independence, the new government could not fully take over the schooling system, and to date continues to rely heavily on churches to run schools. Thus the respective churches have a major say in the orientation of the values education curriculum.

Despite this being the prevailing situation in schools, teacher training colleges, on the other hand, did not consciously prepare teachers to be moral role models and translators of the curriculum. This omission has largely been blamed on the traditional African belief where the adult is assumed to be in a leadership position and thus able to determine right from wrong. This omission in teacher preparation is evident from the limited time in the teachers' curriculum dedicated to subjects like psychology and values analysis. The training materials on teacher preparation reviewed in this study also do not reflect much time dedicated to the promotion of values education.

As was soon realised by the independent government, CRE taught Christian principles, but not *national* values. The difference between the two largely lies in the emphasis. National values focus on values aimed at nation building, whilst Christianity focuses on building a people based on a certain belief system as prescribed by Jesus Christ. This is not to say that Christian values are not useful as a moral foundation for a nation, since Christianity teaches the virtues of love, forgiveness, sharing, truth and justice. However, Christianity represents a story of people's lives – mainly that of Jesus Christ. As one of the education experts interviewed in this study retorted, "The danger of teaching values based on a single religion is that people, not necessarily only those from other religions, but also some Christians, will not own these values, and thus will not take them seriously as a way of life - that is how *they* lived".

To a large number of people, the values remain at story level, not meant to be emulated. Thus religion is taught as just another subject. Teachers do not have to believe in what they are teaching. Inevitably, the final step of translating values into daily life was not achieved in many schools, especially those that did not have a Christian background. From my analysis of the learning material, even though they were of good quality, the style of presentation

could have been one of the major obstacles to ensuring that teachers were translating policy to achieve the expectations of national goals.

The learning materials in this phase were limited to stating and translating what it meant to be a good Kenyan citizen, and defining the national responsibility of each individual Kenyan. For example, learners were expected to memorise and recite a loyalty pledge: “I pledge my loyalty to the president and the government of Kenya...”.

The recitation of the pledge was an end in itself; no other activity was planned or expected thereafter. This demonstrates the high level of assumption in the whole policy strategy. The Ministry of Education provided the pledge to schools and assumed that the teachers would understand the intentions and find the most appropriate means of transmitting the same. The practical/activity steps in the learning process were missing and at no time were learners held directly accountable for the pledge they recited. The class textbooks/teachers guides were similar in approach; the guide only requests the teacher to make time, especially on Friday for the recitation of the pledge, and the final evaluation or examination of performance was a clear demonstration that values remained at subject level instead of becoming a way of life (Kenya, 1976).

In this period the role of the teacher in values education seemed clear in the minds of society. There was a strong belief that the teacher was a role model not only for learners, but the community at large. Thus there was an unwritten agreement that each teacher had to participate in promoting moral values. Due to this general assumption, the policy did not spell out the role of the teacher in values education. The head teacher and the teachers had autonomy to create the environment that they considered most suitable.

### **1.1.2 Second phase - The Daniel Arap Moi era (1979-2002)**

Social challenges related to ill-discipline, a high crime rate, increased number of school drop-outs, drug abuse among the youth, and the growing multi religious society. This led to the questioning of the role of RE as the sole moral foundation of the nation at school level. A cross section of society, especially the Muslim community, as well as leading educationalists, began to highlight gaps in the values curriculum.

The National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) report of (1976:59), expressed the view that: "...the teaching of ethics should go into the details of the social norms underlying all aspects of human behaviour irrespective of whether one is religious, atheistic, agnostic or adheres to any other belief....".

The recommendation was based on the assumption that Kenyan citizens, irrespective of their various religious beliefs, could formulate a common system of values through consensus as set down in the constitution and the laws of the land. The idea was to disentangle the teaching of moral education from the teaching of religious education, as these had hitherto been entwined. A requirement was to "...institute specifically the teaching of basic social ethics as a course on its own just as equally, RE was to continue being taught..." (NCEOP 1976:59).

In 1986, the curriculum was changed to accommodate different concerns and Social Ethics and Education (SEE) became a separate subject. Scholarly comments during the interview discussions for this study attest to the fact that the learning materials were well researched and attempted to incorporate as many concerns as possible. For example, the daily challenges that young people face were given prominence. Issues related to drug abuse, family relations, school teenage pregnancy and sex education all gained visibility in the curriculum. For the first time the materials reflected values that Kenyans aspired to as a nation and spelt out the responsibilities of individuals, e.g. the need to vote, and issues of democracy and good governance. Different interview sessions with the key informants of this study and an examination of the Koech Commission Report of 1999 indicated that the material on SEE was well received by the school authorities.

Another strategy adopted in this period was the Friday devotion sessions. Time was set aside every Friday as a spiritual period in which students would reflect on their different religious beliefs. In some instances, an authority from one of the different religions was called upon to share experiences with students. As noted during the interview sessions, the commitment towards this time was dependent on whether or not the school was a religious sponsored school. In some government schools this period was utilised as an extra study lesson.

Due to the nature of the subject of SEE, the majority of students opted for this instead of CRE. Students claimed that they could relate more with the issues discussed in SEE. In the



ten years that SEE was part of the curriculum, it was opposed by churches who claimed that the subject was not grounded on any faith beliefs, a fundamental gap for religious groups who are governed by an allegiance to faith beliefs. These controversies made it very difficult for the Ministry of Education to fully implement the subject. Key areas of contention were teacher preparation and sex education, since some churches did not agree with the stance and methodology of transmission as prescribed by the Ministry. As a result, SEE was phased out in stages, with the last phase completed in the year 2005.

The style of writing has a great influence on whether implementation of policy will take place or not. As emerged during the key informant interviews, the concern with the style in which the material was written was claimed to give room for learners, and therefore teachers, not to have to practice what was written. For example, the material asks; "What do you think should be done?" and not "What will you do?". The informant claimed that the material did not call for deep reflection and understanding to result in the goal of trying to develop the whole person. It remained an academic subject and not a way of life. A brief analysis of the material shows that though it was claimed to be well researched, scholars warned that the way in which the teaching material was presented did not ensure compliance in practice.

Despite the gap between the first and second phases, not much has been achieved as in both phases as the issues related to values education continued to be treated as just another academic subject. Implementation still presents a challenge to the Kenyan government and schools alike. The government grapples with the challenge of maintaining harmony among the potentially volatile, diverse cultural and religious communities in the country, as "values" have a highly religious tone. The educational system is alert and sensitive to any issues that might cause tension, especially between the major religious groups of Christians (Catholics and Protestants), and the Muslim community. It is important to note that SEE was a compromise, and not fully accepted by the conservative Christian sects.

### **1.1.3 Phase three - The Mwai Kibaki era (2002 onwards)**

The third phase, beginning from 2002, essentially encapsulates elements of the debate that have been taking place in the country. The goal of values education remains the same with the major difference being in the strategy of delivery. Values education has now been "mainstreamed" into the social sciences; it is no longer a separate subject. The learning

material has incorporated national, human and religious values into day-to-day teaching practice. Some scholars, commenting on the current values curriculum, had the following to say, “The current curriculum resonates with high ideas of values and holistic development. It encompasses life skills, national development and identity, universal ideas, with equal opportunity, cultural heritage, social justice, human dignity and multiculturalism a strong laundry list of solid foundational principles” (Cunningham 2005:75).

Cunningham went further to argue that “The curriculum looks excellent on paper. All problems appear to be addressed by these abstract conceptions of educational philosophy. How the Kenyan government plans to actually implement this nobly worded curriculum still remains to be seen” (2005:75).

The above sentiments are founded on the fact that the curriculum on values education has undergone various changes in the hope of getting a system that can lead to the internalisation of values as opposed to the academic focus prevailing in previous strategies. This goal has eluded the education system, as expressed by Omulando (1995:30) who described the subjects that have been mainstreamed with values as being “...integrated and comprehensive, and aim to teach critical thinking, excite curiosity and improve communication...”. He expressed the hope that the curriculum would help students internalise the values that underlie the country’s constitution and laws.

From contributions gathered from the various scholars, the challenge in the curriculum seems to lie in its implementation. In the period just after independence, the challenge was to ensure that the curriculum was relevant to Kenyan needs. Thereafter, as demonstrated in the metamorphosis that has taken place in the sector, values education has grappled more with the pedagogical style that would be most appropriate. Secondly, and still related to pedagogy, has been the clear definition of the teacher’s role. Questions have been raised as to whether the teacher should lead by example, whether it should only be the RE teachers taking on the subject, or whether what is being promoted now is the role of each and every teacher.

The Kenyan context shows consistency in its definition as can be seen in the government policy documents, learning materials, and the syllabi of *Sound Moral and Religious Values (SMRV)*. The changes that have occurred over time have generally been an expansion of the

details in an effort to incorporate changing circumstances in society, and thus remain relevant. In the period 1963-1980, the goal of SMRV, then referred to as Social Mutual Responsibility (SMR), was defined as, “The free ability and willingness of the people to discharge their moral obligations for the benefit of all members of society (that is the common good)”. In the period 1986-2002, SMRV was defined in the same way, though the strategy of implementation changed, and it was taught in subject form – Social Education and Ethics (SEE). The definition since 2002 remains “...the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enhance acquisition of sound moral values and help children to grow up into self-disciplined, self-reliant and integrated citizens” (Kenya 2002 c:iv).

A review of the three phases demonstrates the ambiguity or blindness to the emotional, social and personal dynamics that are faced by teachers in their efforts to grapple with the changing values curriculum. Their role is not defined and their perceptions are not taken into consideration. Consequently, issues related to teacher preparedness and definite strategies of promoting values education are either often omitted or left to the jurisdiction of schools and individual teachers to make sense of them.

A pertinent question in the education sector which is closely connected to this study is the debate by parents on the cost of education versus the benefit derived. Average middle class parents in Kenya spend over 60% of their income on their children’s education. Education is considered a major investment that should accrue benefits: firstly, an educated child is expected to have acquired the skills to enable him/her to participate productively in the economy; and secondly, an educated child is expected to have the right moral attitude in order to become a respected member of society. Despite parents recognising the twofold nature of the goals of educating children, it would be a great omission if this study did not underline the fact that in the current environment, more emphasis is placed on the economic benefits that are derived from education.

It is pertinent, in concluding this section, to underscore that values education will remain dynamic and controversial, and questions remain as to its relevance in the system, particularly with regard to its implementation. For example, when CRE was removed from the compulsory curriculum, the same teachers were expected to take on SEE, along with a number of other teachers taking social science subjects. Now that the subject is mainstreamed, all teachers are expected to participate.

The issues and questions that arise out of these policy directives relate to the elasticity and capacity of teachers. How prepared are the teachers to take on the new value based curriculum, when they have not had any previous exposure? Further analytical scrutiny questions the style and skill of presentation, and whether appropriate time has been allocated in the curriculum to allow for the internalisation of the content through practice and demonstration. Answers to the above issues should be teased out from the focus group interviews and observation sessions with teachers.

## **1.2 The research puzzle**

To reflect on values is a formidable task, since words like “values”, “virtues” and “good character” are often interchangeably used. Their meanings are assumed rather than clarified, and their interpretation, in concept and practice, varies widely. Values may be social, religious, moral, spiritual, aesthetic, political, economic, technological, or material.

Veugeles (2000:38) comments on the fluidity of such concepts by observing that “...even meaning ascribed by a single person may vary over time and circumstance”. Recognising the variable meanings of “values” within and across cultures and contexts, this study seeks to explain how and why Kenyan teachers chose their respective practices. Thus the following question guided the study:

How do teachers understand, interpret and implement the goal of “Sound Moral and Religious Values” as embedded in the Kenyan national curriculum?

This guiding question provides the genesis of my enquiry into the interpretation of values education from the perspective of Kenyan teachers. I derived teachers’ perspectives by observing their practice. The focus on the teacher as the source of information on values was a key departure from the various interpretations and attempted definitions as ascribed by a number of policy documents and scholarly contributions, among them Lickona (1991) and the widely quoted Josephson Institute of Ethics.

The Institute has developed the following list as representative of moral values: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, civic virtue and citizenship (The Character Education Partnership, Inc., 1996). The listed values have been referred to as universal, and are recognised in hierarchical form as values ascending from the “lower”

material order to “higher” spiritual values. The “higher” values transcend the diversity of humanity's various cultural, philosophical, and social heritages, forming the bedrock on which are built not only cordial international relations but also the mutual benefit within interpersonal interactions. On the other hand, the Institute treats the lower values as preferences and claims that they are related to taste that can be very individual and culture specific. The Institute seems not to attach as much value to this level of values since they do not have an impact on interpersonal relationships.

Values education in Kenya's multicultural society is often acknowledged in national educational plans (Kenya, 1994, 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; 2002e).

Kenya's people belong to different ethnic groups, races and religions, but these differences need not divide them. They must be able to live and interact as Kenyans. It is the paramount duty of education to help the youth acquire this sense of nationhood by removing conflicts and by promoting positive attitudes of mutual respect. This will enable them to live together in harmony and foster patriotism in order to make a positive contribution to the nation.

Different interest groups concerned with “building persons of good character” have become very concerned with values education, and teachers are sometimes subjected to intense scrutiny and pressure. While such interest groups have the best intentions, the teacher in the classroom has to be very clear about how he or she reacts to inputs from such groups.

Interest groups tend to apportion blame on teachers rather than recognise the important role they play in values education.

Jansen (2002), in a Critique of South African values education, states, “Can white teachers in a former white school in a conservative community be trusted with conveying the kind of values that signify the new demands of a changing democracy?” In the Kenyan context the question raised by Jansen might read, “Can teachers, who come from various backgrounds, with different value systems and are ill-prepared by the education system, living in a society inundated with the influences transmitted by the global media, be entrusted with the task of teaching values as prescribed in the new mainstreamed curriculum of 2002?”.

As far back as 1976, the Kenyan state, in its role as the custodian of education, and in recognition of the decline in social and moral values in schools as was manifested in strikes, drug abuse and violence, initiated a process aimed at addressing the concerns of different

pressure groups. In that year, the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) was instituted. This committee was charged with delivering possible solutions to the challenges posed by the various social problems. The committee recommended the introduction of the teaching of Social Education and Ethics (SEE) in Kenyan Secondary Schools. SEE was an attempt to go beyond "...the continually ineffective public condemnation of social problems such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism and idleness due to lack of the necessary supporting moral and civic education" (NCEOP, 1976:5).

Though different recommendations have been implemented, based on the findings of various education commissions, they have continuously raised concerns about the limited impact that values education strategies have had. The goal of values education has been to raise children to become morally responsible and self-disciplined citizens. From the outcry from society this does not seem to be happening. In this study, I hypothesise that this could be an indication of key omissions in the policy. One such omission is that of teacher training. There is no evidence to demonstrate changes in the teaching profession as regards values education, and the values mainstreaming policy has essentially been engulfed in the old system as teachers have continued to use their known pedagogical practices, which have relied more on the transmission of knowledge and less on student participation to attain transformation.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that none of the committee reports have specifically targeted teachers as key to the whole process.

The problem, as identified by this study, is that there is both a conceptual and operational gap in the education policy document that is expected to ensure the goal of achieving Sound Moral Religious Values. As stated above, the main strategy identified by the Kenyan education system is the mainstreaming of values in the curriculum. Unfortunately, due to the controversy that has surrounded the subject, not much attention has been placed on explicitly developing the necessary implementation strategies. This has resulted in pertinent issues related to the teacher being superficially addressed. There is no evidence to demonstrate that time has been devoted to rigorous identification of the social, cultural, and political environment that influences the way teachers conduct their duties in respect of values education. This therefore means that values education is assumed with the potential of remaining vague and open to varied interpretation by different implementers. Teachers are to

a large extent being left to make sense of what to teach in regard to values, despite the much-proclaimed importance of this in the government policy documents.

This assumption in the values education curriculum is not unique to Kenya. Newell (2003:7) demonstrates the assumptions and contradictions in the apparent consensus on universal values by giving an example of an American secondary school science teacher who remarked, “Just about everyday we seem to be regaled with a new headline to do with genetic advances. What am I to think and what values am I to teach in talking about these new developments, especially when I am struggling to understand the science myself?”.

In acknowledging and contributing to the confusion that exists in the values arena, Bacchus (1989:24) recommends that, “...every society needs its members to have core shared or common values and beliefs along with the facility of communicating with each other”.

Having explored the context and content of the research enquiry, the study now seeks to investigate the intriguing intellectual context of the study.

### **1.3 The intellectual basis for the study**

Values are a complex, changing and contested subject. The meanings, as stated earlier, are defined by context and vary across time and space. Thus my attempt to get to grips with the practice of the concept, meant that I was entering a complex and contested terrain. The terrain tries to appreciate the *personal* inner tensions between the emotive and the professional self of teachers; acknowledging that teachers, like everyone else, are prone to influences of prejudiced attitudes and stereotypes.

The intriguing intellectual question of this study is the move from the outward analysis of the professional life of the teacher to exploring the way the professional interacts with the personal life of the teacher. I do this believing that the inner being of the teacher plays a key role in determining the fundamental question of how choices on values education are made. For example, the teacher’s beliefs may determine the methodology that they chose to use to transmit a particular value topic. This study, among others, begins to shed light on the implicit values that teachers portray, knowingly or unknowingly, by the choices they make in pedagogy and the amount of emphasis that they make in a subject. For example, if an English teacher, when talking about “honesty”, decides to emphasise the meaning of the term



and not the value attached to the concept of honesty, then one is able to postulate on the implicit values that that teacher holds. In the words of Connelly and Clandinin (1990:184), teaching is a “narrative in action”, that is, an “expression of biography and history...in a particular situation”.

This study also begins to illustrate how the lacuna in values education has been created, where the rational side of teaching and the teacher has received more attention than the emotive side. As previously mentioned, teacher training programmes have emphasised and strive to enhance the knowledge base of the teacher in the hope that the teacher can also transfer this knowledge to the students. It is only recently that scholars like Hargreaves (1998), Goldman (1995), and Gardener (1983) have started highlighting the importance of understanding teachers’ emotive aspects as this plays a key role in how they construct their world. These scholars have brought to the fore the fact that if a teacher was once abused when they were young, the chances of them abusing students are high, and that these teachers find it very difficult to make objective judgements on matters pertaining to abuse.

In emphasising the importance of understanding the interaction of the person of the teacher with their professional life in values, I would like to remind scholars of the power and unique position that teachers hold in the classroom. It is a fact that teachers, like any other working group, come to school in the morning carrying the baggage of their various ethnic, class and gender identities. Brooks and Khan (1992:24), state that, “Teachers not only have values, they smuggle them into their classrooms every day”. Thus teachers have individual ways of making sense of values, which, I argue, are far removed from those defined in policy documents.

In the study by Day (2000), a school principal, she says that her emotive and professional self are intrinsically linked, and the former is her driving force. This teacher’s statement illustrates that in most instances teachers are dominated by professional concerns, but driven by personal values which are mediated by external forces. Other studies, like that of Clandinin (1986) show that teachers have found that they improve at thinking reflectively across the interrelated emotive, moral, personal, private and professional dimensions of their work as the number of years’ practice increase. This argument is supported by Bullough (1989), Tabachnik and Zeichner (1984), and Feiman-Nemser (1990), who add that a teacher’s



thinking is further enhanced when they receive support and encouragement from one or more critical and trusted colleagues.

Datta (1992) states that the way the teacher's role is enacted in any particular situation depends on a number of factors including age, sex, marital status, socio-economic background, personality structure, experience and the institution in which the teacher works. Bourdieu (1997) adds to this argument by claiming that to some degree, many of us possess values that are relatively typical of our gender, class, epoch, age group, life trajectory, and so on, and we certainly acquire these from features of our social environment. The studies by Datta (1992) and Bourdieu (1997) have highlighted the critical elements that influence the teacher. What is lacking, however, is an analysis of how these factors play themselves out in the day-to-day professional life of the teacher. A close analysis of the identified factors will show that these are implicit, and therefore "hidden systems", "messy beliefs" that most researchers, among them Calderhead (1996) and Richardson *et al.* (1991), acknowledge but have found difficulty in making the connection to teacher practice. Finding the connection between the different variables and practice is central to this study.

Having highlighted the above studies, it is imperative that we look below the "waterline," as there is something more taking place in the classroom that education policy has yet to grasp. As the study by Day (2000:414) states, "What all the stories demonstrate is that 'watersheds' or critical incidents are only the tip of the iceberg of teachers' lives. Beneath the waterline is a continuing inner debate between the personal and the professional, the emotive and the cognitive, which has its moments of resolution...".

This view illustrates that the person in the teacher cannot be separated from their profession. A number of scholars have also argued that teachers, by necessity, should live up to the standards that they are expected to promote. For example, Gore (1998) says that the old adage that teachers need to be themselves what they want their children to be is as true today as it has ever been in education. Modelling remains a powerful strategy for teaching values and for moral education. The above stance becomes even more important, since the science of behaviour has proved that most behaviour is habitual, with persons in authority leading the process (Piaget 1977).

This study joins the intellectual debate on trying to find a place for values education and specifically attempts to contribute to the debate on the role of the teacher in values education. I will now present the conceptual framework that guided the study.

#### **1.4 Conceptual framework of the study**

The quandary of values education is an ancient one, as shown in the theme of Plato's famous *Meno*. Contradictions and varied explanations as to what values education entails, and how it should be promoted, are found in most of the literature on values (Lickona 1991). Scholars, practitioners and teachers have remarked on the diversity of definitions and disagreed over the proper methods of teaching values. The arguments have sought to provide philosophical (Huitt 2004; DeVries and Zan 1994), spiritual (Aparicio 1998; McGettrick 1995), and practical explanations (Lickona 1991) of what the profession of teaching is and how it relates to values.

In an effort to get to grips with the fluidity of the concept of values, these scholars, unlike Socrates who called for definition to be as precise as a mathematical equation, followed the Aristotelian tradition of not paying too much attention to precision and have tried to describe values and therefore education based on its varied characteristics and nature. Given the nature of the concept, especially if viewed from the religious perspective, authors, including McGettrick (1995), have referred to values as an aspect of spiritual development and defined values as having to do with the individual's stance in life; the inner world where feeling, imagination, mind, and heart combine.

From a religious perspective, as in Aparicio (1998), values have been defined as the science of morality, understanding morality as the combined judgments that people make with regard to what is correct or incorrect, good or bad in relation to individuals or the collective centres of intelligence and will. These varied definitions of the concept of values have meant that the strategies proposed for transmission have equally been varied. Below is a summary that attempts to bring together the different methods that have been used.

**Table 1-1 Overview of typology of values education approaches**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Methods</b>
<b>Inculcation</b>	To instil or internalise certain values in students; To change the values of students so they closely reflect certain desired values	Modelling; Positive and negative reinforcement; Manipulating alternatives; Games and simulations; Role playing
<b>Moral Development</b>	To help students develop more complex moral reasoning patterns based on a higher set of values; To urge students to discuss the reasons for their value choices and positions, not merely to share with others, but to foster change in the stages of reasoning of students	Moral dilemma episodes with small-group discussion; Relatively structured and argumentative without necessarily coming to a "right" answer
<b>Analysis</b>	To help students use logical thinking and scientific investigation to decide value issues and questions To help students use rational, analytical processes in interrelating and conceptualizing their values	Structured rational discussion that demands application of reasons as well as evidence; Testing principles; Analysing analogous cases; Research and debate
<b>Values Clarification</b>	To help students become aware of and identify their own values and those of others; To help students communicate openly and honestly with others about their values; To help students use both rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine their personal feelings, values, and behaviour patterns	Role-playing games; Simulations; Contrived or real value-laden situations; In-depth self-analysis exercises; Sensitivity activities; Out-of-class activities; Small group discussions
<b>Action Learning</b>	Those purposes listed for analysis and values clarification; To provide students with opportunities for personal and social action based on their values; To encourage students to view themselves as personal-social interactive beings, not fully autonomous, but members of a community or social system	Methods listed for analysis and values clarification; Projects within school and community practice; Skill practice in group organising and interpersonal relations

Source: Huitt (2004)

The first strategy, promoted by Veugelers (2000), Lipman and Sharp (1985) is the values clarification method. In this method the teacher either tries not to express his/her own values or is explicit about which values he/she finds important. The teacher may stress differences in values without expressing the values he/she finds important, or the teacher indicates differences in values, but also expresses the values he/she finds important. The aim is not to

teach children certain particular values. It is rather an open-ended, sustained consideration of the values, standards and practices by which we live, discussed openly and publicly so as to take all points of view and all factors into account.

The practicability of the above strategy raises a number of questions, the foremost being related to the power relations that exists between learner and teacher. The teacher in the classroom takes the leading role and is a value neutral position possible from the teacher? Secondly, what about the hidden curriculum? The above strategy seems to downplay this concept, whilst numerous studies have proven the influence of the hidden curriculum on values education. The model borrows heavily from the theory of Piaget (1932) which asserts that we construct our cognitive abilities through self-motivated action in the world. Thus the teacher only needs to facilitate, and leave the learners to explore and develop from their own interaction with others. This approach has been accused of promoting relativism, where anything seems to go.

The second approach is closely related to a rationalist approach and has been promoted by the likes of Ennis (1969) and Metcalf (1971). This approach teaches students a specific process that has to be followed when making decisions and putting these into action, and is commonly known as the analysis approach. Wambari (1998:5) appears to concur with this approach, when making his contribution to the education review process in Kenya, by stating "...to be effective, social and moral education needs to engage students in ethical inquiry not aimed at indoctrinating them, but helping them to make informed decisions".

The cognitive oriented approach is the third dimension. It seeks to engage students in discussions of relevant moral issues with the expectation that students who hear their peers discuss the issue from a higher level will gravitate to that position. This is expounded in the moral development approach of Kohlberg (1976, 1984) whose theory was based on the cognitive development theory of Piaget (1932, 1962), and Hersh, Paolitto and Reimer (1977). According to Piaget, all development emerges from action. This is to say, individuals construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world as a result of interactions with the environment. Based on his observations of the way children apply rules when playing, Piaget (1962) determined that morality too, can be considered a developmental process. This approach unfortunately leaves us in the same position, where the knowledge base of the

teacher is unknown. This means that the teacher is free to determine the emphasis and the direction. The moral discussion is based on his/her preferences.

The fourth approach is to teach students a given set of values and accompanying appropriate actions. This is the position taken by the inculcation approach to values clarification taken by the Georgia Department of Education (1997), Wynne (1989), Wynne and Ryan (1992), and Wynne and Walberg (1984). This approach, as stated by Huitt (1995), assumes a set of absolute values, agreed upon by society, that are unchanging and that can be applied equally and appropriately in all situations. This approach has been criticised for being close to an indoctrination strategy.

The final approach combines the approaches discussed above and allows the students to put their thoughts into action in a variety of social actions – a form of action learning as presented by Cotton (1996), Gauld (1993), and Solomon *et al.* (1992), or the service learning approach (Champion 1999) in more detail. Although this approach has been more palatable in a number of quarters, there is however the danger that it is vague and pluralistic in nature, with anything passing as good.

The strategies identified above betray a simplistic and vague approach to values education, one which has led Gore (2003) to term existing programmes as “a process of indoctrination,” as they fail to engage the student in deep, critical reflection about ways of living. An extract from the California study illustrates this point:

A visitor is led to a fifth grade classroom to observe an exemplary lesson on the character education topic. The teacher is telling students to write down the name of the person they regard as the “toughest worker” in school. The teacher then asks them, “How many of you are going to be tough workers?” (Hands go up). “Can you be tough workers at home, too?” (Yes). The lesson ends (Gore 2003:12).

The above extract shows that teachers tend to emphasise those values which are necessary in order to operate successfully as members of a class or school. It does not, however, tell us

why teachers select certain methods instead of others. Information on teachers' choices is critical, not only for values education, but also education in general. Eisner (as cited in Cole and Knowles, 2000:28) argues that by not fully engaging the mind and seeking out the questions that need to be answered we fail to understand who we are as individuals, and as teachers we fail to understand what is controlling what we do and to what effect; we remain fragmented, shadows of what we could be. Education planners and trainers need to understand the gaps between theory and practice and the gaps in the current training programmes. This research attempts to source such information from teachers.

The difference in values education has largely depended on the ideological background or the environment in which one finds oneself. Dunne (1997) in his effort to clarify the concept says that "Moral Education" is an umbrella term, often used to describe any attempt to systematically improve the moral values of children or adults, regardless of how morality is specifically defined. He continues to say that Character Education, or Social Education and Ethics, etc. are all variations of Moral Education. The inconsistency in the use of terminology is common in the values education arena.

Due to the fact that the definition remains contested, it therefore follows that scholarly contributions on the most effective means of transmission will remain scattered. A key concept that the studies seek to convey is the fact that teaching values is a personal art and it is the practise of a relationship between the teacher and the learner.

Scholars' are calling for research to pay attention to the general atmosphere and tone of the school and to the demeanour and methods that teachers use. Authors like Tom (1984), Noddings (1984, 1992), Ayers (1993), Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen (1993) and Sockett (1993) have discussed teaching as a moral activity. Teaching, they claim, is founded upon the relationship between two or more individuals and thus has to be guided by a morality of relationship. This follows that the relationship has to be grounded in respect and truth. The teacher by profession has to uphold the fact that they will expose the learner to the best knowledge. I believe these authors raise the issue of teaching being a moral art upon the realisation that teachers are engaged in changing the behaviour of others to attain prescribed ends. Thus the whole process of teaching is value-laden, based on the personal relationship. This teacher/learner relationship determines the outcome of the learner and it is therefore critical that the values education curriculum is able to mediate this relationship.

In the same breath, scholars like Day (1998), Fineman (1993) and Hargraves (1998) have also described teaching as a highly emotive process that involves personal reflection and individual reaction/response to different circumstances. Statements from teachers in the Day (1998) study demonstrate the delicate interaction between the rational and emotive, and in particular, the powerful influence emotion has on the former. Wright (1990) says that a teacher's understanding is largely implicit and unexplained.

Complicating the concept further is the argument by some scholars like Bacchus (1989) who claim that values are community specific and that these community values influence individual values. The values selected can be experienced and learnt and, in a multiple cultural society like Kenya, it therefore becomes the responsibility of the school, policy makers and curriculum planners to find common values and teach/transmit them to the youth. Dune (2004) throws in a cautionary statement on the issue of community values by stating that: "...community acceptance proves cultural congruency, not moral excellence. This is the greatest flaw of the character education programs as a whole. Morality is assumed to be consistent, even identical, to traits necessary for successful in-group perpetuation. Hard work, patriotism and obedience to authority may allow the society to continue its current activities in an efficient manner, but provide no guarantee that these activities are themselves moral".

In following the debate of values being community specific, Wambari (1998) builds the argument by stating that the whole community has to espouse the same agreed values. He highlights the Kenyan context of values education, and says that it has to be viewed from three existing systems of education – the formal, non-formal and informal schooling, which may well be at cross purposes. He says that a school will find it hard to transmit the values of honesty, hard work and love of a neighbour when the society of which it is part (informally) teaches people corruption, idling at work and the ethics of "every man for himself."

Therefore, instead of asking questions about the value of our formal educational system, we should really be asking questions about the values of our society and about the values which we ourselves are teaching our children by example. Wambari (1998) claims that in the final analysis, whether we wish it or not, these are largely the values that our children will acquire. Wambari's contribution continues to illustrate the confusion and diverse opinions as to the strategy that values education should take (1998).

The overview of the literature presents a lively debate that has no clear conclusions. Scholars, practitioners, parents and policymakers are all making an effort to participate and influence the debate. But final implementation seems to present a challenge, with a “hands off” attitude demonstrated by a good number.

As stated above, values education has elicited a wide range of participation from stakeholders, largely due to the fact that it touches on core/deep rooted personal beliefs. It was in this intriguing and almost messy intellectual environment that I carried out the above study. I will now proceed to give a brief methodological plan of the study. The aim of this brief is to give the reader a sense of the strategies I employed as they read through the initial chapters. A more elaborate and detailed study plan is provided in Chapter 3 of this study.

### **1.5 Methodological plan of study**

In an effort to capture the different dynamics of teacher practice in relation to values education, I deliberately chose the use of qualitative methods. I believe, and rightly so, as was proven in this study, that qualitative methods would enable me to uncover the role of the personal inner debate and the professional life of teachers, and to reveal their most deep-rooted beliefs and assumptions about a concept like values.

Whilst a number of studies note that qualitative research methods are too subjective, based on the alternatives, and has been proven by other scholars like Hargreaves (2000), I feel that qualitative methods are the only way to gain an understanding of a situation through the eyes of the respondent. The method allows for interrogation into the “why” “what” and “where” questions. The responses to these questions require the respondent to share their thoughts and beliefs. These would then enable me to link their personal and professional lives. I will now proceed to briefly describe my data collection strategies.

I examined government, school and expert writing/research documents related to SMRV. The analysis was aimed at identifying the explicit and underlying goals, pedagogy and content of the teaching and learning of SMRV in Kenyan classrooms. The data I collected formed the basis for analysis on different fronts, and answered questions related to the gap between policy and practice, as I made comparisons of the stated policy and practice of teachers. The documents made available to me included government policy documents on education, syllabi, both old and new, school handouts, teachers guides, the Constitution,



government sessional papers, government education review documents, and teacher preparation syllabus.

My second strategy was that of key informant interviews. The interviews involved persons who have been central to the development of the Kenyan curriculum, both old and new. The interviews were encouraging, compared to the questionnaires that were initially administered in the pilot phase. There was one that was very informative, with an interviewee who, on becoming aware of the “empty rhetoric” of the government and other stakeholders regarding values education, had actually started a school, where she was implementing key theories of values education.

The key informant interviews afforded me the opportunity to get first hand information of the contestation and emotions that transpired during the policy formulation process. One would be unlikely to get these insights from the neatly packaged policy document.

My third strategy was the use of focus group interviews in place of the self-administered questionnaires. This method, though difficult to arrange, proved to be a source of vital information. I gathered information from several people in a single session, and had the opportunity to clarify issues, observe expressions, and get participants to mobilise each other to participate. A total of 136 teachers were involved in the above interviews.

Lastly, I conducted structured observations of three teachers, two at primary school level and one at secondary school level. The initial intention had been to observe four teachers, but one left her school and it proved difficult to get a substitute. I observed teachers over a three-month period, one month every two terms. The purpose of observing teachers in action was to obtain first hand experience of actual classroom practice and get a feel of the classroom’s intricate relationships, connections and influences. After each observation session a brief discussion was held with the respective teachers to clarify issues that might have arisen, and also to give them an opportunity to highlight any of their concerns. In the initial sessions, the briefings were very short and the respective teachers were somewhat defensive. But as we grew more familiar with each other, the teachers relaxed, called in other colleagues, and were able to identify some of their own weaknesses. I will proceed by sharing the challenges and limitations of my study.

## 1.6 Limitations of the study

In this section, I will start by sharing my field experiences, followed by the limitations that these experiences could have had on my research findings.

My neat research plan was put to the test when I came face to face with government bureaucracy whilst trying to get permission to conduct the research. On successfully presenting my personal details and research documents to the Ministry, I waited for the documents to be reviewed by a mysterious team. This was very stressful and emotionally draining. The approximate one month wait resulted in time loss and slowed the process as I had to present myself to different levels in the Ministry to obtain permission. Unfortunately, the different levels of authority did not seem to be in touch with each other and I found myself moving from pillar to post.

Once consent was obtained from the Ministry of Education, I had to approach the City Council of Nairobi, where the research was to take place. I again went through a similar experience, as had been the case with the Ministry, although this time the process was completed in two weeks. The whole process and scrutiny that I was subjected to left me feeling guilty for being a scholar and escalated my research costs.

After the approximately two months' wait for legal clearance, I was excited that I could finally begin my research. The documentary search and random selection of schools was the first step. The documentary search was a nightmare, not so much due to the fact that nobody was ready to share information; on the contrary, they were ready to share but had nothing to share. The hangover of the previous regime's policy of secrecy or non-documentation still bedevils the different ministerial departments. I had to change tactics. Documents are in the custody of individuals instead of being in the Ministry libraries. Thus my key informants were also my sources of government policy documents.

My patience was further tested when I had to face the reality of being the one in need, and at the mercy of teachers, as I continuously had confirmed appointments postponed. In some schools, I only secured the interview discussion after five or more trips, a process that voraciously ate away at my time and monetary resources. What I could not understand then and to date is why, despite leaving my contact number, nobody had the courtesy to call me to

inform me of the postponement of an interview. I will now move to discuss the limitations on my study findings.

While the logistics presented a challenge as highlighted above, on an intellectual basis, I came to realise that my key informants lived in the African tradition of being an oral people. They had all the information I was looking for, but had not taken the time to document their experiences. This was very unfortunate, as the information remains the property of very few people. Due to the fact that the experiences of the process of values curriculum development were not documented, I cannot rule out the fact that I did not capture some vital information due to its non availability or due to the respondents having forgotten facts. This situation continues to perpetuate the fact that western experiences and analysis continue to dominate the discourse on values education.

Secondly, I selected Nairobi as the study area, believing that it would be representative of most of the communities in the country. I also chose to observe four teachers so as to get a wider perspective of teacher practice. I only managed to observe three. As I proceeded with the study and realised the contextual nature of values and thus values education, I feel that I missed useful insights to rural experiences. The absence of rural data, and the fact that I could only accommodate a handful of key informants, has made me continuously question how much more information exists that I was unable to capture. I am forced to conclude that my study is not a national representation of values education as I had previously expected. In spite of this limitation, I believe that the findings of my study mirror what is taking place amongst Kenyan teachers with regard to values education.

Lastly, I would like to share the changes that I recorded among the teachers that I was observing. Though not significant, the discussion sessions after classroom observation turned into a kind of capacity building/reflection process for teachers. It made them more aware of, and conscious of, their teaching methods as was the case, for example, when I asked the English teacher about the added value to sentence construction of the concept of “honesty”. In the next session, she made every effort to take the lesson beyond merely explaining the meanings of concepts to examining their worthiness. I thus cannot rule out the fact that teachers practices changed due to my presence. However, the length of time I spent with each teacher compensated for this fact, since most soon reverted to their old practices.

Despite the above identified limitations, I believe that my study findings make a significant contribution to the field of values education. In the following section, I explain the significance of my study at various fronts; i.e. at the theoretical, policy and future research.

### **1.7 The significance of the study**

This study on teacher understanding and implementation of the values based curriculum in the Kenyan context carries implications for theory, policy research, and practice. Before I delve into the implications it has for theory, policy research, and practice, I would like to mention that this study joins the few, but a growing number of research studies carried out in an African setting, by an African. This fact is significant as much of the scholarly work on values education, as will be proved by the literature reviewed for this study, have a western background.

The implication for theory is found in the confirmation that meanings of values are highly contingent upon and mediated by social context. What is important then is to develop theories of curriculum change, in the context of values that take account of the background of the teacher, whilst at the same time meeting the demands of the immediate community, among them parents, and further linking the same to national aspirations.

The implication for policy is that a value based initiative cannot assume that teachers, even within the same context, share the same understandings of, or commitment to, national values.

The implication for practice is the recognition that policy reforms may be necessary for change, but they are not sufficient. This means that school based research is important to determine teacher practice, and teachers will adopt policies to enable them to survive in their teaching profession whether the strategy is right or wrong. It is a game of survival.

The implications for further research are clear. This study sheds light on how teachers, in a multicultural environment that lacks the paternalistic consensus of the shared values of home, church and school, craft their way and translate values education to their practice. However, much still needs to be understood about how teachers in a multicultural society can strategically be prepared to enable them to discharge their duties effectively to meet national goals of values education.

## 1.8 Summary

This chapter has laid the foundation of the study by sharing the motivation and intriguing intellectual questions I set out to explore. The summary shows the confusing, turbulent and yet critical position that values education holds in the education system.

This study notes that although the government of Kenya seems to downplay the differences in the various stakeholders and purports to promote universal values, the conclusion by some of the policy makers that the problem is found in the definition and limited capacity among teachers is misleading. This study differs by stating that the contestation around values education resides in the fact that at both policy and implementation levels, interpretations are very different and they are embedded in deep rooted cultural, religious, social, economic, and political settings. The purported homogeneity of universal values is simplistic, and overlooks the real political and epistemological complexities ignited by values and values education.

Having developed the above foundation for the study, in the next chapter, I explore what scholars before me have identified as factors that influence teacher understanding and practice of values education. In the literature reviewed, one could not help but notice that most of the scholarly works have a western background. This is because the area of values education has not been widely researched in Africa, and more specifically in Kenya.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT VALUES EDUCATION?

#### A CRITICAL SYNTHESIS OF THE CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

## 2 Introduction

In this chapter I seek to establish and evaluate the knowledge base on values education through a critical synthesis of the relevant literature. In the process, I will identify limitations in the field which my study seeks to address. I will especially endeavour to bring to the fore the policy gap in values education, i.e. the mismatch that exists between policy intentions and classroom practice from the perspective of the teacher.

A review of the literature locates this study among other related scholarly works. It serves as a launching pad for the study and finally shows the contribution this research makes in building the blocks towards further understanding of values education. I will conclude the chapter by demonstrating how values education has not received sufficient policy attention to facilitate effective implementation.

I also undertake, in this chapter, to show how research on teaching values education has only recently begun exploring the tenuous connection between policy and practice, an area that had hitherto been considered non-scientific. As Taylor (2002) asserts, while some attention has been given to teaching methods, very little information on why and how teachers choose certain curricula approaches is available. This research oversight, I argue, has meant that values education has downplayed the complex, diverse and interconnectedness entrapped in the person of the teacher and her/his professional practice. Ruth, a teacher in the Day study (2000:413) argues that, “My whole credo in teaching right from the beginning (21 years) is that the most effective way of teaching, guiding or counselling others would be through my own personal development or self-awareness”.

In this chapter I will demonstrate that most of the scholarly works on values education have largely been presented from a “reactionary” perspective as opposed to a proactive position. This fact further emphasises how research has tended to overlook what it considers the subjective theories of educators, in favour of more commonly accepted objective research

theories. Pajares (1992) suggests that the avoidance of explicit studies on teacher theories and experiences is due to the difficulty of clearly defining teacher beliefs, calling them “messy” - an inappropriate subject for empirical investigation. This omission might be a key reason as to why the implementation of values oriented policies and programmes have enjoyed limited success in education practice.

This chapter begins by acknowledging the previous scholarship on the implementation of values-oriented education. These works, though largely unsystematic, have been critical in elucidating key concepts related to values, and a growing consensus on the importance and need for values education. Three major questions have, however, rendered the actualisation of values education problematic. Which and whose values should be promoted? How should values be promoted? Whose responsibility is it to transmit values? These are some of the questions demanding answers.

These unrequited questions have meant that the field of values education remains rife with uncertainty and controversy. The disputes are not limited to psychological accounts of the nature of moral development or character formation, but extend to the very definition of educational aims. Malen and Knapp (1997) assert that arguments surrounding the aims of values education are centred on its attempts to capture the essential quandary for any pluralist democracy attempting to construct a shared civil society, without privileging the particular values of any one group.

As indicated earlier, the concept of values education is complex and controversial. The complexity and controversy around values education clearly stem from the fact that the concept is not only highly contextual but hinges on deep-rooted personal and community beliefs. Ideas around values education are not only context and community bound, their meanings are constantly shifting. What was appropriate yesterday may not be so tomorrow. These notions of values and values based education seem to have heavily influenced scholarly work and might explain the somewhat superficial attention the concept has received.

I will now proceed to illustrate these points by organising the literature review under major thematic areas identified in the relevant literature.

## 2.1 Theories on moral development

Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, psychologists by profession, have been central to the development of theories on moral development. Jean Piaget (1932/65) focused specifically on the moral development of children. According to him all development emerges from action; that is to say, individuals construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world as a result of interactions with the environment, and thus morality is a developmental process. Applied to values education, Piaget's (1932) theory suggests that a classroom teacher should provide students with opportunities for personal discovery through problem solving, rather than indoctrinating students with norms. This thinking has largely influenced the cognitive approach, which has as its central tenet problem solving.

Lawrence Kohlberg (1984), building on the work of Piaget, advanced the notion that humans developed morals based on a series of stages - meaning that the factor of age is critical in the moral development circle. The six stages identified by Kohlberg (1984) are shown below:

**Table 2-1 Kohlberg's classification (1984)**

LEVEL	STAGE	SOCIAL ORIENTATION
<b>Pre-conventional</b>	1	Obedience and Punishment
	2	Individualism, Instrumentalism and Exchange
<b>Conventional</b>	3	"Good boy/girl"
	4	Law and Order
<b>Post-conventional</b>	5	Social Contract
	6	Principled Conscience

The first level of moral thinking is that generally found at the elementary school level. In the first stage of this level, people behave according to socially acceptable norms because they are told to do so by some authority figure (e.g. parent or teacher). This obedience is compelled by the threat or application of punishment. The second stage of this level is characterised by a view that right behaviour means acting in one's own best interests.

The second level of moral thinking is that generally found in society, hence the name "conventional". The first stage of this level (stage 3) is characterised by an attitude which seeks to do what will gain the approval of others. The second stage is one oriented to abiding by the law and responding to the obligations of duty.



The third level of moral thinking is one that Kohlberg (1984) felt is not reached by the majority of adults. Its first stage (stage 5) is an understanding of social mutuality and a genuine interest in the welfare of others. The last stage (stage 6) is based on respect for universal principle and the demands of individual conscience. While Kohlberg (1984) always believed in the existence of stage 6 and had some nominees for it, he could never get enough subjects to define it; much less observe their longitudinal movement to it.

During the same period as Piaget (1932), Hartshorne and May, in the early 1920s, advanced the notion that decision making is based on the specific situation that one finds one's self, thus it is highly variable and determined by the potential degree of risk that may accrue from the decision.

It is worth noting that the above theories have provoked much criticism, with scholars like Simpson (1974) claiming that Kohlberg's (1984) theory is culturally biased. Carol Gilligan (1982) brings in the gender angle by observing that Kohlberg's stages were derived exclusively from interviews with males, and thus she claims that the stages reflect a male orientation. Further, Gilligan (1982) argues that for women, morality does not centre on rights and rules but on interpersonal relationships and the ethics of compassion and care. She claims that woman's morality is more contextualised; it is tied to real, ongoing relationships rather than abstract solutions to hypothetical dilemmas.

Despite the diverse criticism that these theories have elicited, they continue to form the foundation on which other theorists and scholars have built in their continued investigations into moral development. Gilligan's theory (1982) on gender difference in moral development calls on scholars to reflect on whether a male teacher or female teacher will implement the curriculum differently, because the grounding and reflection on issues is based on different premises. This study will shed some light on the gender claims on moral judgments.

The moral stage approach, as promulgated by Kohlberg (1984) is vivid in the current values education curriculum in Kenya. A review of the text in use, as will be explained in chapter 4, is a testimony to how curriculum developers have used the stage theory in developing the text. This can be noted in the advice given to teachers: "...this means that activities chosen to explain religious truths and values should be selected and organised according to children's' age and level of mental development..." (Kenya 2002:116).

Piaget's (1932/65) self motivated learning theory has also found space in the same values education curriculum, as the syllabus calls on teachers to promote cooperative learning, a key feature of Piaget's theory. Unfortunately not much of the literature has been able to investigate these theories and link them to practice of teachers. For example, the stages do not offer any ideas of the levels at which a teacher should be in order to enable them to spearhead the process of moral development.

The second theme discussed below demonstrates the gap in the linkage of the theories and teacher practice.

## **2.2 Limited literature on policy and practice in values education**

There is a paucity of empirical literature on the relationship between policy and practice in values based curricula. However, it is important to note that while researchers acknowledge the fact that there is some distance between policy intentions and actual practice, they fall short of explaining the reasons for the gap between values driven policy and values-oriented practice. For example, Sockett (1993:5) observed that, "...much of what we read in the literature of education and much of what we are told is 'good' in the process of schooling, is morally totally unexamined ...".

Hargreaves (1998:559), in his major volume on education change, was amongst the first to draw attention to the fact that "...teaching is an emotive process", and that education policy has done itself a disservice by not acknowledging this fact. Fink and Stoll (1998) state that schools are human institutions, and therefore strategies that ignore the disposition, practice and culture of individual schools are doomed to fail. From Sockett's (1993) study, the question that remains unanswered is the identification of the moral issues that are critical in the process of schooling. The same can be asked of the claims made in Hargreaves (1998) and Fink and Stoll (1998). What exactly are the emotions and cultural practices that policy needs to take into consideration so as to begin addressing the gap between policy and practice? The answers to such questions will be important in determining whether, and to what extent, values education is a relevant subject for policy inquiry.

Secondly, the trend in the values literature has been to identify symptoms of the problem, with authors avoiding closer description or analysis of the complex terrain of identifying the underlying causes of the gap experienced between policy and practice. In research carried

out in Australia (2003:33), the committee concluded that values education is a subject over “...which much has been written about, but little is known”. Malen and Knapp (1997:419-445) try to explain the gap between policy and practice by saying that “...there is a disparity between policy stated aims and actual effects that seems to defy explanation. Different social conditions of the implementors may give rise to problems whose symptoms, sources, and solutions are neither readily apparent nor reliably addressed by policy provisions...”.

The literature consistently seems to remain at the descriptive level. Roger and Louzencky (2003) say everything teachers do in the classroom reflects their personal beliefs.

Gudmundsdottir (1990) argues that the values a teacher wishes to develop in his/her students are expressed in his/her interpretation of the curriculum and pedagogical choice. Mortimer (1998), in his study, acknowledges that schools from the same environment, having the same curriculum, nevertheless produce different outputs. The question that arises from these studies is; what and how do the personal beliefs of the teacher play themselves out in the classroom, and what reasons can account for the difference found in schools in similar environments that depict very different phenomena?

The McLaughlin (1999) study illustrated that policy does not necessarily determine how implementation finally takes place. Implementers, he says, do not always do as instructed, or act to maximise policy objectives, but instead respond in what often seems quite idiosyncratic, unpredictable, and even resistant ways; as is commonly known in other quarters as “street level bureaucracy” – where persons who are not officials make decisions about the practices of teaching and learning.

These studies bring to the fore the critical, individualistic and contextual nature of value based policy and practice. However they do not make clear the reasons underpinning the difference we encounter in values education classroom practice. According to a head teacher in Baltimore, Saterlie (1988:45): “If you want to know what your school values are, look at what you give awards for in your June assembly”. The values education debate would benefit from knowing the implicit and explicit reasons for the choices teachers make. In the above scenario, the reasons for selecting the said awards would expose the teachers’ values.

The available literature, including that of Leming (1993:70), bemoans how values education research is disjointed; “...disparate bits and pieces of sociology, philosophy, child

development research, socio-political analysis and a variety of different programme evaluations...”. The literature describes the disjointed initiatives and alludes to the fact that this contributes to the limited all-important dialogue between policy and practice. In an attempt to unravel the mysteries of classroom practices, my study builds on the existing literature, hoping that, at a particular period, the various pieces of scholarly work will complete the jigsaw puzzle that is teachers and values education. I will now move to investigating the vacuum in research on values and classroom practice.

### **2.3 A vacuum in research on values and classroom practice**

There is very little research-based literature in Africa and other developing countries on values in the classroom. Authors such as Lickona (1991), Nucci (1989) and Jansen (2001) assert that additional emphasis must be placed on the philosophical "why" of education, in addition to the technical "how". Jansen (2005), in sharing his experience of being the first black dean in a previously white dominated University, laments the limited research on the emotional aspects of deanship in institutions of higher learning; more so where the issue of “race” is a major factor. Halstead and Taylor (2000:190) observe that some areas of school practice were “notably under-researched”.

The limited research on values in the classroom is not unique to the African situation. Nucci (1987) observes that since the 1960s, teacher education has downplayed the teacher's role as a transmitter of social and personal values and emphasised other areas such as teaching techniques, strategies, models, and skills. Wells (1992) reinforces this point by saying that teacher-child discourse is a central aspect of classroom life where moral implications have been ignored. Buzzelli (1996:14-15) bemoans the fact that few studies have examined the moral implications of the teaching/learning activities that occur in classrooms, “Our conversation is dominated by mechanistic language: strategies, skills, time on task, and so forth.... But technique in teaching itself implies a view about what a human being is, what a person is, and that is at the very least evaluative and certainly moral”.

A number of reasons as possible explanations for the above assumptions have been put forward, amongst them, the non scientific nature of the concept and tendency to measure the concrete and tangible. There is also the untested assumption that teachers as moral beings are likely to act uniformly in the class.

Fullinwider (1993) is one such scholar, who claims that moral values are a messy area and that many would like to avoid the messiness by turning moral and political arguments into scientific or technical arguments, where they would be more at ease. He contends that such a strategy merely hides rather than resolves the problem. For a long time, the authority and knowledge base of the teacher was not questioned; what Goble (1977:118) termed the “knowledge-giver”. These explanations contribute little to the knowledge base on teacher classroom practice, which the very studies have predominantly acknowledged to be value laden. The studies argue that classroom practice is grounded in teachers’ backgrounds, their hopes, dreams, opportunities, aspirations and frustrations, which are very far removed from the obvious teaching skills, techniques and content that policy has continued to focus on.

Scholars, among them Kirshenbaum (1994), have tried to explain the fragmented attempts in values education by apportioning blame to the weak philosophical grounding that characterises the policy formulation process. The weakness, they claim, has automatically led to continued fragmented attempts manifested in the separation of the rational, intuitive and the spiritual/experiential learning of an individual. In most cases, the rationale, which is the factual curriculum, has been given more weight than the intuitive or spiritual/experiential.

According to Ryan (1988:27), “ educational psychology, rather than philosophy and religion, has become the basis of teacher training. In most cases, educational psychology focuses on the individual, separated from the social context. Additionally, modern education has been heavily influenced by the behavioural approach, which has proved adept at developing instructional methods that impact achievement as measured by standardised tests”.

Regardless of the limitations mentioned, it is prudent that I mention the fact that some research has, however, sought to explore classroom practice. Allard and Cooper (2001) and Manke (1997) conclude that uneven power relations and negotiations between teacher and students in the classroom largely determine the methods that teachers use in promoting values. Gore (1998) and Buzzeli (1996) on the other hand, raise the important issue of the role of relationships between teacher and learners. Buzzeli (1996:14-15) holds that, “The ways teachers engage children in discourse during teaching-learning activities have profound moral implications for children's learning and development...”.

Despite the small but growing literature on values education practices, questions related to the determination of actions are yet to be clearly presented. For example, in the Buzzeli (1996) study, obvious questions of how the power relations that exist in the classroom between teacher and learner influence and impact in moderating the values that are espoused in the classroom, remain unanswered. It would have been beneficial to the whole discourse on values education if the studies had taken the discussion further by specifically identifying moral elements of the classroom relationship. While the third theme emphasises a similar gap to the first and second, the accent is, however, more on practice.

#### **2.4 Too much theory and advocacy; too little original research**

There is too much advocacy or normative literature on what values should be and far too little original research on how values should be structured. The literature I reviewed displayed a relatively weak philosophical grounding which may explain the limited empirical data they have to offer practice. For example, on explaining the challenges on pedagogy, Hydon (1997) says that despite recent attention given to the development of virtues as an educational aim, it is by no means clear how the aim is to be pursued or how it can be achieved.

A similar assertion is identified by Korthagen and Kessels (1999) who argue that one of the central problems with teacher education is that the theoretical body of knowledge taught in schools of education is not the kind of knowledge that teachers actually draw upon while teaching. Similar sentiments are expressed by Cochran-Smith (1998) who said that educational theory needed to move from only providing knowledge to providing knowledge and interpretive frameworks.

Whilst these studies raise key challenges in values education, they fall short of providing information on the practical structure that values education should take. This is common in the literature. The identification of the problem and a normative prescription are provided, but the next step of collecting relevant data that will facilitate the development of strategies of action, is either weak or, in some instances, completely lacking.

The literature, in a somewhat romantic style, seems to have collected a number of stories of educators' experiences. For example, Carlin (1996: 7-26) says, "...but if schools rise to this challenge and decide to tackle the sex question, they are right back in their original quandary. Should they take an abstinence approach or a safe sex approach; in the latter, they'll outrage

moral and religious conservatives while in the former, they'll outrage moral liberals and secularists".

Carlin's (1996) study, though it brings out the dilemma that teachers find themselves in when in the classroom, does not proceed to suggest which route the teacher should take and why. That information would have been extremely useful in our understanding of teacher choices. The above study, among others, illustrates the superficial nature that the values education arena has been inundated with. Most studies examine emotional issues that are not grounded in a substantive base of information and supported by teachers' day-to-day practice. In my study I have listened to and conversed with the teacher. In the case of the above example, my approach would have been to probe the teacher further on the choice taken and why. I believe that it is when policy starts listening to the lone voice of the end user that the gap between policy and practice will begin to be addressed in values education.

On the other hand, some studies have attempted to provide insights into the structure that values education should consider. Sommers (1993), a critic of the conventional means of transmitting values, presents Japan as one model that has successfully mastered the art of using the public school system to transmit values. She claims that, unlike the method of having values taught in a separate philosophical class, the Japanese system has inculcated values in everyday activities. Students practice acts of sharing, neatness and orderliness, respect for others, and loyalty. This approach has allowed the Japanese to instil the basic values of their society within the school system.

However, in response to Sommers, Holt (1997), a critic of the conventional method of character education, makes a different assertion by stating that the methods used today are designed to drill students in specific behaviour rather than engage them in deep, critical reflection, adding that these methods are tantamount to indoctrination. The issue of indoctrination is also supported by Piaget (1962) who suggested that a classroom teacher must provide students with opportunities for personal discovery through problem solving, rather than indoctrinating students with norms. While the identified ideas are powerful in the sense that they state what the ideal/basic principles of operation should be, they, however, need to shed light on the interpretive framework of the teachers and the environments in which they are working so as to have concrete suggestions as to how values education should be structured.



Another theory that attempted to contribute to the structure of values education is that of reflective thinking - a position taken by advocates of the values clarification movement (Simon and Kirschenbaum 1973; Raths, Harmin and Simon, 1978; Simon, Howe and Kirschenbaum 1972). The key challenge of the proposals of the above authors is the fact that though they recognise basic principles of learning, they fall short of focusing on teachers interpretative frameworks which, due to the power relations in a classroom, can point the thoughts of students in a particular direction. Beller (1986), in his contribution on education for character, advocates that values clarification and cognitive programmes have failed to equip students with the moral character that society wants. This finding goes further to confirm my argument on the need to focus on teacher interpretive frameworks.

Another common thread in the literature is the fact that while most people want values included in the curriculum, they don't want children tested in the conventional way, i.e. through exams, to assess student achievement of values. This fact has provoked a major debate in academic circles in Kenya. The argument has centred on the diversity that exists in the current schooling system with stakeholders wondering how a fair or uniform kind of criteria can be developed to evaluate the development of learners on a continuous basis.

Again, the same issues of stating the desired, but not providing a basis for implementation, is common. Kohlberg (1984), in taking cognisance of this gap suggests that there is need to identify a continuum of moral development and apply it to any moral situation and to individuals. The levels on the continuum, if established, would form a framework for assessment and provide a common standard and language for reporting. Kohlberg's study (1984) is among the few that has highlighted the fact that the framework should also include the teacher. If Kohlberg's (1984) suggestion was to be taken seriously, then the policy environment would have to reorient itself from a boardroom kind of policy development, to one that seeks to explore and develop policy from the experience of teachers.

As I was reviewing the literature, I kept questioning the seriousness in which values education is held, especially when policy documents, including research works, confirmed that values are social constructs; thus the teacher's involvement in the whole process was critical. The limited attention therefore given to teachers' values is puzzling. Hargreaves (1998), in his study on the emotive aspects of teaching also, clearly highlights challenges that



are encountered by present day educational reform programmes. He claims that if the emotive side of teaching is not taken seriously, reforms cannot be effective.

Jansen (2001), in emphasising the same point, calls for an exploration of the "personal identities" of teachers, while Cochran-Smith (1997) is of the opinion that a theory should be formulated that will understand not only knowledge, but also the "interpretive frameworks." These scholarly works have left the debate at the level of identifying the problem. There is therefore room and need to take the debate further by really getting to grips with how teachers are currently making sense of values education. Only when we appreciate how teachers are managing, will education policy be in a position to formulate appropriate action on values education.

The next theme focuses on what has been written specifically on teacher understanding and practice in values education.

## **2.5 Teacher understanding and practice in values education**

I encountered some literature on teacher understandings of values education in practice, and how teachers make sense of values oriented curricula at two levels. On one level, the literature reflected incompleteness, whilst at the second level a more detailed account of teacher understanding was provided.

At the first level, for instance, I came in contact with experiences of the likes of Jane Elliot, a third grade teacher in Iowa (USA) who, in order to demonstrate discrimination divided her class according to eye colour. The children, through the activity, felt what it really means to be either superior or inferior. This classroom activity was a face-to-face confrontation with discrimination and demonstrated a high level of understanding by the teacher. The exercise drew on inner reflection that seems to be lacking in most of the superficial examples of values education (Nyberg 1990).

The literature also brings to the fore scholars who have made great strides in identifying key fundamental issues that relate to teacher understanding, but stops short of making the connection with practice. Veugeles (2002), in his study, shows that teacher understanding of values is narrow since they understood it to be a special project of sessions, which takes place in the morning assembly, lasting 20 minutes at most.

Kohn (2003) further points out that not all teachers thought it was their responsibility to foster values. They believed that this domain was the responsibility of the teacher who taught the subject. This narrow understanding is again recorded in a study carried out by Powney and Schlap (1996), where it was realised that behaviour was central to primary teachers' understanding of values that some teachers listed certain types of behaviour as "values". Holt (2003), in analysing the same situation, boldly states that teachers mistake good behaviour for good character. The above studies have taken the research on teachers and values a step further, by attempting to identify and make judgments on teacher understanding. However, they do not identify the interpretive frameworks which are critical for a full understanding of teacher practice in values.

I came across studies that have attempted to identify elements that influence teachers' interpretive frameworks in values education, but are weak in making the final linkages of the understanding, interpretation and practice of teachers. Datta (1992) has attempted to address the issue of interpretive frameworks of teachers when he says that the difference in understanding is based on teachers' beliefs and the multiplicity of roles they have to play, including confidant, counsellor and disciplinarian. While Datta's study comes close to answering the questions on teacher practice, he however falls short of highlighting which beliefs teachers hold that determine their interpretation of values.

Pintrich *et al.* (1993) cautioned against ignoring the powerful effect of the emotive aspects of teachers' beliefs. He also does not expand on the said emotions. It is for the above reason that I have termed the studies incomplete. My study set out to identify and shed some light on the nature and genesis of teachers' beliefs, and how they affect the interpretation and final implementation of values education. I believe the study will go a long way in capturing the data for the missing link.

On the second level of analysis, I came across literature that has made strides in the area of understanding teacher interpretive frameworks. A case in point is the research conducted in Israel, by Schwarzwald *et al.* (1978), which showed that teachers' attitudes and teaching values were based on a combination of variables, including interaction with people and inherent personality traits, especially dogmatism. The Israeli study is one of the very few that went on to make a connection between personality traits and understanding, by stating that less dogmatic teachers were more open and were found to base their decision making on

relevant information, whereas highly dogmatic teachers tended to be more encumbered by irrelevant factors, mostly stereotyping.

Besides the above study, I also found a body of literature that has tried to analyse teacher understanding by making reference to the rational and emotive nature of the teacher. Day (2000) asserts that teachers make decisions using two minds, the rational and the emotive. The rational is deductive, careful, analytical, reflective and frequently deliberate. The other side of the coin is the emotive mind, which is powerful, impulsive, intuitive, holistic, fast, and most often, illogical.

The literature continues to assert that the rational side of teaching has received more attention than the emotive. It is only recently that scholars like Hargreaves (1998), Goldman (1995), and Gardener (1983) have confirmed the importance of understanding the teachers' emotive aspect, as this plays a key role in how they construct their world. Even though the above studies do not mention in detail the factors that influence emotions, they have been critical in bringing to the fore important issues about the emotive nature of the teacher. The challenge remains to identify the genesis of these emotions and how they translate themselves in the values education class.

Testimonies that show the linkage of the personal and the professional practice of the teacher are common in the literature. In the Day (2000) study, a school principal says that her emotive and professional self are intrinsically linked, and the former is her driving force. This teacher's statement illustrates that in most instances, while teachers are dominated by professional concerns, they are also driven by personal values mediated by external forces.

The study by Clandinin (1986) illustrates that teachers have found that they get better at thinking reflectively across the interrelated emotive, moral, personal, private, and professional dimensions of their work as their experience in teaching grows. And Bullough (1989), Tabachnik and Zeichner (1984), and Feiman-Nemser and Bachmann (1986) add that enhanced reflective thinking is recorded when teachers receive support and encouragement from one or more critical and trusted colleagues. These studies bring out the earlier point I raised, the fact that values education research on teachers has been conducted unsystematically, meaning that there are bits and pieces of initiatives that need to be consolidated for a more holistic picture.

Contributing to the puzzle of the teacher interpretive framework, Datta (1992) says that the way the teacher's role is enacted in any particular situation depends on a number of factors including age, sex, marital status, socio-economic background, personality structure, experience and the institution in which the teacher works. Bourdieu (1997) argues that to some degree, many of us possess values which are relatively typical of our gender, class, epoch, age group, life trajectory, and so on, adding that we certainly acquire these from features of our social environment meaning that they determine how we make decisions.

The studies by Datta (1992) and Bourdieu (1997) have highlighted the critical elements that influence the teacher. What is lacking, however, is an analysis of how these factors play themselves out in the day-to-day professional life of the teacher. A close analysis of the identified factors shows that these are implicit, and therefore "hidden systems" and "messy", and most researchers, e.g. Calderhead (1996), and Richardson *et al.* (1991) acknowledge, but have found difficulty in making the connection. Finding the connection between the different variables is central to values education and key to this study. It is in this regard that this study seeks to understand how teachers make sense and implement the values curriculum, by establishing teacher understanding, interpretation and practice of values education.

Contributing to the construction of the puzzle on teacher interpretive frameworks, Caspe (2003) identifies three reference points from which teachers give meaning to values, namely: other families they have interacted with in the past, their experience within their individual families, and familiarity with the particular family or child concerned. By comparing information with one or more of these points of reference, teachers begin to construct meaning, whether accurately or inaccurately. Bauman (1992) refers to post modernism, where the lack of a "centre" is something to be celebrated and everyone is a producer of knowledge, leading to values education becoming more neutral. Everything is right depending on the context. The post modern era, in my thinking, has contributed greatly in creating a challenging environment for teachers. Levels of sensitivity to values education have increased and the policy documents have generally remained vague in a number of areas so as not to offend any particular interest group. The vague nature has meant that values are open to different interpretations. The key question is, what are these interpretations?

On his part, Newell (2003) claims that communication and media are major influences in shaping current thought. Baudrillard (1988) speaks of a revolution that has engulfed people

with information. The extent of this information, according to Saul (2002), is such that the distinction between reality and the word/image that portrays it breaks down into a condition of hyper reality. The question I will seek to resolve is the extent to which teachers' value judgments are influenced by the media, especially when we find ourselves in Africa.

A key reference point identified in the literature is that of the head teacher. Powney and Schlapp (1996) noted that head teachers generally see it as their role to set the tone for values education in the school, and ensure a policy of transmitting these. Anderson (1991) also showed how school principals manipulate teachers.

Wendy (2004), commenting on the importance of school leadership, argues that:

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school...It is his/her leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of the teachers and degree of concern for what students may not become...If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child centred place, it has a reputation for excellence ... If students are performing to the best of their ability, one can always point to the principal's leadership as the key to that success.

These studies have revealed important elements regarding teacher reference points by identifying a key person who sets the tone of values education. They fall short, however, of exploring the basis upon which the head teachers formulate their conception of values. The challenge then is whether the manner in which the values are interpreted and implemented are in accordance with expectations of parents and the curriculum.

This study sets out to investigate the premises that are used when determining values education. This will offer an explanation as to what teachers consider when making their final decision on practice, following from the hypothesis of this study, which claims that government policy alone does not seem to be the premise on which teachers consider in value education. The next theme is centred on the controversy that surrounds the role of the teacher in values education. This theme is of interest to this study as a comparison with the Kenya

system demonstrates how the concept of values education continues to be a challenge for different education systems.

## **2.6 The controversy surrounding teacher roles in values education**

The literature in values education reveals high levels of uncertainty, with conflicting ideas on the role of the teacher. For example, some authors on values education have continued to question whether the teacher has a role to play in values education. Nyberg (2003) holds the view that it is a blunder to leave the role of the transmission of values to the teacher, as the teacher is an educational partner with parents. Others, such as Carlin (1996), have questioned the role of the school in promoting values, both on content and on issues related to the teacher as an individual.

The Australian study (2003) concluded that teachers should reflect more on the values that govern their own teaching and be aware of the values that they want to develop in students. Beyond this, there is a need for more understanding of values and its development. The studies are non committal, and it is for this reason that I state that the literature reveals high levels of uncertainty which may explain the slow pace witnessed in the crystallisation process of teachers' practice on values education.

As a counter argument and second dimension to the place of the teacher and values, we are confronted with strong advocacy for the role of the school in teaching values. Otiende (1992) subscribes to the ideal that one of the roles of education is to transmit cultural values from one generation to another, and also within a generation. Otiende *et al.* (1992) makes the case that all educational systems, whether purposefully or not, transmit certain values. Bachus (1989) contends that the role of the education system is to develop an awareness and sensitivity among all students to particular elements in the society that are revealed in the cultures of the various ethnic groups who are also members of the nation state.

This line of thought is supported by Mncwabe (1987:1) who believes that,

Education is an institutionalised way of formally transmitting the culture of a society. Schools and other acculturation agencies employ the curriculum as their main strategy for ordering the selection of knowledge for

which they are responsible. Here, in a sense education acts as a vehicle for integrating individuals into their social group, community and society. The curriculum planners determine which knowledge is made accessible to the children.

But one may ask, whose culture will be transmitted in a plural society? The argument questioning the place for values brings in the third dimension advocated by the likes of Dillion and Maguire (1997) who expand the notions of values education. But their argument, though ideal, could easily diffuse the central role of the teacher. Dillion and Maguire (1997) advocated for a lifelong learning system, meaning that education must extend beyond classrooms and schoolyards into the community and society. They called for “a partnership of school, home and community in which each partner would be responsible for a specific aspect of the educational task...education must serve the needs of humans.” While this may be the ideal, the reality of current day society will hardly allow for the above paternalistic kind of society as noted by Musgrove (2004), who bemoaned the unpredictability of society, arguing that it is critical for a more defined order to ensure that schools are able to deliver on their mandate:

All societies need their members to behave reasonably, consistently, predictably and honestly. This is what social order is... but in less close-knit communities like modern industrial countries, families themselves may vary considerably. In these circumstances schools come to the fore; they help to cut down variations in behaviour that is important to the society and the economy.

Musgrove’s argument is further enhanced by Powney and Schlapp (1996) who state that the unpredictability of society is so confusing that in instances where teachers think they know, and where there is consensus about key values, they lack the confidence to take action when confronted with real life situations in the classroom. Halstead (1995) on his part says that it is not difficult for schools to identify appropriate values. There is no shortage - the challenge is that there is often little agreement.

The non committal nature of the literature on values education made me consider the Japanese option. The Japanese system, not that it is absolutely beyond question, has clearly defined what it understands values to mean and how it wants these transmitted. This means that the teachers and the curriculum are prepared to rise to the challenge, unlike most communities where issues of definition and responsibility are still clouded. The latter means that adequate preparation and monitoring can hardly be expected; thus rendering the debate as to whether teachers are well prepared for their role as values transmitters.

Then there is a whole body of literature that represents those scholars who try to highlight how values should be taught. But again these studies display a relatively high level of hesitation due to the highly personal nature of the issues and how they hinge on the teacher's individual rights. For example, scholars question whether the teacher by necessity has to practise the values they are expected to teach by society, or can they distance themselves from these, and if so, with what impact? Jokhoo (1998) is one of the bold scholars who in his contribution claims that values are more often "caught" than "taught". Thus, teachers have to practice what they teach as they are role models. This kind of slippery ground has meant that research into teachers' practice and values education has to tread carefully as there is potential controversy.

The above discussion has dramatised the contested and seemingly confusing concept of values education. However, authors have made attempts at prescribing ways of promoting values education. The next theme will endeavour to highlight some of the proposed methods that have been used to promote values education. This information is important for this study as it shows the attempted practice of values education. This is a key element for this study.

## **2.7 Proposals for implementing values education**

Despite the literature, when showing how values education lacks coherence and consensus expected of scholarly works is witnessed in other subject areas regarding pedagogy, it is important to mention that scholars have made strides in not only debating on pedagogy, but identifying, and in some instances, testing a number of strategies that could be used at school level for values education. I will briefly share the different thoughts, ideas and cautionary statements that other scholars have contributed to the pedagogical debate. The comments



from different scholars will not only serve to show that this is a concept still in the making, but also demonstrate that this is an area that nobody can yet claim expertise in.

Silcock and Duncan (2001) provide a general overview of the values education arena, when they say that though schools are not value free environments, teaching methods have tended to focus on issues of definition, classification and the extent to which anyone can, or should impose their moral precepts on others. This narrow and disjointed approach has been a consistent trend in the literature leading scholars like Checkoway (2001) to state that moral education should be integrated within the curriculum and not take the form of a "special" programme or unit. A programme that is simply inserted into the curriculum carries with it an inherent artificiality and discontinuity that renders such interventions incompatible with the more general aims of teachers and students. Nucci (1987:3), in support of an all-round approach to values education, says that, "If we have learned anything over the past 30 years, it is that moral education cannot be isolated to one part of the school day, or to one context, but must be integrated within the total school experience...".

Then there has been the argument of the role of the teacher. The literature shows that there is no consensus as to how schools might approach values education. Aristotle (as cited in Kizlik, 2002) has questioned whether virtues can be taught at all, and if so, whether it should be the role of schools to teach them. Newell and Rimes (2002) state that teachers are inevitably involved in values education, but their exact role is still the centre of debate. In response to this debate, we have scholars like Milson (2002) and Checkoway (2001) affirmatively stating that good character is not formed automatically. It is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning and practice. Checkoway's (2001) study is one of the few studies that refer to some of the underlying factors that determine good character.

Kirschenbaum (1983) begins on a cautionary note by suggesting that it would be prudent to take the best elements of each of the different strategies, synthesise them, and improve from there. Mncwabe (1987) follows the same argument by stating that, "...the aim of education should not be to impose moral standards on the youth, but to teach them a process through which they can set standards and make moral decisions for themselves within the context and demand of their relevant culture".

It is indoctrinators who regard social and moral education as a matter of "instilling" or "implanting" or "passing on" values. Proper teaching should be a matter of cultivating and exercising moral and social discernment that is already in the children at an early age so that they can function on their own now as children, and later in life as adults (Huitt, 2004:10).

Ryan (1995:428) observes, "...what goes by the name of character education nowadays is for the most part, a collection of exhortations and extrinsic inducements designed to make children work harder and do what they are told...". The diversity of opinion on the subject makes one aware of the conspicuous gap that exists between the stated policy and the practice. The literature shows that due to the indistinct and non affirmed approach of values education pedagogy, implementation continues to be haphazard. One is tempted to agree with the school of thought which stated that, instead of developing policy and trying to implement it, rather focus on what people are doing and put this into the policy (i.e. backward mapping).

It is noteworthy that though scholars like Hydon (1997) have stated that generally values education has been implemented inconsistently by means of trial and error, exceptions exist, i.e. the De La Salle University programme in the Philippines, the international "Living Values Educational Programme," which began in 1995 and found its way into Kenya in the same year. The Virtues project, common in North America and some schools in Australia, has been considered by scholars as a progressive initiative. These projects aim at raising moral and spiritually responsible children and teachers. A set of virtues (values) have been distilled from the world's religions, and these virtues form the point of reference in all discussions and are the object of teaching and learning in the classroom. Important to note is that, despite having all these programmes that have successfully integrated values into all sections of the curriculum, with participants practicing "values" in their day-to-day lives, implementation of the process has only taken place in isolated instances.

Allard and Cooper (2001) and Manke (1997) conclude that the methods that teachers use in promoting values are largely determined by uneven power relations and negotiations between teacher and students in the classroom. This suggests that it is next to impossible to impose a single method of implementation as students are all different. The challenge for education policy is to move away from an open-ended definition of values education to a level where

parameters can be determined for teachers and students to use in the classroom. This research is intended as a contribution to the development of such a framework.

Another consideration under implementation has been that of the “hidden curriculum”. It has featured prominently in the research on values education, with Hydon (1997) saying that the climate and ethos of the school as a whole are the most significant influence on the determination of values education. Davies (1991:18) states that “...if teacher’s professional conduct does not underscore the written content of the curriculum, then we have no alternative other than to admit that even the most relevant curriculum can become totally irrelevant...”.

Teachers demonstrate different levels of understanding and use of the hidden curriculum as a strategy for inculcating values. It was interesting to note that in some of the studies, teachers did not consider the hidden curriculum – it was assumed or taken for granted.

A survey conducted by the Boston University Centre for the Advancement of Ethics and Character in 1999 demonstrated that over 90% of the deans and directors of teacher education across the country supported the teaching of core values in schools. Yet over 81% reported being unable to adequately address Character Education in their own teacher preparation programmes. Another study by Nhivu (1999) showed that while teachers were generally prepared to teach values, their incapacity prevented them from complying with the requirement.

Marshall (2003), having recognised the inability of teachers to teach values education, proposes that all teachers, no matter what their grade level, discipline, or years of experience, need information and guidance on how to demonstrate and implement positive character traits in the classroom. However, the question still remains. What will the training focus on, especially since the connection between teachers’ knowledge and their practice in values education has not yet been determined? Such a fundamental question will have to be addressed before the proposed initiative can be implemented.

In a study conducted by Powney and Schlapp (2003), they recorded suggestions from teachers regarding how values education should be taught; the suggestions favour a system that enables students to think for themselves. But Hydon (1997) advises that students’

thinking has to be guided in a particular direction. Thus, there is need for a process that enables consensus on values and the enhancement of the teacher's skills.

## 2.8 Summary

In conclusion, the literature review has confirmed that the controversy taking place, both at the philosophical and practical level regarding values education, reveals a glaring (and unspoken) gap between policy, theory, and practice. A substantial body of literature has attributed this distance to the limited or incomplete data that exists in the sector regarding teachers' interpretive frameworks. The literature seems to conclude that while the general meaning of values is established, the specifics remain a challenge. My study is poised to contribute to the debate by identifying some specifics, especially those related to the teacher. These specifics will go towards enhancing our understanding of the extent to which policy can expect to influence practice.

A number of issues ranging from the conceptual definition, the question of whose values and that of pedagogy, still remain unanswered. This study extends the scope of existing research by exploring the disparity from a teacher's perspective, believing that this information is critical in completing the jigsaw puzzle that is values education. This is an area that has partly been explored by some studies, such as Jansen (2001). But there is need for further investigation in order to determine teachers' attitudes towards values education.

The literature has demonstrated the vital position that values education holds in the debate in education. This position, though fraught with difficulties, continues to preoccupy the minds of many educators and policy makers. The task of getting to grips with values education has been described as "enormous" by Halstead (1995) and difficult for schools, not so much due to limited knowledge, but due to little agreement. Thus any scholarly work that sets out to contribute to shedding light on this concept is welcome. My study aims to identify teachers' interpretive frameworks. Knowledge on teacher interpretive frameworks in Kenya is critical for the newly introduced values education curriculum. As mentioned earlier, the values education arena has experienced several changes, but there has been limited attention given to teachers and their coping strategies. A focus on how teachers negotiate their way will contribute critical information for policy on teacher preparation. The information generated will highlight the gap that has continued to elude the goals of values education.

The literature has been elaborate in its presentation of the growth that has taken place in values education. It seems to call for dynamism and creativity, as society is changing. Values are a contextual concept and thus creative frameworks need to be developed to ensure that the dynamism of the concept is maintained, whilst keeping the ideals. It is important to note that in the initial periods, the studies were generally theoretical and had not been tested, but research that is currently being done in this sector is based on tested initiatives. This fact should bring hope to scholars interested in values education, in that one day, the concept will be much more understood and thus easier to implement.

While it may not be overt in the literature, there are implications and questions raised by this review on the seeming silence on values and teachers. Values education seems to have made heroes out of the teaching profession, with the literature alluding to the fact that teachers need to take a lead in values education. Teachers are expected to be aware of the values they want to develop in students, and teachers are expected to take on different roles demanded by their profession with ease. Yet teacher interpretive frameworks are not discussed in the credible body of research. This study is an attempt towards addressing teachers' interpretive frameworks in values education. The study attempts to measure with integrity, the sensitivity of teachers' classroom practices and to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of this knowledge for the success of the general values education goal.

As I move to the chapter that enumerates the design of this study, I need to mention that the methodologies I chose for this study are based on the fact that I would like to measure teacher perceptions of the values curriculum. Secondly, I will measure understanding not only by their stated responses, but also as verified by their action in practice. The observation session will play a major role in determining the sensitivity of the teachers to the mainstreamed values curriculum. In this regard, I identified tenets of the values education curriculum as per the curriculum policy documents. I used this information firstly at the interview level, where I investigated the stated responses of teachers of the various concepts. I then derived behaviour partners of the concepts for further observation in classroom practice. For example, for the concept of "national unity", I discussed with teachers their understanding and possible ways of promoting the same. This is then followed by an observation of how the concept is practiced in the classroom; e.g. giving every person in the class an opportunity to share their thoughts on diversity.

I will now present a detailed explanation of the design this study adopted. It will be noted that due to the fact that the study seeks to investigate subjective issues related to teacher perceptions and practice, multiple qualitative methods were used to compile the data.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND STRATEGIES

#### **3 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the research process and explains the different data collection methods and strategies deployed in this research. The aim is to provide an appreciation of the detailed investigation that forms the framework for this study, and to give an account of how I arrived at the stated findings. The chapter starts with an outline of the design followed by a detailed explanation of the four main methods chosen for the study. The chapter ends with an outline of the strategies used to address issues of validity and reliability of this study of values education in Kenyan schools.

In order to capture the different dynamics of teacher practice in relation to values education, I deliberately chose qualitative research methods. I believed, as the study has proven, that qualitative methods would enable me to reveal the sensitivity of the teachers to the values education curriculum which I postulate to be embedded in deep-rooted beliefs and assumptions surrounding the concept of values. I was attracted to qualitative methods because of their nature of investigating the “why” “what”, “how” and “where” questions. Responses to these questions move from the generic and sometimes inaccurate projections or postulations common of quantifiable research.

While emphasising the fact that “values” are a subjective and continuously shifting concept, I have used multiple methods of data gathering to not only clarify my findings, but also to confirm the statements made by the same teachers in different periods and situations. Fidel (1993) asserts that subjective research should make use of multiple methods to measure the same qualities, each verifying the other. Before I provide the details as to each of the methods I used, I will explain the sampling this study adopted.

#### **3.1 Sampling**

The sampling and selection of informants for this study took into consideration the fact that the ideological, social, and political environments in which different teachers work all have a bearing on how they interpret policy in their classroom practice. I used snowball sampling

methods, where the first participant identified the next, and so forth. This method of selection ensured that the informants were not selected based on prior judgment or acquaintance, but were identified by people in the same field of interest, i.e. people with whom the conversation and initiatives on values education have been taking place. This strategy further guaranteed that the respondents were an authority on the subject. A scan of the respondents included former school inspectors, lecturers in teacher education; curriculum developers; and persons in research institutions. A detailed profile of participants is provided later in this chapter.

The geographical area of the study was limited to the province of Nairobi (34 secondary and primary schools in total). The city has a rich diversity of different types of schools and all the major cultural and ethnic groups are represented in this province. I randomly selected every second school from the list of schools provided by the city council, based on the identified stratification, namely, Muslim, Christian, Government, and private sponsored schools. The original target was 63 schools, but this was reduced to 34 for manageability and the realisation that I was more interested in access to the interpretive frameworks of a particular group than the number of persons in the group that think in a particular way. I thus invested more time in a smaller group.

The initial stages of the study envisaged the use of self-administered questionnaires. I chose this method knowing that self-administered questionnaires have the advantage of anonymity, and I was probing sensitive personal issues. However, the piloting phase showed that this was not to be the case. I intended to send out 180 questionnaires, distributed by means of “drop off and pick up,” in order to make certain that the response rate was high. I gave the teachers a period of 5 working days to respond to the questionnaire.

While the response rate was indeed high, I discovered on inspecting the content of the first 40, that the teachers were having trouble responding adequately to the questions. The responses tended to be academic and did not reflect accurately the feelings or perspectives of the teacher. I decided to administer the remaining questionnaires through focus group discussions. The interviews recorded the stated understanding and perceptions that teachers hold of values education. This information was to be further compared with practice during the observation sessions. The discussions gave the teachers time and space to express themselves and enabled me to witness the process. Although I had ceased to use the self-



administered questionnaires, I was able to use the information gathered to sharpen my focus group interview guide document. The questionnaire also formed the thematic base of the conversation with key informant interviewees these were lecturers in teacher education and school inspectors, whose main role is to monitor the implemented of curriculum, and lastly persons who have played a key role in consecutive curriculum development. Furthermore, I used the information in the data analysis stage, where I compared the written statements with the focus group discussions.

I chose to observe teachers in the primary grade 7 to secondary form two. This stage of schooling was selected based on the findings from the theories of moral growth as promulgated by Piaget and Kohlberg (1976), who claim that at this stage, of between the ages of 7 and 11 years, the learners start to use logic in their moral reasoning. It was therefore important to observe how the teachers at this level are able to accommodate the changes in the growth of learners into their practice. I will now provide a profile of the key informants for this study

I interviewed personnel in the curriculum development unit; namely, the head of Primary Education, head of Religious Education, colleagues in the Research and Development Unit and the Coordinator of Life Skills Education project. By virtue of the fact that the mentioned team is in charge of curriculum development and was directly involved in the crafting of the curriculum on SMRV, I was interested in gathering information related to the process of translating the policy on values to classroom practice. I was looking for any guidelines or cues as to their expectations. What were their interpretive frameworks and how have they incorporated teachers concerns in the whole curriculum? Comparing the policy formulation to that of teacher concerns, their interpretation and final implementation are critical for this study to establish how policy determines practice.

I then interviewed a former Education Inspector of schools, who is currently running a school with a very different system that strives to strike a balance between the academic and personal growth of the child. From the former inspector of schools, I sought to document issues that may have arisen in follow up visits to schools on values education. Questions were aimed at determining how much values education takes up the official government evaluation process. This information was to enable me gauge the level of importance that government and schools have placed on values education.

This was followed by interviews with lecturers from the public and private universities, where I focused on people involved in teacher preparation. I was interested in knowing the content of the curriculum on values and also in determining the time allocated to values education in the teacher preparation curriculum. Much of the literature on values had alluded to the fact that teachers were not well prepared for their role as values educators. Thus, I needed to confirm or dispute this fact. The information I generated in this section was useful in showing the distance between the stated policy and school level practice.

I then sought information from key stakeholders. These were persons whose contributions have had an impact in values education policy. I specifically selected private research organisations, and representatives of religious communities, (1 Catholic, 1 Protestant, and 1 Muslim). These were people who have participated in the education commissions whose recommendations have resulted in the change of values curriculum. I was interested in documenting their respective concerns and feelings towards values education.

Lastly, I interviewed ten head teachers from ten different countries in Africa. I met the head teachers at an international symposium of head teachers taking place in Nairobi (February 2005). I combined these interviews with that of four locally based head teachers from a representative sample of private schools, both primary and secondary – a Christian primary school and a Muslim secondary school. The literature on values education has claimed that the head teacher determines the ethos of the school and that the school is a reflection of the head teacher. I was thus interested in confirming this assertion and also determining how far the head teachers have participated in interpreting the current values education curriculum.

Between the key informant interviews I conducted focus group interviews with teachers. These interviews incorporated 136 teachers from different schools. Three to four teachers formed an interview group. I kept the groups small to allow for participation from each member. The small groups enabled me to easily record the reactions of each member. I concluded the study by conducting structured observation sessions of three teachers, two at primary, and one at secondary level. The aim of the observation was to establish teachers practice. I will now explain each of the data collecting strategies.

## **3.2 Data collection**

I concentrated on four data collection methods, namely: documentary analysis, key informant interviews, focus group interviews, and structured observation of three teachers. I combined the document analysis with the key informant interviews of persons who have played pivotal roles in the development of the curriculum in Kenya. This was so, since the key informants were my source of policy documents (I conducted these two simultaneously to overcome the challenge I mentioned in chapter I, where I cited the fact that government policy documents were not in the government libraries or offices, but were in possession of past and present personnel). I will now move to enumerate each strategy.

### **3.2.1 Document analysis**

I examined government, school, and expert writing/research documents related to SMRV. The aim of the analysis was to identify the explicit and underlying goals, pedagogy, and content of the teaching and learning of SMRV in Kenyan classrooms. The data I collected formed the basis for analysis on different fronts, and contributed immensely to the identification of issues related to the gap between policy and practice. I then compared the information documented with practice in the classroom situation. The documents made available to me fell into two categories, those at policy level and those targeted for utilisation at school level.

For the policy documents, I reviewed the constitution, government policy documents on education (Acts), government sessional papers and government education review documents. From these documents I started to understand and appreciate the government's written intentions, perspectives and aspirations in relation to values education. I documented the spoken philosophy and agenda of values education. I later used this information to compare realities I witnessed on the ground.

The next category of documents was those used at implementation level. These were the teacher preparation syllabus, school syllabus, both old and new, occasional school handouts and teachers guides in values education. From this material, I began to appreciate the strategies that had been adopted as a means of translating policy into practice. I matched the strategies and began the process of documenting what I considered convergence and divergence in policy and practice. I clarified and built on this information during the

interview and observation sessions. An analysis of the teacher preparation material provided an insight into the time allocated and skills building efforts dedicated to values education. This information enabled me to comment on literature claims about inadequate teacher preparation.

In chapter four I present an analysis of the documentary search in chronological order to demonstrate the journey and progress that values education has made over time. A review of both the policy and school based material shows three phases: the period immediately after independence 1970-1980, the change of political administration 1980-2002, and the current period 2002-2005. A bird's eye view of the materials reflects the system's expectations of the students, and it therefore follows that teachers should be conversant with them.

### **3.2.2 Key informant interviews**

The interviews involved persons (as detailed above) who have been central in the subsequent development of the Kenyan curriculum; i.e. the period of 1970 – 80, then 1980- 2002, and finally 2002 - 2005. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and, in most circumstances, in the work place of the interviewee or in their home environment. The process and data gathered during the interviews was exceptional in providing the background and impact of the prevailing social, cultural and political environment on values education. One interview was particularly insightful, in the sense that I recorded a story by one of the key interviewees as she sought to interpret policy intentions into practice. On becoming aware of the empty rhetoric of the government and other stakeholders regarding values education, the interviewee has started a school, where she is putting into practice key theories of values education.

The key informant interviews afforded me the opportunity to get first hand information of the controversy, conflict, and emotions that accompanied and influenced the policy formulation process. Anonymity was guaranteed in the individual interviews and this increased the richness and depth of information gathered. It is highly unlikely that I would have gathered such information from the neatly packaged policy documents. The response rate for the key interviews was high, and in some instances the respondents remained in touch with me thereafter.

Again, the “snowball” sampling technique was used in the selection of interviewees. The interviewees were those who had either been directly involved in the education review committees or those that participated in the subject expert committees; in this case values education. This strategy not only assisted me in gaining access to policy makers, but in some instances afforded access to highly placed policy makers.

Despite the number of documents consulted, the type of information I was seeking is not typically documented. It is for this reason that I chose the key interviews to supplement information provided in the policy documents. For example, a policy document does not mention the mood of discussions and the forces at work behind policy agendas. I was able to elicit this information from the key informant interviews.

The direct interviews, in contrast to survey questionnaires, allowed me to seek clarification and to prompt the interviewee if a question seemed unclear. The interview sessions concentrated not only on identifying policy as opposed to current practice, but also the factors that determine the curriculum of values education. The sessions provided a more detailed account of the meanings of the official pronouncements of the goal of Sound Moral and Religious Values (SMRV). The information gathered increased my understanding of the original intentions of the policymakers and planners of SMRV, as well as the challenges they have faced in trying to achieve the policy goal.

### **3.2.3 Focus group interviews**

My third strategy was the use of focus group interviews in place of the self-administered questionnaires. This method, though difficult to assemble the participants, proved to be an excellent source of vital information. I gathered information from several people in a single session and had the opportunity to clarify issues, observe expressions, and get participants to mobilise each other to participate. A total of 136 teachers were involved in these interviews. This is many more than could have been interviewed individually. Three to four teachers were present at every session.

A key element of the study, and as demonstrated in the literature reviewed, is the gap between peoples’ perceptions, their practice and the official pronouncements and intentions of policy. In the focus group interviews, I was particularly interested in the teachers’ interpretive frameworks. I wanted to find out, at a general level, what guides the teacher’s

decision-making in values education. Thus the conversation was filled with “Why?” and “Where did you get that from?” I wanted teachers to explain what they understood about SMRV as a core value in education, and how they actually implemented this value commitment in their own classroom. I designed the discussions in such a way that they enabled teachers to explain how they would act in real life situations. This method permitted communication and interaction between group members in a relaxed manner, enabling the teachers to remind each other of concrete examples of practice. The casual recollections of real life situations served to validate the information I was gathering.

Unlike the key informant interviews, the group discussions required me to develop an open relationship of trust with the various teachers. I spent time explaining the aim of my study, and how I intended to utilise the data collected. It was interesting to note that when I mentioned the fact that I was pursuing my studies from a University outside Kenya, the teachers and administration were more willing to accommodate me. I concluded that this feeling of unease originated from the days of the previous administration, where people feared to disclose any information in case they got themselves into trouble with the government.

I realised that in order to enhance the rigour and quality of the research I had to be part of the team, yet be apart from them; a very difficult act indeed. To overcome this hurdle, I sought the support of a research assistant, who was familiar with my character and would therefore act as a check and balance to my participation. As a strategy, I disclosed my bias to the assistant at the beginning of the study, and one of her key roles in the study process was to ensure that the level of subjectivity was minimised. The assistant signalled to me whenever she thought I was pursuing questions that reflected my bias.

A major advantage of the focus group is that I could clarify issues that might have been delicate or not discussed at all – i.e. implicit issues. People often express views that they might not have expressed in other settings, or if interviewed as individuals. The social interaction within the group yielded freer and more complex responses as there was interactive synergy and security of participants within the group. The facial expressions and body language of the members of a group was revealing, increasing the validity of my findings.

For example, it was interesting to note the different ways in which the teachers communicated. I could not help but note the marked difference between the way they addressed me and when they spoke amongst themselves. This illustrated to me how teachers can acquire different identities to suit the situation. It was then that I decided I would make follow up telephone contacts with different individuals involved in the sessions, to clarify and probe further any apparent consensus reached in the group interviews. The employment of multiple strategies further enhanced the rigour of the study to aim at arriving at accurate data. I was very conscious of the fact that the concept of values is a subjective concept, thus the conclusion arrived at in a group may not be fully representative.

### **3.2.4 Observation method**

I conducted a structured observation of three teachers, two at primary level and one at secondary level. My initial intention had been to observe four teachers, but one left her school and it proved difficult to get a substitute. I observed teachers over a three-month period (one term), one month each. The purpose of observing teachers in action was to obtain first hand experience of how teachers make sense of values education in the curriculum. My observation sessions were guided by a list of questions formulated from information gathered from the documentary search, focus group interviews and key informant interviews. After each observation session a brief discussion was held with the respective teacher to clarify issues that might have arisen, and give them an opportunity to highlight any concerns.

In the classrooms I recorded teacher language, teacher/learner interaction, and teaching methods used. The basis of this was decided upon during the focus group discussions and expert interviews, where value based statements were changed into behaviour.

As the observation sessions progressed, I noted changes; not only in the teachers under observation, but also in those who were interested in finding out the reason for my presence at the school. The number of teachers participating in the after-lessons debriefing sessions increased. The conversations and the teasing that took place amongst them demonstrated the growth in the level of awareness on the education goal and expected practice. Whereas my presence could have influenced the behaviour of teachers and therefore the data, the period I spent observing a teacher was such that they would revert back to their normal practice, then

back again to the expectations of the curriculum. In this way I was still able to gain insights into their practice and also confirm that pedagogical change take time to be fully adopted. Some of the observed teachers took the process further by reading about the subject and approaching me for interpretation and advice. Drawing a line in the relationship between the teachers and me proved to be very challenging, and it was difficult to remain detached. Since research dictates that one should desist from getting personally involved in the research process, I was unable to share my feelings with the teachers. While the teachers were attempting to deal with real issues in the classroom, I was unable to respond to their problems, for fear of influencing their decisions. This was very frustrating.

The teachers involved in my study developed an open attitude, and began to share with me their dilemmas and inadequacies. I noted that the teachers appreciated the fact that they were being questioned about themselves and their professional world. Someone was for the first time interested in their lives and not the pass rate of their students; meaning that they were not merely instruments for churning out students, but that they themselves mattered. This made them feel valued and increased their enthusiasm to participate in the study.

### **3.3 Data management**

In order to manage the vast amount of information gathered, I have presented the information gathered through focused group discussion into the respective stratification of schools; i.e. government school, followed by the private school, then the religious school. This is followed by a cross synthesis of the information gathered.

The information gathered during the observations has been represented as follows. At the government school, represented by Miss Atieno, the captured data has been synthesised into a single day in her teaching life. At the private school, represented by Mr Okello, the information has been presented through the lens of three key characteristics of the students. At the religious school, as represented by Mrs Andia, the information has been presented using some unique incidents that took place whilst I was at the school. Lastly, the forum is presented in discussion format. I am confident that this manner of presentation will elucidate out all the key observed findings.

The information gathered through the expert interviews is presented in chapter 7, where I carry out a cross synthesis of all the information gathered in the literature review, curriculum



analysis, teacher interviews and observation sessions. I use pseudonyms and have coded them – e.g. K1 represents key informant 1.

### 3.4 Validation of procedures

The element of subjectivity in the data collection process during this research was problematic. In order to reduce the risk of my own perspectives dominating the data and overriding those of the respondents, I used the following strategies:

(a) **Research assistant:** Throughout the study period, I engaged a research assistant who is quite familiar with my personality and I shared my bias towards the study with her. The role of the assistant was to support me in taking down field notes and also to be a check restraining me whenever she felt that I was going beyond my study objective confines.

(b) **Triangulation:** The information collected from the documentation was verified through interview sessions carried out among curriculum developers, lecturers and head teachers. The after-lesson interview sessions clarified and elucidated the observation sessions, whilst the focus group interviews were clarified and confirmed by the observed practices of teachers and the policy makers' contributions. In the case of any information that was entirely at variance with the trend, I made a direct follow-up with the respective teacher to ensure that what was recorded was actually what they meant to say.

(c) **Peer review:** When conducting the key informant interviews and focus group interviews, a research assistant was also present, and I held discussions with her following every session. I also gave the data collected to a colleague in the field of teacher education for review. These peer reviews enriched the process by questioning the findings and providing different viewpoints as lead areas of investigation. This made me go over my findings again, resulting in some instances of me having to call upon some of the teachers for further investigations.

(d) **Thick description:** The contents of the discussions and observation are described in as much detail as possible, so as not to omit any leading information. The literature on values education has alluded to the fact that personal histories have an effect on how decisions are made. Thus although I would have liked to present the personal biographies of the respondents this was not possible, as the teachers were not comfortable with this. I have thus

omitted this information, but have instead provided details of the respective school environments in which the teachers are working.

### **3.5 Ethical considerations**

This study explored the personal understanding of how teachers interpreted and implemented the values education curriculum. The fact that values as a concept touches the personal lives of teachers meant that I was seeking information that has largely been considered private and sensitive. It was therefore critical that I maintained a high level of sensitivity and confidentiality towards the issues under observation or shared with me.

From the start of the study I explained the aim of the study in detail to the participating teachers. I also assured them that the information would not be used in any way to discredit themselves or their school. I have therefore used pseudonyms in the text and have presented the information in cluster form, according to the stratification adopted in the sampling that is religious, government and private schools involved in the study. This style ensures anonymity, and at no time can one make a connection to the respective schools or teachers. The number of schools in the different clusters renders such an exercise impossible.

### **3.6 Summary**

In this chapter I have described my data collection strategies and how I tried to ensure that the information I generated was a fair representation of the teachers' meanings and understandings of values education. I conclude that the process of collecting data was interesting, but also tedious and in many cases frustrating; particularly in dealing with bureaucracy in the education system. It was fortuitous that this research was conducted at a time when Kenya was going through a transition period from a fully dictatorial political system, to one that is more accommodating. Thus people were beginning to feel free and were ready to share information.

In the next chapter I present a detailed analysis of policy documents and texts used at the classroom level. The aim of the process was to establish the extent to which government has been able to interpret and translate policy intentions to classroom practice material. From this exercise I was able to determine what values government was interested in promoting

and I used that information as a basis of the interview questions and also determined the behaviour to observe.

A brief overview of the documents shows consistency in the interpretation of values education. What stands out clearly is the fact that over the years, the values education discourse has experienced tremendous growth as demonstrated in the policy documents and material being utilised in the schools. This is not to say that the sector has reached maturity. Issues related to teacher preparedness and capacity to fully implement the values education curriculum as envisaged by various stakeholders continue to haunt the education system.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### VALUES IN KENYAN EDUCATION: A CURRICULUM ANALYSIS

#### 4 Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of the current learning material on values education that the Ministry of Education has produced for use at school level. I begin by locating the roots of the policy in the Constitution and in the Education Act, which has largely been influenced by the different education commissions' reports. An analysis of these documents is significant as it not only provides insights into the philosophy of the policy intentions, but also evidence of how the Ministry has translated the policy at implementation level. Several features form the basis of my analysis of the material.

The first is the writing style. I chose to review the writing style, given that scholars (among them the University lecturers involved in teacher preparation interviewed for this study) have argued that writing style plays a critical role in not only determining the method that is used at classroom level but also the level of involvement expected from the learner and thus the teacher. Because I am trying to determine the interpretive frameworks of teachers, an analysis of the writing style will help me determine the impact the writing style of the school text has contributed to the practice I find on the ground.

The second feature to be analysed is the language used in the text. While conducting the focus group discussions, teachers identified language as a critical pointer to the emphasis that the government or policy would like to promulgate. Thus I tried to determine how the language used in the text is supportive in promoting the values as espoused in the policy documents. The second issue that I noted when analysing the language was the relevance and appropriateness of the content as compared to the environment. One of the key philosophical beliefs that the values education curriculum has embraced is the fact that leaning for transformation can only take place if the content is relevant to the learners' situation. Thus during the interview discussion I was able to identify the issues that teachers thought relevant to the current environment.

A third aspect that I looked for in the text is how the content has embraced issues related to diversity and ethnicity, as espoused in the constitution. Lastly, I try to determine whether

there is any evaluation system in place to inform the teacher and at a different level the government on progress made towards achieving the goal of SMRV. This is important in determining the importance that the government has placed on the policy.

I have presented the discussion under the respective subject headings; that is, analysis of English, Social Studies, Christian Religious Education, Geography, History and Government to enable a detailed description of how far the government has mainstreamed values at text book level. I focus especially on the social science subjects as these were the initiation target subjects of the Ministry of Education. I commence my review by giving an overview of what the Constitution and various education plans state on values education.

Kenya is in transition with regard to Constitution making. The Constitution currently in use is one inherited at independence. One of the election promises of the current government, elected in 2002, was the crafting of a new Constitution developed by Kenyans. True to their promise, the government instituted a Constitution making process in 2003 and the process has been ongoing for the last three years. A draft was completed in 2005, but was rejected in a referendum due to some contentious issues. Political analysts have claimed that 80% of the proposed Constitution is acceptable and have expressed hope that by the end of 2006, the remaining 20% would have been amended to the satisfaction of the people. It is for this reason that in this analysis, I have reviewed both the current and proposed Constitution.

A synopsis of the current Constitution shows that values are expressed throughout the document though one cannot help but notice the diffused and unstructured manner in which these values are presented. Values in the document take an individual/human rights perspective, meaning that the values are expressed from a second perspective; i.e. the rights of the individual take centre stage and the values are assumed by virtue of those rights. For example, when taking a stance against discrimination, the document places it under the “protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual” (chapter 5).

It is within this chapter of individual rights that one draws conclusions towards potential values which may be infringed. For example, the Constitution spells out that Kenyans do not believe in discrimination in any form, value freedom, and value tolerance. This is the trend in the whole document, with values not as explicitly articulated as one would expect.

Another phenomenon that appears under several sections in the Constitution is the concept of “public morality”. Public morality is considered as a fundamental issue to be protected. The Constitution makes provision for exceptions to be made in the interest of “public morality” (Constitution: 21). Unfortunately, the details of what “public morality” entails are not provided, and thus it is open to different interpretations.

The proposed Constitution is in sharp contrast to the current Constitution in key respects. Firstly, it places the people of Kenya at the centre of the dialogue. Secondly, the rules are made by Kenyans to facilitate the development of a nation, unlike the current Constitution which gives rules to govern Kenyans, a situation that contributed to the limited ownership of the document and rightly so, since this was an inherited Constitution, developed by colonial masters for an entity aspiring to independence. Thirdly, the proposed Constitution, in its preamble, begins with acknowledging the supremacy of the “Almighty”, in sharp contrast to the current document, which is almost silent on the spiritual beliefs of Kenyans. This is a major shift.

The new document dedicates three chapters to clearly spelling out what Kenyans value and what they aspire to as a nation. Chapter three spells out national values, principles and goals (Constitution 3: 13:18), for example national unity, recognition of diversity, promotion of participation and promoting transparency and accountability among others. Chapter four details issues related to citizenship (Constitution 4: 14:19), e.g. the right to citizenship, entitlement to a passport, and responsibility to fellow citizens among others.

Chapter five focuses on culture (Constitution 5: 26:23) e.g. recognition of culture as the foundation of the nation and affirms the sovereign uniqueness and distinctiveness of the Kenyan people. The focus of these three chapters is a fundamental departure from the current Constitution. A summary of the values shows that they resonate around national unity, appreciation of diversity, people centred development, inclusiveness in governance, protection of human rights, upholding the family as a key social unit, social justice, cooperation, respect, good governance, tolerance, equality, transparency and accountability (Constitution 18: 23). These values though relatively universal, in the Kenyan context, the emphasis is an indication of the challenges manifested in the multicultural society that forms the Kenyan nation.

An important feature of the proposed Constitution is the weight it places on individual responsibility. This is a significant departure from the current Constitution which tends to emphasise what the state ought to do for its people, with less said on the obligations of the individual to their community and state. This was a sore point for the scholars interviewed in the key informant interview sessions. The scholars claimed that the development of international human rights movements has tended to emphasise the responsibility of the state and less that of the individual, leading to an unhealthy imbalance that has bred irresponsible persons, more concerned with self interest.

Based on the ideological principals of everybody taking responsibility, the new values curriculum has as its central tenet the need to involve everybody and make it every body's responsibility to promote values – i.e. mainstreaming. No more is the teaching of values specific to some teachers; secondly it is no longer only found in a specific subject, but in all subjects.

The above discussion has centred on what the Constitution has stated with regard to values. I will now proceed to look at other policy documents, more specifically the Education Act and different commissions' documents. I mentioned earlier that the various education commissions have been the source of information for the education system. The reports are highly regarded in Kenya and continue to be important documents for the education system. One key reason why the reports are highly regarded is the fact that they contain information gathered from the Kenyan people on what they would like to see happening in the education sector. I will now continue to present what the specific reports have raised in regard to values education.

Values education has been an issue of continuous discussion in the Kenyan environment. The various policy documents on education attest to the fact that values education has repeatedly been acknowledged as an area that needs to be at the centre of education. An overall scan of the different policy documents records a consistent definition and understanding of Sound Moral and Religious Values. The changes that have occurred over time have generally been an expansion of the details in an effort to incorporate changing circumstances in society, and thus remain relevant.

In the period 1963-1980, the goal of Sound Moral and Religious Values (SMRV), then referred to as Social Mutual Responsibility (SMR), was defined as; "...the free ability and willingness of the people to discharge their moral obligations for the benefit of all members of society (that is the common good)".

The thinking behind this goal was to bring up a generation that would be conscious of the rights of others, contribute to economic development, and willing to make efforts to live in harmony despite the different ethnic groupings. In the period 1986 to 2002, SMRV was defined in the same way, though the strategy of implementation changed, and it was taught in subject form – Social Ethics and Education (SEE). From 2002 onwards, it has been defined as "...the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enhance acquisition of sound moral values and help children to grow into self-disciplined, self-reliant and integrated citizens". The philosophy behind this goal is the quest to have a nation that is peaceful, with people living in harmony and contributing productively to the economy.

As far back as 1949, the debate on values education made it onto the agenda. The difference, however, has normally been identified in the intended benefit. For example, the Beecher report of 1949 promoted values education as a strategy of ensuring that Africans developed a character that would enable them to be obedient servants. The report recommended that, "...at all levels of education, and as a condition of entry to the next level, considerable emphasis be placed on character and on the acquisition of practical skills" (Kenya 1999:2).

The second commission is the famous Ominde commission of 1964, coming one year after the country attained independence in 1963. This particular commission's findings are critical and serve as a turning point for the education system of Kenya. For the first time, African Kenyans were afforded the opportunity to contribute to the education system and the report breaks new ground by taking cognisance of both the social and national objectives of education. With regard to values, the report acknowledges the important role of government in training for national unity, and specifically identifies schools as having a major role to play. It is in the same belief that the report recognises the important role of the teacher in building the character of the learner, when it states, "...but in these schools we need a much more developed national consciousness among the teachers, in order that the whole teaching in the school may encourage children from an early age to think of themselves as Kenyans" (Kenya 1965: 29).



The Ominde report extensively covers issues of national unity. This is understandable considering that the commission was instituted one year after independence. The report did not explicitly deal with values education as we know it today and essentially values are assumed in the document. It is the responsibility of the curriculum developers, and at lower level schools, to decide what values they need to promote to attain national unity. The Ominde report has largely been accused of not giving prominence to values education, when it specifically opposed the development of a single ethics programme, claiming that it would not be desirable. The report states that:

...a single programme of ethics should be given in all schools, comprising a quintessence of the ethical teaching of all the main religious systems...we must dismiss this proposal as impracticable. Even if agreement between the representatives of the different faiths could be secured, which is highly problematical, it is certain that the resulting compromise would please none of them (Kenya 1965:36).

As a result, the period after independence was characterised by a curriculum that did not explicitly plan for values education, but expected that religious subjects, through their efforts of addressing the spiritual growth of the learner, would adequately serve the purpose.

The next commission is the Gachathi commission, which was instituted in 1976. The findings of this report led to the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP) recommending in 1976, that Social Education and Ethics (SEE) be taught in Kenyan Secondary Schools. The purpose, as claimed in the report, was to help learners to consider and reflect upon their social and moral values and, if need be, modify them appropriately for the well being of the society of which they are a part. The NCEOP report expressed the view that, "...the teaching of ethics should go into the details of the social norms underlying all aspects of human behaviour, irrespective of whether one is religious, atheistic, agnostic or adheres to any other belief...a basic code of survival...".

The report went on to state that the responsibility of values should be solely for the RE teachers considering "...the traditional role of religion to provide a strict moral code for the community".

A clear trend and emphasis has been sustained in the respective reports on the need for values education. This emphasis is a reflection of the failure of the previous strategies to address the issues of values education, since the social/moral state of the society is the yardstick against which values education success is judged. Progressive reports, among them the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond, commonly known as the "Kamunge report" (1988), went further to recommend that SEE be taught universally to all students at all levels of education in Kenya. The report dealt with values in an incremental manner, suggesting the continuous search for solutions to the deteriorating social environment in the country.

As is the norm in various policy statements that are considered highly sensitive, the statements on values education in the education plans are brief and open-ended, leaving room for various interpretations. In the Kenyan situation, the above observation could be the government's strategy of accommodating various views common in a multicultural society. However, one commission report that stands out as having recommended mainstreaming of values is the Koech report of 1999. The report recommended a shift in the education system and termed it "...totally integrated quality education and training (TIQET)". The research commissioners claimed that such an education system embraces the values and substance that should characterise an education system. The Koech report (1999) is very clear in its statement on the gap in values education. It states that:

A most important gap is in the area of values and ethics. This is an important gap because the effectiveness of knowledge and skills is heavily influenced by the values and attitudes of the persons concerned...this in turn implies that a foundation of general values and ethics has to be built during the basic levels of education and training (Koech Report, 1999:9).

As a follow up to the identification of the gap, as its second recommendation, the report (Recommendation 4.2) reads as follows:

There is need to strengthen the moral fabric of the nation through greater emphasis on Religious Education, and Social Education and Ethics, whose teaching should adopt a practical approach (Koech Report, 1999:xxxiv).

It is important to recognise the unfolding events that were taking place in Kenya when the Koech commission was tasked with their inquiry. The country was gripped with fear raised from claims of an upsurge in the number of people involved in the art of devil worshipping. This practice was claimed to have been rampant in schools. The then President, Daniel Arap Moi, appointed a commission of inquiry into the claims, but the report on the findings was said to have been too sensitive to be released to the public.

The second key issue at the time of the Koech commission of inquiry was the much awaited public recognition and acceptance by government of the challenges related to HIV/AIDS. For a long time the Kenyan government, unlike its neighbour Uganda, downplayed the impact of the pandemic, and this situation was compounded by the antagonism that was taking place amongst the religious organisations and government on the most appropriate strategies to employ to address the pandemic. Consequently, the pandemic spread unabated. The Koech commission was instituted at a time when consensus had been reached among the key stakeholders on the need to address the scourge, thus it was a time for identifying aggressive strategies to address the pandemic in all sectors of society, and more especially, the education system. The report therefore noted that, “The devastating threat posed to the nation by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the need for the education system to target the youth for desirable behaviour change towards the eradication of the epidemic” (Koech Report, 1999: xxxv).

Depending on the interpretation that curriculum developers adopt, addressing behaviour change in relation to HIV/AIDS means that a set of values would make their way into the curriculum. As I discuss in the individual classroom texts at a later stage in this chapter, this is exactly what happened. It is for this reason that the Koech report (1999) stands out as a report that urges the education system to act on values education. The subject of social

studies, developing understanding of the relationships between history, climate, resources and cultural patterns can lead to a better understanding of persons from different cultural backgrounds and religious groups.

A bird's eye view of the various commissions' reports seems to suggest a nostalgic quest for traditional value systems. The Koech report calls it the "...rekindling of the original and traditional culture of mutual social responsibility... moral and ethical values were known and accepted as a way of life by all" (Koech 1999:1). The respective reports attribute the lapse in values to the changing social economic environment, but the Koech report comes out strongly and points a finger at the colonial system. The report states that "... the colonial government imposed its education policies and practices on local communities, thereby destroying in its wake the African traditional systems" (Koech 1999: 2).

The Koech report (1999) seems to have informed the current values mainstreaming process. The report recognises the challenge to Kenya's education system as the need to " evolve an education system that provides access, relevance and quality for all eligible learners; one that promotes the all-round development of individual persons and which fosters national unity, moral integrity and mutual social responsibility (Koech, 1999:4).

In light of the above challenge the report recommends that "...education must emphasise character development of each individual to ensure that economic development is accomplished by moral integrity" (Koech, 1999:4). The only way to ensure that each individual character is developed is by adopting a mainstreaming approach.

In accordance with the strong recommendations as outlined in the commissions' reports and the constitutional review process, the curriculum development unit of the Kenya Institute of Education has developed its own guidelines for authors to adhere to when writing the text. In the years before values mainstreaming, the guidelines were relatively silent on values, but at the beginning of 2002, authors were provided with explicit guidelines that ensured that the values Kenyans wanted to promote would feature strongly.

The above discussion has centred on the policy documents that have influenced the education curriculum in Kenya. The reports' aspirations in relations to values have been summarised in the national educational plans (Kenya, 2002a; Kenya, 2002b; Kenya, 2002c; Kenya, 2002d; Kenya, 2002e and Kenya, 1994). All state that the following:

Kenya's people belong to different ethnic groups, races and religion, but these differences need not divide them. They must be able to live and interact as Kenyans. It is the paramount duty of education to help the youth acquire this sense of nationhood by removing conflicts and by promoting positive attitudes of mutual respect. This will enable them to live together in harmony and foster patriotism in order to make a positive contribution to the life of the Nation.

However, an overview of the school-based material reveals an ironic mismatch in emphasis between what has been produced for teacher preparation compared to that geared for direct student utilisation. The irony lies in the emphasis placed on expectations of students, whilst overlooking the strategy for achieving the policy goal. It is my belief that a balanced, holistic approach would automatically have captured key issues of teacher concerns. This lacuna was more striking in subjects such as values, where a solid reputable framework is yet to be confirmed.

In comparison with direct statements from teachers, I noted that the harmonious methodical scenario presented in the policy documents was limited to the official textbook analysis that I conducted. The consistent definition of values for example does not represent the debate that is taking place within the school environment or on the outside wider community. An important issue I also noted was the marked difference in levels of awareness of the policy on values. In my opinion, the level of awareness has played a major part in further reinforcing the distance between the government policy and school practice.

I will now present the detailed review of learning materials. These materials will illustrate the manner in which curriculum developers have interpreted the mainstreaming policy of values education into the school text books. The information generated will enhance the basis of the observation sessions.

#### **4.1 English language**

English is the third language for most Kenyans and is the second official language of communication (Kiswahili is the national and first official language). During my interview

sessions, curriculum developers claimed that English was one of the easier subjects for promoting value awareness. A look at the Teachers' guide for English Book Two used at secondary level cites the major principle of the new syllabus as one that "...places learners at the centre of the learning and offer realistic writing tasks to which learners can relate..." (T/G 2004:x).

The book then begins on a high note with a set of general rules that are value laden; these rules set the tone that should guide the learning process (see below). Interesting to note is the fact that the text seems to adopt the format of the proposed Constitution, where what is valued by Kenyans is placed right at the beginning of the text. In the English text, the values that we expect in the text are enumerated under the banner of "rules of conduct" at the beginning of the class.

### **Rules of Conduct**

Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can

At all the times you can,

To all the people you can

As long as ever you can.

John Wesley (pg 1)

An appraisal of the content of the book shows how the authors have dealt with varied socio-economic issues relevant to the Kenyan context. These issues range from health, history, culture, behaviour patterns and relationships. Under health, for example, the book covers topics like drug abuse, smoking and alcoholism. In terms of culture, the topics serve to put into perspective and dispel issues related to witchcraft and some traditional taboos and practices that may be inappropriate in present day life.

Under behaviour patterns, the authors in comical ways have used interesting daily etiquette to challenge what is experienced in an ordinary Kenyan community - by this, students should be able to relate and understand the message being conveyed.

The narratives in the book intended for analysis by students ensures that they address pertinent issues of family relationships, drug abuse, sexuality and that they extensively explore conflict management techniques within the school, home and community; for example, issues surrounding inheritance and drawing of a Will. The philosophy underpinning this approach is that when people are analysing issues familiar to them, then they are best able to understand and internalise them. Reading the book exposes the reader to topical social issues affecting the Kenyan community. The narratives provide real life lessons relevant to the Kenyan situation today and thus serve more than one purpose; they introduce history, culture, moral values, and finally, the intended knowledge of the English lesson.

An analysis of the style of writing is such that it accords the learner time to reflect and be creative. For example, at the beginning of each topic, a story/narrative is provided (the narrative is centred on a topical issue as indicated above). From the narrative, the learner is expected to read, understand and at the first level respond to questions directly related to the narrative. At the second level, the learner's creativity is explored, as they are required to widen their scope of thought, for example by being requested to find other countries with a similar situation. The third and final level centres on the acquisition of language.

The first and third levels of the session are straightforward, and have been the norm before the mainstreaming process. The second level, however, requires that the individual teacher's reflection/interpretation comes alive. This level is left open for the teacher's creativity and as the authors of the teachers guide have stated, they hope that the teacher will "...take the language lesson beyond the classroom..." (T/G, 2004: xiv).

A summary of the values noted and exalted in this textbook include bravery, honesty, hospitality, marriage and kindness. The text scorns at issues related to wizardry, alcoholism, drug abuse, laziness and theft. This text is an improvement on the previous text which had abstract stories with a narrow focus on language acquisition only.

The teacher's guide accompanying the above text basically follows the same format as the one in the student's text, but offers tips for the teacher in areas of methodology. The teachers' guide provides the objective of the lesson and the intended outcome. Under the objective, both the language and value/worthiness of the lesson appear, as shown in the following example.

“To enable the learner to:

- a) acquire vocabulary and sentence structures relating to police activities and use them correctly
- b) appreciate the importance of maintaining law and order” (Primary English: pg 18).

The guide places the responsibility on the teacher to ensure that the objectives of the lesson are achieved. Unfortunately, the outcome of the lesson did not clearly state what slant the teacher's interpretation should take, despite the subjective nature of the narratives and the individuality of the teacher. The authors acknowledge this in the introduction to the guide, when they state that “...teachers bring to the class their unique personalities, experiences and training which influence the way in which students interact and learn language...” (T/G, 2004:x). The text assumes that the teacher would know what the government's stance with regard to the respective values is. The open-ended nature means that interpretation of values education is not protected from dogmatic beliefs or values from the individual teacher.

It is difficult to achieve clarity in values education, in the discourse of teachers and values education. The dialogue has highlighted the issue of values not being explicit, thus contributing to the contestation witnessed in the area. For example, the English form two teachers' guide clearly states that, “...the most effective methods are those which give students the greatest opportunity for participation and allow them to relate their experiences...” (T/G, 2004: xi).

The challenge is that terms like “participation” can be problematic as they carry different meanings for different people. For example, participation could mean “a question and answer session”, or “group work”, “dramatisation”, or it could mean carrying out a “live experience” exercise. These four are different forms of participation that call for different input, with regard to time, management and resources. The four strategies also have varied



levels of impact. Thus, depending on the teacher and the environment in which they find themselves, the teacher is free to choose whichever method, and will still be within the policy framework. The said situation contributes greatly to the variations witnessed in schools.

The teacher's guide provides a section that supports the teacher in evaluating the impact of the lesson. This section provides indicators that the teacher should look out for, including some leading questions. The section unfortunately does not focus on evaluating the values gained, but on the language acquisition. For example, when discussing vocabulary, the definition of the word takes precedence over the social/value meaning, e.g. "honesty". The emphasis would be on the fact that the word means "truthfulness", but not on the virtue of being honest or truthful. I noted this fact across the board and can therefore state that from what is presented, the mainstreaming of values seems to have been covered only at the level of knowledge, omitting evaluation or the impact to the individual.

I will now move to the analysis of the Social Studies (SS). Interview sessions with teachers and curriculum developers revealed that due to the flexibility of the content of SS, the text proved to be straightforward with regard to values.

## **4.2 Social studies**

The primary teacher's guide on social studies is explicit from the beginning on its intention; "...to assist the teacher of social studies in interpreting the topics in the syllabus...". The guide enumerates the aim of social studies as, "...to help the pupil to develop mentally, physically and socially; not just within their own selves, but within the community...". It clearly states values it would like the students to be introduced to, namely tolerance and respect for other people's opinions; respect for different ways of life and traditions in different parts; respect for the role of reason in the solution of problems; respect for the dignity and worth of every person; belief that all people should possess equal rights and freedoms; and acknowledging that all people in society have roles and responsibilities, which they must play (T/G, 2004:6).

The authors of the guide are aware of the subjective nature of topics and thus leave no chance for misinterpretation, but at the same time state that "...pupils should not be told what is good or bad, but need to be told of the consequences of certain behaviours..." (T/G, 2004:6). At a glance, this may seem like a contradiction or that the authors are promoting the values

clarifications approach propagated by Veugelers (2000), Lipman and Sharp (1971), but a look at the whole text shows that the authors are advocating for different methods to be used by the teacher; the key point is that the right message has to be transmitted.

The social studies' guide is explicit on how it would like the teachers to teach the subject. For instance, on the method, the guide states that, "...while discussing the problems facing trade in the region, pupils will learn better not by memorising the facts, but by going to the market centres and finding out from traders the problems facing them..." (T/G, 2004:9). Such suggestions are very clear; the onus is on the teacher to take the initiative.

The authors of the guide acknowledge the sensitivity and importance of the desired outcome of social studies; they therefore go as far as proposing the characteristics of the social studies teacher. Besides being resourceful and knowledgeable in the subject area, the guide says that, "...the teacher should be courteous and friendly to the pupils, accepting the pupils' opinions on issues that demand their input..." (T/G, 2004:9). This detail is provided as the authors are wary of the "hidden curriculum". They include a cautionary statement that, as schools implement values and character education, the implicit curriculum should not be ignored or underestimated. The claim that the manner in which teachers and administrators relate, how teachers relate to parents, and how they communicate with students all provide invaluable opportunities for modelling behaviour that the system seeks to develop in students.

As a conclusion to the lesson, the SS guide, just like the other guides, presents tips on assessing the impact of the lesson. However, this time round, the guide goes further, by identifying tips on how to assess the attitudes and values. For example:

**Topic: The Institution of Marriage**

Attitudes and values to be developed:

- Tolerance
- Appreciation that marriage is for adults
- Cooperation in the family
- Sharing of information and experiences

- Appreciate the importance of marriage (T/G, 2004:74)

This is a major achievement for the text as assessing values has and continues to be raised as a challenge by a cross section of personnel in the curriculum development unit.

I will now analyse the Christian Religious Education text.

### **4.3 Christian religious education (CRE)**

It is important to note that the CRE text was a joint effort of the Christian churches in the country. The all-inclusive method used in developing the text was to ensure that no Christian sect felt excluded, a situation that would have created potential disharmony.

As would be expected, the CRE text is inundated with values that are drawn from the Christian religion. The goal as stated in the T/G is to help the teacher improve on lesson delivery, "...though not strictly binding in its usage, the T/G nevertheless, takes the teacher through the development of each lesson..." (T/G, pg vii). The teacher, on the other hand, is expected to "...provide the learner with correct motivation for spiritual, moral and social development...developing the whole person by inculcating attitudes and values that will model the young readers into responsible persons..." (T/G, 2004:vii).

The T/G has identified and recommended that a life-centred and pupil-centred approach be used in the teaching of CRE. The text has clearly defined what it regards to be a life-centred and pupil-centred approach, stating that this approach places emphasis on the learner's day-to-day experience and how God speaks to the learner through these experiences. The text has made clear the task of the teacher; "... to draw out and reinforce knowledge that learners have, as well as expose them to new learning experiences...".

The manner in which the T/G is written assumes that the teacher is a practicing Christian, thus he/she will be in a position to "reinforce knowledge" and "expose the learner to new learning". For example, on page 49, 51, 53 and 109 of the T/G, songs that should be sung at intervals are specified. The teacher can only lead this session if they know the songs, as these are songs mostly learnt and sung in churches. The presentation of the T/G seems to support evidence provided in the literature review by some scholars who argue that one has to live by the values that they would like to espouse.

The T/G has been elaborate in its proposed method strategy; it provides the objectives of the lesson, and gives lesson preparation notes and gives explicit directions as to the stages/plan the teacher should follow in every lesson: Human experience; Biblical experience; Application and response; Pupil's activity; and Conclusion (T/G, 2004: xviii).

Under the application stage, the authors remind the teacher that the,

“ CRE lessons are unique in that they are not meant just to pass knowledge. Any lesson taught should help the learner grow into a better person. The CRE teacher is therefore, required to make deliberate effort to point out the teachings of a given lesson.” T/G(2004: ix).

It is at this stage that the values of the individual teacher can be unconsciously smuggled into the classroom since for the guide leaves it open to the teacher to ensure that the teachings of a given lesson are achieved. It does not define the “teachings”, but only gives suggestions, based on the diversity and the challenges that this values education has undergone. The individual teacher's preferences may take centre stage.

The content in the CRE text can be credited for the manner in which the authors have integrated the lessons found in the bible to daily life experiences. The content is drawn from what transpires in Kenya, thus the teacher is not faced with the previous challenge of having to interpret the bible or complain of dealing with an abstract lesson. The book calls for creativity from the teacher with regard to their respective unique environments. Just like the social studies text, the CRE syllabus gives guidelines to the teacher on how to evaluate the acquired values. The syllabus suggests the use of written questions, oral questions, observations, checklists and project activities (Syllabus, 2002 pg 55).

I will now proceed to analyse the subjects that fall within the social sciences, but were considered more challenging to mainstream values. I will begin with the Geography text for form two.

#### **4.4 Geography**

Interviews with the teachers showed that the Geography text proved to be a challenge for the authors as far as mainstreaming values is concerned. Unlike the English text, the authors

claimed to be dealing with extremely factual issues and they did not see how they could incorporate moral values. However, what the textbook seems to have achieved, is the fact that it has, in an interesting manner, integrated local, regional and international issues systematically. This style allows the learner to appreciate his/her local environment and compare the same with that from beyond the borders. The text successfully brings the learning of geography to the doorstep of the learner; it encourages the exploration and creativity of the learner through the practical exercises provided after each lesson.

The topics covered by the geography book are varied; unfortunately, the text in a number of topics missed the opportunity to incorporate moral values. I will focus on one chapter to illustrate my point: Chapter six of the Geography for secondary schools (2003), topic, “Vegetation”. This chapter begins with the definition of the terminology and goes on to explain the details of the different kinds of vegetation, both natural and exotic, and how the same are distributed based on climatic regions. The chapter is elaborate on factors that influence distribution of vegetation; however, the text concentrates on the natural causes and misses the opportunity to bring in the human factors like deforestation. In a country like Kenya where climatic conditions are changing due to corruption in government and forest land is being sold, it is surprising that this is not highlighted as a key issue and an opportunity to talk about corruption.

Still on the same chapter, the style of writing is such that exercises do not require or provide for time for the teacher and learner to take time to critic what is taking place in the country. The issues are stated, and the rest is left to the teacher to decide how far the lesson should go. The same applies for the topic on environmental conservation. In the Kenyan context, and globally, issues on environment are value laden and it is critical that learners be exposed to such issues; so that they can understand and eventually participate in international dialogue with convictions that are guided by moral values. This style is common in all the chapters. Compared with the English text, I would like to state that the geography text lost many opportunities for incorporating pertinent moral value issues. The last text within the social science subjects is the history and government text. The style of the text is a major departure from previous texts as is demonstrated in the next section.

## 4.5 History and government

From the beginning, the student's text book (2004) recognises the fact that it has to incorporate moral values. The foreword by the Director of Education, Mrs Naomi Wangai, states that, "...the text recognises the fact that history and government should be studied in relation to other values that have affected man's development in society. These include honesty, integrity and human rights among others...".

The text is organised in thematic form, unlike the previous text that was organised according to time periods when the events took place. The authors of the text claimed that the shift in style has enabled them to bring home the history message, as history is explained through the perspective of the present, which is referred to as government. This claim was confirmed by teachers during the interviews, who said that subjects like history are no longer abstract. For example, issues related to the slave trade are discussed under the banner of trade or human rights. In Kenya, as the country continues to struggle to confirm democratic governance in its institutions, this style is appropriate as it calls upon the teacher and learner to reflect on pertinent issues in relation to the historical occurrence.

The T/G (2002:3) has been elaborate in providing tips on methods that the teacher should use. The text, however, expects the teacher to be conversant with detailed government processes, which may not be the case as was confirmed during the interview sessions. The manner in which the T/G (2002:3) is presented, just like the geography text, seems to state the intended/ideal, without necessarily compelling teachers to carry out the activity. This form of writing leaves room for the teacher to decide how far the lesson should go. The disadvantage of this is that in situations where the teacher is not creative, the learner may be confined to the classroom.

Having reviewed the style, I will now move on to comment on the content. The content of the text, though relevant, seems incomplete due to key omissions. For example, when talking about slave trade and human rights, the text falls short of giving prominence to Africans who have been in the forefront of the respective struggles. Personalities like Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela do not feature in the text on slave trade or human rights. The text therefore loses valuable opportunities to correct misconceptions and information blackouts of achievements by Africans in the face of their colonial masters. The need to correct

misconceptions is a critical moral issue for any African state, and thus the very text in the schools should be at the forefront.

Still emphasising the seeming incompleteness of the text, topics like Trade and Communication are elaborate on both traditional and modern methods of communication. However, the text concentrates on the advancements and pays very little attention to the disadvantages. When it does, the emphasis is more on the financial cost of modern communication methods and not on the dangers associated with pornography on the Internet and TV for example. The authors of the history and geography texts seem to have exhausted their energies integrating history and present day government, and have omitted the aspect of moral values as envisaged in the introduction by the Director of Education.

#### **4.6 Summary**

As a conclusion to this chapter, I would say that the Ministry of Education has made major strides in channelling/filtering the policy document on values education to textbook level. As mentioned earlier, some of the subjects proved to be a challenge for authors to integrate moral values, with more conscious efforts required. English, CRE and SS stand out as the best practice. However, what seems to have been relatively easy for authors in all the subjects is the process of making the content relevant to the Kenyan situation.

From the materials reviewed, it would suffice to say that values as espoused by Kenyans, have only in the latest syllabus found their way more prominently into the learning materials. The materials exhibit a slow, but steady progression from policy statement to anticipated classroom practice. A summary of the values shows that they hinge around those that would promote a harmonious environment for co-existence of the different ethnic communities. The text reflects the progression that can be witnessed at the constitution making process, where the values and values education have been given visibility.

The next level of this study will focus on primary data collection, where direct information will be generated from teachers through focus group discussion and one on one interview sessions. In this section I will be exploring how teachers have received the new curriculum and the challenges they face in implementing/utilising them at classroom level. I will be interested in determining the understanding of teachers and what factors determine their understanding of values education.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### TEACHER UNDERSTANDINGS AND INFLUENCES OF VALUES EDUCATION

#### **5 Introduction**

In this chapter I present the findings of my research on teacher's understanding of values education. As an initial step, I provide background information on the type of schools within which focus group interviews were conducted. This information is important, as teachers felt uncomfortable with and were reluctant to disclose their identities. An explanation of the type of schools provides insights into the study population. Lastly, I present the findings under the canopy of emerging issues and cluster responses according to the school type. Before I move into a detailed presentation of the findings, I will begin by interrogating the concept of understanding.

Broadly, the concept of understanding operates in a twofold way: It is both relative and contextual. As a relative concept, understanding is not only dependent on intent, but carries different levels of meanings. At the first level, it is a simple awareness, that is, the knowledge of existence of something; while the second level involves a deep appreciation of the details of the concept under interrogation. The third level centres on sympathetic awareness and at the final level, understanding refers to practice, where conclusions of understanding are derived from actions (Hornby, 1995).

As a contextual concept, understanding draws its meaning from a diverse knowledge base that is context-dependent; i.e. different meanings can be attached to the term at any given time. Different societies give different weight to different concepts. It is for this reason that in this study, the source of knowledge of teacher understanding is critical. The source will provide insight into what exactly teachers mean when they say that they understand. Thus I will give the stated meaning and further an analysis of the practice will be used to verify whether understanding remains at the knowledge level or whether it goes deeper to the level of practice. I therefore have a stated understating and an understanding as demonstrated by practice. It is, however, important to caution here that it does not always follow that people act according to understanding.



In this chapter, I present teacher understandings and factors that influence understanding of values education as stated in their testimonies during the focus group interview sessions. The semi-structured interviews enabled teachers to express themselves and articulate what they understood values education to mean and the factors that have influenced their stance. The findings are therefore a presentation of the knowledge and perceived meanings that teachers have and give to values education. Whilst I appreciate that understanding as a concept can have an extended meaning to include practice, I have deliberately left this discussion to chapter 6, in which a comparison is drawn between the perceived meanings of values and the practice of three teachers. As an introduction to the chapter, I will briefly present an overview of the factors that seem to influence the values curriculum in Kenya.

My study assumed that teacher understandings of values were influenced by a number of factors besides the curriculum and government policy document on values education. Four key issues that are not overtly expressed in the school environment seem to influence the local debate on values education in Kenya. These are ethnicity/culture, religion, local politics and global influences, especially through the media. I will briefly explain these four issues.

**Ethnicity/culture:** Settlement in Kenya is predominantly oriented towards ethnicity, though urbanisation and internal economic migration have resulted in the movement and mixing of different ethnic communities. Despite these movements, one can still comfortably refer to regions based on dominant ethnic settlement, which inevitably determine the mode of behaviour and norms. Ethnic foundation has meant that even when people move to the bigger more cosmopolitan cities, they still uphold and align themselves with practices of their ethnic community. Village ties are very strong, as demonstrated by the importance given to the rural home. The village is referred to as the “home”- “permanent” and the urban settlement is referred to as the “house” - “temporal”. All burial ceremonies occur in the village, which is the “permanent home”.

The entertainment industry, realising the strong ethnic inclinations, has profited from this by celebrating/hosting special evenings in the city of Nairobi dedicated to the individual ethnic communities; e.g. “Kamba night” or “Luhya night”. The events of the evening entail a celebration of a particular ethnic group in the form of playing music and serving food that is derived from a particular ethnic perspective. These evenings are very popular and attract many prominent personalities from the respective communities.

Ethnicity has bred and encouraged stereotyping that members carry along with them to their respective places of work. Teachers are no different. They are raised in the same communities and thus would generally be expected to exhibit the same characteristics as those of their fellow community members.

**Religion:** The second level of influence stems from the religious background. The majority of households in Kenya are aligned with a particular religious group. Aside from family, religion is a key determining factor as to how people conduct their lives in Kenya. When a traditional practice is discarded, it would mainly be because the family has embraced certain religious values. Religion determines how parents select schools for their children, how marriage takes place, and how burial ceremonies are conducted. Religion has been the greatest adversary to traditional practices in Kenya. Teachers belong to different religious groups and are therefore assimilated into the beliefs and practices of the chosen religion. Hence, teachers' thinking is inevitably influenced by the supernatural nature and reverence of religious beliefs.

**Politics:** The third level of influence stems from local politics. Local politics is the amalgamation of both the traditional and religious factors, including the dominating political standing of a particular ethnic community. I mentioned that Kenya is ethnically oriented, meaning that the politics of the day is dictated by the same pattern. The dominant philosophy of the area prevails, and teachers just like other inhabitants hardly have a choice but to follow the same to survive. For example, Western Kenya is dominated by the Ford Kenya party (FK), Nyanza province by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), central province by the Democratic Party (DP) and Rift Valley by the Kenya African National Union (KANU). Whether teachers support these respective parties or not, they have to conform in order to survive.

**Globalisation:** Lastly, a more recent influence is that of globalisation. The international conventions, e.g. human rights, children's rights, open airwaves, and the exposure to international cultures are changing the behaviour patterns of Kenyans. Twenty years ago, it was impossible to imagine that a debate on abortion or gay people would ever take place in Kenya. However, these debates are now common. Increasingly, as has been highlighted by scholar Aparicio (1998), there is a drift towards the fulfilment of the self above that of

society. This drift has a major influence on how people make choices i.e.; “Is it right for me?”

Thus, as curriculum changes on values education are taking place, other factors beyond the government policy document are having a great impact on the interpretation and implementation of the policy. The manner in which these factors play out in the life of the teacher are core to this study as they form context of analysis. As an opening statement to the findings from the interview sessions, I noted that although Kenya has unique experiences, the findings display a common trend of themes similar to those identified in previous scholarly works, namely diversity, inconsistency, mutability and the contextual nature of the concept of values.

My hypothesis states that the seemingly controversial and unclear way in which values education policy has been developed and implemented in Kenya has resulted in superficial treatment of teacher issues. Consequently, teachers use their own value judgments to interpret the values curriculum.

I begin with presentation of my findings of government schools, followed by private schools and finally religious schools. An important point to note is the fact that for many teachers this study was the first encounter with an explicit reference to values in the context of the curriculum and their day to day school activities. I have coded the responses of teachers as follows: “GH1” meaning Government high school teacher 1 and GP1 for Government primary school teacher 1. The same sequence is followed for the other schools, where I use PP1 to represent Private Primary teacher 1, and PH1 to represent Private high school teacher 1. For the Religious schools I use RP1 for Religious primary teacher 1, and RH1 for Religious high school teacher 1.

## **5.1 Government schools**

Government schools are in the majority (60%) and vary from high performers to least performing schools. The tuition costs of such schools vary, but never reach the level of private schools. Teacher qualifications in these schools also vary, with the renowned secondary schools attracting university graduates. At the primary level, unlike the private schools, most teachers have a diploma in education.

The secondary schools are classified as district, provincial and national schools. This categorisation symbolises not only the status of the school but the geographical location from which it draws students. National schools can be considered as “A” schools, i.e. best. My study was limited to schools in Nairobi, thus the secondary schools I visited could fall within any of the categories, but the primary schools exist strictly at the district level. As mentioned earlier, the three categories represent the diversity of schools in Kenya. In this study I was interested in investigating a cross section of the society.

The management of government schools rests solely with the Ministry of Education, with support from the parents association. All teachers in government schools are recruited and employed by the Ministry, thus they have to adhere to the rules and regulations as stipulated by the Ministry. Wages are governed and administered using the government salary scales.

The challenges that government schools have encountered over the years have generally been linked to access to adequate resources to enable expansion or improvements in schools. For example, with the introduction of free basic primary education in 2002, these schools have absorbed large numbers of learners who were previously not attending school. At the time of conducting the interviews, I visited some primary schools that had an average of 80 learners in a class, using the facilities previously allocated for 40 learners. The secondary schools maintained an average of 46 learners per class. On the human resource side, teachers have complained of a heavy workload and low wages. On a number of occasions, countrywide teacher strikes have been organised to demand from the government improved working conditions. These schools grapple with low morale among teachers due to the poor working conditions. It is against this background that I conducted this study.

### **5.1.1 Findings**

What follows is a presentation of my findings.

As an introduction to the interview sessions, I attempted to establish the level of awareness of teachers about the government policy on values education. This grounding information structured my questions in a manner that allowed for interrogation of areas that were familiar to teachers. Secondly the information enabled me to establish the information base of teachers, bearing in mind my hypothesis that states that teachers are using their own knowledge to interpret government policy on values education. I confirmed that teachers’

awareness of values education is governed by the school environment. What follows are the details:

#### ***5.1.1.1 School context as opposed to government policy context***

I established that teacher awareness of values is dependent on the school context within which the teacher operates as opposed to the government policy document on values education. The question posed to teachers was- *Are you familiar with the specific goal of SMRV?* The knowledge of existence of the policy is the first step towards making any attempts to understand the concept. Thus if the knowledge of the policy is low, it may follow that understanding of the same can also be limited/

There is a marked difference in levels of awareness of the government policy on values education. On a percentage level, the awareness of the policy was relatively low among teachers in primary schools. The amount of time I spent explaining the goal to some head teachers and class teacher's bears witness to this. In one primary school where I obtained permission to interview some teachers, the head teacher enquired; *"Do you want, or does the government want, to introduce another religion to schools?"* This head teacher was ignorant of the goal of values education. He was, however, aware of the changes occurring in the curriculum. For him the changes were routine, especially when a new political party came into power. I mentioned earlier that curriculum changes have been associated with political changes, and so the teaching fraternity does not usually take these changes seriously.

In the high schools, the scene was different with a relatively high number of teachers noting that they could vaguely remember hearing of the goal of values in education in their teacher training. I was unable to determine whether the above response was because the teachers were more academically advanced and so could use their reasoning capacity to define values education. I therefore went on to probe why they could only vaguely remember values and elicited this response, *"...though it is one of the goals of education, we teachers in general are not responsible, it is the counselling teacher, we do not interfere with her/his work..."* (GH1).

The response from this teacher indicates that the interpretation and implementation of values education has maintained the old system, where a pocket of teachers responsible for teaching the subject of Social Ethics and Education (SEE) are still solely responsible for values education. This finding correlates with the literature on teaching as a profession, which

indicates that teachers take time to modify their teaching methods. But in the case of the Kenyan situation, it is a reflection of the teacher's understanding of the goal of SMRV. Despite the mainstreaming of values education, the teaching community has not changed due to limited knowledge among other factors. In the Kenyan context, this interpretation could also be influenced by the manner in which mainstreaming has taken place. As narrated by the teachers during the interviews, the refresher courses organised by the Ministry of Education have normally targeted Religious Education teachers, former teachers of SEE, and counselling teachers. Consequently, the thinking that values education remains the responsibility of a few is maintained.

I posed the same question in another school the response was relatively similar to the first one:

“...Teacher Service Commission (the employer of teachers in the country) cannot fire me because I do not teach values, but I can be fired if I do not teach my main subject...” (GH2).

“...the translation of values to pupils cannot be examined...it is not a priority to parents and the education ” (GH3).

The above responses begin to question policy implementation and the degree of importance of the values education curriculum. The curriculum, though having mainstreamed values, seems not to have required that teachers, by necessity, should know what the policy entails. Secondly, the management of these schools did not require that teachers be conscious of the policy on values education. Knowledge of the goal was therefore not a central part of their classroom practice. Teachers are proceeding with their assignments despite the curriculum change. This finding goes further to confirm the hypothesis that teachers' practice on values education is informed from other sources besides that of government policy. They continue with their assignments without referring to government policy.

Having gathered information on awareness levels and having noted that government policy was not the source of knowledge for most teachers, I proceeded to the more detailed interrogation that would bring to the fore teacher understanding of values education. The following section presents the different understandings I was able to note.

### ***5.1.1.2 Teacher understanding is based on practical needs as opposed to perceived results***

I established that teacher understanding of values is explained by the envisaged practical outcome – i.e. what is the benefit of having values? The question posed to teachers was - *In your own words, what is SMRV?* Responses and experiences varied: in some instances, I came across teachers and head teachers who were completely ignorant of SMRV in education. They believed that they were in the profession to teach academic subjects, and nothing more this was mostly common with math teachers. For example the teacher who claimed that,

“...when I am teaching division, I concentrate on learners getting the concept right, I do not go into explaining that division is related to sharing as a value...that I do not do and do not see myself doing it...” (GH5).

“...they have changed the examples of multiplication from, e.g. having mangoes to demonstrate multiplication, they now have examples on number of people tested for HIV & AIDS...but I stick to the multiplication, I do not talk of HIV since I do not know much...”(GH3).

In other situations I felt moved by the effort taken by teachers to develop their students holistically.

I recorded similar concepts to explain values education, namely teaching obedience, humility, trustworthiness, and good behaviour. The difference in interpretation, I noted was in the philosophical grounding. In the government schools, obedience was important for it mediated teacher/learner relationships. In private schools obedience was important in as far as it ensured high academic achievement. Learners had to obey teachers so that they could live harmoniously and in the latter case, so that they could pass exams. It was common to hear expressions like, “... they have to learn to listen and obey us...” (GP1), “...students need to be respectful to teachers...” (GP2).

I also noted that teachers perceive SMRV from a narrow perspective. For these teachers, values education are principles or tools that help them manage their students as opposed to it being a strategy for ensuring that students internalise moral values that influence their daily

lives. I recorded expressions like – “it would be good if SMRV would stop the drug abuse...” (GH2).

Although stopping drug abuse may have a long term impact, the teacher who gave this statement was referring to the more immediate concern in the school. On the same question, another teacher said that,

“...what you are referring to er er...values or I would like to call it discipline, is important for I have to ensure that students are obedient...” (GP3).

The element of good behaviour seemed to dominate the discussion on the definition of values education. As alluded to earlier, teachers in government schools have always complained of a heavy workload due to the congested curriculum and high number of learners. This situation does not leave the teacher with any time for creativity. All they want to do is to complete the curriculum in the simplest and quickest way possible. A primary teacher in trying to emphasise the point of workload and the general working conditions, described her daily life:

“I earn US\$300 per month, which can only allow me to live in a one roomed cottage. I walk to work. Due to the free education introduced in 2002, I now have a class of 70 learners, I take all the 8 subjects taught at primary level, meaning that I have no free time to reflect during the day; I am expected to mark 70 x the 8 subjects I teach. How do you expect me to be creative and even think about inculcating values in a student, when I hardly have time to plan my academic lessons effectively?” (GP4).

She concluded by saying that, “I move with those who are ready to move” (GP4). Whilst the education policy has tried to mainstream values in the curriculum, there seems to be an assumption as to the capacity of teachers to absorb, internalise and practice the concept. I say this because the unique situations in which teachers find themselves do not feature in the policy. Kenya introduced free primary education in 2002; this move resulted in government schools taking on more students. This fact, among others, is reflected nowhere in the policy. In the example above, other social conditions including the large class that the teacher has to



teach, are wearing down on the teacher to a level where they are barely making it through the day. This has led to a situation where there is a gap between policy expectations and practice.

The diverse explanations of values that I found among teachers were a result of either the contextual nature of the concept or a clear representation of a concept vaguely understood.

Having established that teachers have mechanically interpreted values education to suit their practical teaching needs, I pursued the interrogation into areas that would explain the knowledge base of teachers. The response to this question would enlighten the study as to the key reference points for teachers. The following section explains my findings.

### **5.1.2 Teachers understanding of values is rooted in their history and experience**

I noted as in other studies before mine, that teachers' understanding is rooted in their cultural, social and religious backgrounds. Teachers highlighted the fact that they used more than one factor simultaneously, in order to reach a decision. However, they were still able to identify some factors according to priority. The question posed to teachers was- *when faced with situations where you have to make a value judgment, what informs your decision?*

The interview sessions elucidated the different opinions and sources of knowledge used by teachers. Though leading to the same goal, it was evident that the various interpretations were based on different ideological, religious, social and professional backgrounds of teachers. I noted that teachers are influenced significantly by the community in which they were integrated. In other words, teachers do not act as isolated individuals, but as members of a community.

Religion inevitably was the most frequently mentioned premise that guided teacher decision making. For example, I had the following conversation with a teacher,

Maggie: If one of your students wanted to have an abortion, what would you say?

Teacher: I would discourage her.

Maggie: Why?

Teacher: She can die...it is just not right.

Maggie: Who said it is not right if the girl's schooling is at stake?

Teacher I use what my pastor has said or my knowledge as a mother... or I think about what my mother would have said to me if I was pregnant...

Unfortunately, most teachers associate SMRV with religion. The hangovers of having SEE as a preserve of some teachers still prevails in the thoughts of teachers, with teachers of SEE labelled "the holy ones". Teachers rarely considered SMRV to be a key feature in national development. For teachers, values were a personal individual choice. The same way that teachers have freedom to choose their religion, they should have the same freedom to decide which values to adopt or not. The above sentiments by teachers demonstrate that most teachers have not embraced the education policy on values and further confirms the hypothesis that teachers are not using government policy as a source of information or practice, since they are not utilising it.

Culturally, it is evident that some traditional settings determine how teachers make value judgments. It was common to hear teachers say, "...In our culture, girls are not allowed to ..., I would use that knowledge in such a situation...", meaning that the cultural setting in which the teacher is brought up also affects their decision. If a teacher is brought up in a setting where the role of women is subordinate to men, they readily use this knowledge in their professional life.

In an effort to get more details related to culture, I asked what they would consider a well-rounded student to be. Those coming from traditions, where the high power distance factor was critical, were quick to say that,

"In my community, a good student is one who respects elders, is obedient, knows what is expected of him/her from the community, one who listens to advice, one who dresses decently, and one who is humble..." (GP5).

Note the strong sense of "community" as opposed to the "individual". This is a traditional way of valuing people. Teachers seem to consider a reverence attitude from students as a value. This is a cultural understanding, which goes beyond teacher student relationship, but also incorporates cultural gender considerations. Responses generated in interviews emphasised the fact that teachers carry their cultural beliefs into the classroom and even

portrayed heavy gender biases that they used in arriving at decisions. For example, subject choices for girls and boys - teachers are instrumental in persuading boys to take on sciences and girls the art subjects. These are biases that teachers carry into the classroom from their cultural and social backgrounds.

Other issues raised by teachers include:

“...Personal convictions, nature/age of stakeholder, finances, government policy, role models, social status of teacher, parents’ attitude, research, background of student, influential characters, knowledge base, constitution, workload, and urban/rural setting ...” (Group response of GH &GP).

The above responses by teachers can be classified as socio-economic issues that the teacher encounters in his/her daily life. There is nothing factual or straight forward about them, and every teacher can come up with their own strategy based on their preferences. The issues raised reveal limited/professionally based decision-making, such as government policy, or professional training. A possible conclusion is that teachers make subjective decisions that are largely based on survival. I noted that teachers were preoccupied with pleasing the people they considered important, those who “... determine the cheque ...”, nothing will be done to put at risk the “cheque”.

Teachers have become very cautious. The mandate and security enjoyed in the past has been eroded. Thus, teachers are unwilling to spend time and effort on issues that may jeopardise their source of income.

The next level of questions attempted to clarify and identify other finer details that have an impact on decision making. For example, was age or sex of the teacher an important factor in values education.

### **5.1.3 Teachers’ values are a microcosm of societal values**

I noted that teachers’ value judgments are enmeshed in prevailing society thinking, i.e. teachers’ understandings were a reflection of their immediate environment and circumstances. The claim that teachers are the mirror of society was a constant theme in the literature on values education.

In some instances, scholars have asked why the teacher is expected to have such high standards, whilst they were part of a society that was not keeping the same standards. The question I put forward to teachers was, *What other issues influence your thinking on values?*

To emphasise the distance between the policy and teacher practice, I recorded that a relatively small number of teachers (30) identified their teacher training background as a source of information on values education. Teacher preparation is the main strategy used by the Ministry of Education to influence teacher practice. Thirty of the 180 teachers interviewed is a relatively low number especially if the above number is extrapolated to get a countrywide representation. It would mean that the government is far from achieving its goal, since it influences a paltry 16% of the teaching fraternity.

Teachers expressed doubts as to whether values education was ever meant for implementation or whether it will ever receive the much-needed attention. A secondary school teacher remarked, "...this system does not have a way of monitoring or rewarding anything other than academic achievement..."(GH5). One can conclude from this that what is taking place in schools is a microcosm of society, where values of materialism take precedence over moral values. In the school system, a teacher is judged by the pass rate of his or her students, not on how good their character is, or how they fit into society. Teachers complained openly about the limited support they received from parents. Parents, they claimed, showed very little interest in their children's education. One teacher expressed the following:

I have been in this school for four years, I have never met the parents of ... [learner]; I only saw them in second term of her fourth year after the mock exams, three months away from her final exams. They came because they felt that the mock results of their daughter were an indication that she may not do well in the final examinations...Can you imagine, where have these parents been all these years... how can you talk about values to such parents?... (GH6).

As a conclusion to the interview session, I requested teachers to share in one sentence, their meaning of values and the challenges they experience in trying to implement values education. From this question I noted the following.

#### **5.1.4 Teachers' understanding of values is "fluid"**

I noted that teachers' understanding kept shifting as the discussions progressed. I recorded different meanings provided for the same concepts and in some instances, government policy was condemned then later used as a perfect example, e.g. the education strategy of "family life education" as opposed to "sex education".

A host of reasons could be attributed to the conflicting and shifting understanding, namely: inadequate teacher preparation for implementing values in education; inadequate teaching materials; limited parental support; limited time to evaluate outcomes of a value based curriculum; discipline - abolition of corporal punishment; and the general hypocrisy of society. The above mentioned reasons left the teacher with no choice but to withdraw from key issues of values.

My conclusion is that though teachers may claim to understand the concept of SMRV, the environment in which they are working will determine how they interpret the concept and whether they will practice the values in their daily professional life. Secondly, teacher understanding is dominated by their life experiences both present and past. The response from one teacher seems to summarise the whole concept of teachers being a reflection of society. "...what the society appreciates as good..." (GP3).

## **5.2 Private schools**

These schools are very costly, and created to serve the upper middle class and high class of society. The schools attract both local and international students. Private schools follow the curriculum set by the government and in addition offer options for the British Cambridge Curriculum. Teachers in these schools tend to be highly qualified with a university degree as the minimal entry requirement. It is important to mention, however, that there is a second category of private schools, which normally serve the low income and have earned themselves a poor name of being money-making ventures. Due to the shortage of schools,

the government has on many occasions overlooked the operations of low income private schools. My study purposefully concentrated on the first category: the elite private schools.

Comparatively, teachers in private schools earn a competitive market salary and their working conditions are much better than those found in government schools. Teachers in these schools have access to development loans and therefore tend to be more financially stable. The average number of learners in a class range from 25 to 35. The major challenge identified in private schools is job security - learners are from the elite of society and parents expect high output from teachers. The attitude and general demands of satisfying this clientele can be very stressful for some teachers.

Due to the environment, I found that teachers in these schools were constantly on the alert. Every statement or move they made was checked to ensure that they did not disrupt the harmonised relationship with students or their parents. It is in this light that they responded to the questions I raised on values education.

I began my interview sessions by trying to establish the level of awareness among teachers on values education. This correlates with my hypothesis that claimed that teachers use other sources of knowledge besides that of government policy. The following is a presentation of my findings.

### **5.2.1 The school context has more influence on teachers' values than the government policy**

As stated under the government schools, I established that teacher awareness of values is dependent on the school context within which the teacher operates, as opposed to the government policy document on values education. In private schools, due to the demands, I found that the level of awareness of the government goal on values education was high. This was attributed to the ethos of the school as confirmed by a teacher:

“We are under the spotlight of the parents; we have to explain to them when curriculum changes, thus we have to be in touch with issues...” (PH1).

Accountability to stakeholders is the reason why teachers in private schools are aware of the goal on values education. The strong message that was conveyed from the conversation and observations of these was that they chose to join the private school, thus they had to meet the

demands. As a follow up question, I attempted to establish whether the high level of awareness was present at all private schools.

The general response was the following:

“Some of our colleagues are only now getting to know about the goal, since it now involves them in their subjects. Before they did not know about it... they only followed what was laid down by the school...” (PH2).

The above response suggests the existence of another system of values education besides that of the government. I went on to probe this issue and established that apart from a detailed briefing from the head teacher on expectations, teachers are provided with a document on ethos when they join the school. This document spells out what is expected of the teacher. A review of the document shows that it provides detailed guidelines as to how teachers should conduct themselves within the teaching fraternity and how they should interact with learners and their parents. In one school I visited, the teachers narrated the following incident.

“I was new to the school and so I was writing end of term report cards for the first time in this school. I completed my report cards quickly as this was an exercise I was accustomed too; I wondered why my colleagues were not as fast as I was to complete theirs. I felt very proud of my achievement and handed my reports to the principal for final signing. To my surprise, all the reports were returned. I was summoned to the principals’ office. She tried to hide the disappointment on her face, but I could see through the simple smile that all was not well. The principal took a sample of four report cards to demonstrate her point to me. It was all a matter of language and the implications that some of my statements would generate. In my previous school, I used language I considered appropriate, this is not the case in a private school, for example if I said that “... could do better...” I had to explain what I meant, since more than one meaning could

be derived, i.e. that the student with more effort could do better, or that the student has purposely not been performing well thus the poor results. It was at this moment that I realised that I did not have the freedom to say whatever I thought. Secondly, little did I know that I had to sit with each parent and explain every word on the report card. These conditions, made me realise how I have to take personal interest in every child. I have to give an account to the parents, thus I have to take more responsibility” (PP1).

The above narrative confirms a different set of regulations besides that of the government. This set of regulations take precedence over government policy. I was interested in finding out why the government policy, though known to the school authorities, was not a reference point. The response was as follows:

“Though we know of the policy, we do not follow everything as stated. We know what works for us; we just ensure that we are within the policy...” (PH3).

Private schools have their own code of conduct that is determined by two key stakeholders. The first stakeholder is the parents. Parents with children in private schools form the elite of the country and thus have set standards and expectations they would like for their children. The standards represent a mixed bag of western influences, whilst at the same time maintaining some indigenous characteristics. These standards, as I will get to discuss later, keep changing with international developments.

The second stakeholder is the owner of the school. Private schools are business ventures. The entrepreneurs set standards that would ensure that they maintain their clientele. In some schools, parents demand that teachers who teach the British Cambridge option need to have gone through the British curriculum system themselves. This has resulted in expatriate teachers being recruited.

With the above background, I proceeded to seek details as to teacher understanding of the values education curriculum. The question posed to teachers was, *In your own words, what is SMRV?*



### **5.2.2 Teachers' understanding of values is governed by immediate professional needs as compared to long term life long issues**

I established that just as in the government schools, where teacher understanding is governed by the immediate practical demands, the same applied in the private schools; i.e. what are the benefits? The main difference between the two schools was found in the emphasis. In the case of private schools, the driving force for values education was directly related to academic achievements. In other words, values were professional tools that supported teachers to produce the best academic results from their students. A summary of the concepts expressed by teachers are characterised by broad overlapping terms as follows.

“Obedience, responsibility, acceptability, cooperation, tolerance, trust, balanced personality, self-discipline, humble, independent, and integrated citizen”.

These teachers understood values as a tool that enabled them to efficiently manage their schools. Their professional bias seemed to dominate their judgment. In reinforcing the professional bias, one teacher remarked, “I distance myself from the decision; this enables me to be “fair” and “objective” (PH1). Another teacher contributing to the discussion said, “We teachers are like judges...we have no time for feelings...” (PH2).

This stance gives the impression that the personality of the teacher is removed from the centre of decision making. This is contrary to other scholarly findings which alluded to the fact that the emotional side of the teacher is the driving force behind decision making. Though I noted teachers' statements, I would like to record that the interviews elicited great emotion, which seems to be in total contrast to the objective angle presented. The objective stance can be attributed to the issue identified at the beginning, in chapter 6, where I observed that teachers in these schools are on guard, checking all their statements and moves. I will confirm the level of importance of the professional side of the teacher when conducting a comparison of the conceptual understanding against classroom practice.

Another factor I noted is that a fairly good number of the private schools seem to emphasise the element of order. To some teachers a school's success was dependent on the level of orderliness and obedience. One head teacher said,

“I really do not care which church or whose child you are, you have to be cooperative...or build your own school...” (PH3).

The driving force for values seems to be a market led success with parents of learners in these schools having high academic expectations. Thus teachers’ understanding of values tilted towards meeting the high academic expectations. What were therefore considered as values were traits that had a direct contribution to the learners’ achievement of academic excellence.

Having established that the school environment is a key determinant of teacher’s understanding, I attempted to confirm this find by rephrasing the question. I posed the following question to teachers, *When faced with situations where you have to make a value judgment, what determines/informs your decision?* The following are the findings.

### **5.2.3 Teachers’ understanding of values shifts and is obscure**

Teachers were hesitant to confirm confidently which values they promote. They identified the fact that they receive mixed signals from society. I noted competing claims of what values should be and how implementation should take place. The multicultural context of the school within which teachers operate seemed to heighten the disillusionment and dilemma of teachers.

In one focus group, teachers informed me that despite the strictly framed environment within which they worked, they were still not confident of which values to promote. I went on to probe further and one teacher responded by narrating the following incident.

“We normally have sports day and used to invite parents to participate in activities... children in this school come from rich backgrounds and there is a belief that the food that the school offers is not up to standard. On the day that parents are visiting, they are allowed to bring picnic lunches... This was fine, but what happened is that parents would arrive for the sports day, and instead of delaying the picnic to after the sports events, they would call their children to start eating. In the meantime the sports events are delayed as students are all over the

place...just imagine! What do you expect a teacher to say to the children, whilst it is the parents who are keeping them away from the sports field? This school has since disallowed parents from attending the inter-house sports day (PH4).

In this case, the school has adjusted to suit parents' demands. The questions that arise from this incident are; what would have happened if it was an individual teacher versus a student? Secondly, was the school right in adjusting to suit the parents and not confronting the issue? What message is the school sending? And whose interest is it serving? These are some of the confusing and inconsistent issues related to societal values that filter into the school environment.

Teachers are anxious not to be seen to impose or get into conflict/confrontation with parents. One teacher claimed that they seem to float in emptiness not very sure where to anchor. In some instances even though they were convinced that they were right, their views had to take second place. A teacher expressed his disgust with the choices he thought that elite parents have made, where academic achievements take centre stage. To him, it was misplaced priorities. He said

“Do you think parents care, when you call them for a meeting due to disciplinary problems? They do not turn up or only the mother comes. But if you tell them you want to discuss their child's marks, they both turn up for the appointment, so why bother about the learner's personality?” (PP3).

Having established that the school determined the manner in which teachers explained values, I went on to enquire from the teachers of any other sources of information. This is when I noted the fluidity of teachers understanding of values. The teachers presented a two faced value system. One value system was directed at meeting their professional expectations, while the other was for their private lives, which was mediated and informed by their religious beliefs or modernity.

“When I am in school, obedience means no explanations or compromise, at home, I negotiate with my children and give them the freedom to choose. Here I am at work and have to follow...” (PH4).

Scholarly works on values education argued that values have to be internalised, they have to be lived. In the example above, we see a situation where teachers have two sets of values, one for professional reasons and the other for their private lives. One teacher in trying to emphasise the above said, “You think I can bring my child to this school...” (PH5), showing that the values they espouse in the school, are for school purposes and they do not necessarily have to believe in them.

As a conclusion to the investigation of private schools, I would state that teachers in these schools are governed by strict regulations that they have to adhere to. These teachers, unlike their colleagues in the government schools, have limited leeway to make their own value judgments. Even in situations where they may feel they have better ideas, the school ethos and regulations do not allow them to work outside the stipulated framework. The findings on the private schools confirm partially the hypothesis which stated that teachers, due to their limited training on values were using their own standards to make value judgment. In the above case, teachers, though not using government policy, were not using their own standards, but those stipulated in their respective schools.

### **5.3 Religious schools**

Religious schools (Muslim and Christian) were considered the most prestigious institutions, with every parent aspiring to have their children attend these schools. Student entry to these schools is highly competitive and the same applies for teachers. These are the famous “convent” or “Saint” Schools, and the more recent being those run by the Pentecostal churches and Salvation Army. These schools are considered as the ultimate, since they operate on both a private and religious basis. The combination means that learners are exposed not only to the best academic facilities, but also to strong spiritual grounding.

Teachers in these schools, though highly qualified are not as well remunerated as those in private schools. The working conditions are fairly good, with the number of learners per class ranging from 35 to 45. Opportunities for extra curriculum activities are high; teachers in these schools have unique chances of exposure, and these opportunities draw a number of teachers. Morale in these schools is relatively high and a strong sense of purpose seems to prevail.

Just as in the other schools, my starting point was to establish the level of awareness of teachers on the government policy document. This question was in direct response to my hypothesis, which claimed that teachers are using other sources of knowledge besides that of government policy to interpret the curriculum on values education. These findings, as will be seen below, confirm that the hypothesis was not far from the truth.

### **5.3.1 The school context as opposed to the government policy document determined teacher awareness**

In the Christian and Muslim schools, the level of awareness of the government policy on values education was high. The variance found in the different schools is testimony to the fact that teacher awareness is dependent on the school context, which is determined by the management philosophy of the school.

As a follow up question I sought to find out why levels of awareness were extremely high, and discovered that besides the daily religious festivals and activities that take place within the schools, religious schools have been deeply involved since 2002 in the development of the values curriculum. Churches, as highlighted earlier, had been antagonised by the introduction of SEE as a subject. The subject was viewed as a threat to the more established religious education. They therefore volunteered their teachers to participate in the curriculum development process, not only as a professional exercise, but to ensure that their respective religious interests were incorporated and protected.

Despite recording a high level of awareness of government policy on values, I noted that the policy was not a serious reference point in the schools. This was a similar finding to that in private schools. The government policy served as a confirmation to these schools that their emphasis on values education was the right way to go. As expressed by one teacher,

“They [government] have realised that our students are much better citizens, thus they are trying to emulate how we do things in our schools...” (RH1).

In the same interview, in an effort to reinforce his colleagues’ assertion of the government being an amateur in values education, another teacher responded by saying that,

“The government is a Johnnie come lately in mainstreaming values education” (PH2).

Teachers who participated in the interviews seemed to question the wisdom of complying with a policy and instructions from an institution (government) that is only trying to grapple with the concept of values. I noted a superior attitude displayed by teachers, with others saying that;

“After all, the government relied heavily on the expertise found in religious schools to develop its current values curriculum...” (RH3).

Another fundamental reason as to why government policy was not a key reference point was the fact that religious schools are founded on religious philosophies of the respective religions. As this teacher expressed,

“Government policy on values is fine, but our main reason for running the school is not based on government, but on our religious convictions. It was the parishioners who decided that we should have a school to serve our community...” (RP1).

Thus, the knowledge on values is grounded on the principles of the respective religions. The philosophies of the various religions differ, but generally require that education go beyond the academic to addressing the spiritual development of the learner. In one school, the head teacher made it very clear that the school did not employ any teacher who was not a “born again” Christian.

The above responses serve to confirm the hypothesis that claimed that the government policy was not the key reference point for teachers with regard to values education. Having recorded the level of awareness, I moved on to investigate teacher understanding of values. The question posed was, *In your own words what is SMRV?*

### **5.3.2 Teacher understanding is strongly influenced by religious and historical experiences**

I found two kinds of teachers in these schools, those who were strong religious believers and the more liberal teachers. The strong religious teachers were especially found in the schools where the key criteria used to select teachers were on their religious convictions, or “born again”. A good number of teachers in these schools seemed passionate about their careers. They believed that they were there to serve; it was a calling, therefore everything they did,

they referred to the principles of the Almighty. This could either be the Bible or the Koran. Therefore the concepts they raised as representative of their understanding of values were:

“Love, patience, serving others, consideration of others, honesty, pure heart, humility and things that help learners to live harmoniously with everyone in society” (Group discussions Primary and High).

As opposed to their counterparts in the government and private schools, the emphasis of values for teachers in religious schools was more of a long term nature. There were virtues that make a learner good now and forever. These teachers aligned everything to their religion and their understanding drew reference to the Bible / Koran. I found that teachers in these schools took conscientious and intentional actions, since they have established basic beliefs and core notions of what constitutes right or wrong. For example, “...students have to be good, as the Heavenly Father is good...”. “You have to forgive, since your Heavenly Father also forgives you...”.

These principles were imprinted in teachers such that their relationship with students was mediated in the same way and thus they ensured that students treated each other in the same way. I noted a certain level or sense of freedom among the teachers. Though they may not have been eloquent in their definition, they demonstrated a level of confidence in what they said.

I also met some secular teachers, who said that due to the constant contact with their fellow teachers and the general management of the school, they had begun to live according to the values as stipulated in the school ethos. This leads to the second finding that states that teacher understanding is enhanced by experience.

### **5.3.3 Teacher understanding is enhanced by constant encounter/application of values and accumulated experience as opposed to gender or age of the teacher**

Teachers respond to the environment in which they work. I found that even secular teachers in religious schools used religious concepts to explain their understanding of values. As one teacher expressed:

“I have been here for three years...you will not survive this long if you do things your own way,... you have to tow the line...I now know what to do in different circumstances... the expectations of the teacher are clear...” (RP2).

There are basic principles that the teacher is expected to adhere to and these rules affect the teacher’s decision making regarding values. The teachers’ understanding is independent of government education policy on SMRV and is repeated and evaluated on a daily basis by the school management.

Further confirming the notion of environment, I found that teachers’ values judgments were much more sharpened with experience or encounter with value laden issues. Teachers who had previously taught SEE were more at ease with the integrated curriculum as compared with their colleagues who had to adopt values in their daily lessons. One teacher said:

“I was alert on [the] issue of values when I was on duty and had to encounter disciplinary issues ...I would make sure I considered all the things as stipulated in the rules, now I literally have to be alert in my literature class, which is a big challenge...” (RH3).

The above teacher’s expression of “stipulated rules” shows that some teachers in these schools, just as in the government and private schools, consider values from a much narrower perspective. They see values as a tool that would enable teachers to manage their learners, as opposed to a way of life. Their values were focused more on the behaviour of the learner.

Teachers in these schools, just as those in the private and government schools, highlighted the fact that their life experiences, especially their encounter with some key persons in their upbringing, had a great influence on how they make value judgments. These were parents, teachers or leaders. The teachers were, however, governed by the very regulations set by the schools, which leave them with very little room for exploration of ideas, especially if they were not in accordance with school beliefs.

#### **5.4 Summary**

The findings from the respective schools strongly suggest that teacher understanding is heavily influenced by the immediate environment within which the teacher operates. Teachers mentioned other influences besides the school, but due to the framework within which they operate, their thinking is forced to shift. In the private and religious schools, the



emphasis and framework is more pronounced as compared to the environment found in government schools. For example, the media and Internet were continuously mentioned as sources of information. But these sources could only be a point of reference in as far as it enhanced the ethos of the school.

Government policy was not a key reference point for teachers. Exploring the reasons why this was so shows that the policy was far removed from the immediate circumstances in which teachers found themselves and, the fact that government was considered an authority in values education. One teacher from the government school said,

“...those people [government]...they make statements not knowing what the conditions are in the class...” (GH6).

The concept of the “human face of education” was highlighted in a number of discussions. In the Kenyan context, this is an important point to consider for it says something about the curriculum. The curriculum has on many occasions come under criticism for being too congested and too academic, depriving students of time to develop skills and attitudes in other areas of growth. This is a sentiment that is also expressed in the teacher preparation programme.

I recorded mixed reactions across the board on teacher responsibility on values education. Some teachers were not willing to take responsibility for the character of students, especially if it was negative. In schools that were acknowledged for having high levels of discipline, the teachers were more willing to take responsibility, though the issue of parents and support from government were highlighted as important factors in values education. To reinforce this point, during the interviews, teachers continually mentioned the terms “shared” or “accepted”. These expressions highlight the current concerns in society, where every family seems to have its own definition of what they want from their children. Teachers are frustrated in their efforts and an environment of uncertainty and insecurity seems to prevail due to fragmented beliefs.

Religion continues to be an important influence in values education. Many teachers seemed to relate values to religion, and this could be a contributory factor as to why the government is not considered as an authority in the sector. Contestation between government strategies

and those of religious groupings are ongoing. The thought that the new values curriculum would address the problems is far from being realised. Unfortunately teachers' issues are neglected, with the impact being more significant in those teachers who have no strong school based reference point, in this case the government schools.

As I move to the observed sessions, I would like to emphasise that though teachers expressed values in broad overlapping terms, they displayed considerable consensus on the need for values education. The testimonies showed the varied situations teachers find themselves in, with some recording high levels of enthusiasm diversity in the concept interpretation; confusion as to which way to go and in many cases, frustration as teachers do not understand the government strategy on values education.

A number of teachers could not make a direct connection to the benefits of values education. To them it was seen as extra work. I would therefore be justified in concluding that teachers are not readily conscious of values in their practice as compared to their role of building the academic knowledge of their learners. A table developed through the interviews sessions with the teachers is presented in Appendix 1. The concepts demonstrate what they would consider values education in practice.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE PRACTICE OF VALUES EDUCATION IN KENYAN SCHOOLS

#### **6 Introduction**

In this chapter, I describe my observation of practice in three different classroom environments and one discussion forum. I was interested in determining whether teachers' stated understanding corroborated with what they practiced. The discussion forum intended to broaden my understanding of some observed behaviour unique to male teachers. The observations spanned a period of three months, and I spent one month with each teacher.

Pseudonyms have been used for the respective teachers. Mrs Andia was a form two teacher who taught at a Christian secondary school. Miss Atieno was a grade seven teacher in a government primary school and Mr Okello was a teacher at a private school. I observed a grade seven class in primary school and form two classes in the two secondary schools. In the private school, Mr Okello taught at both primary and secondary level. It was interesting to note the different techniques employed in dealing with the various age groups. Messrs Bodo, Kedogo and Kamau participated in the discussion forum.

I begin by providing a brief background to the three teachers, and describe the key observed behaviours that emerged in the classroom situation. This is followed by an excerpt from the discussion forum. In conclusion I present a cross synthesis of key findings. My findings were deduced from key tenets of my observation, namely, language, relationship with students, and other colleagues, and content analysis of subjects taught.

The basis for observation was arrived at in a participatory manner with the teachers during the focus group discussions and key informant interviews. In the secondary school, I specifically requested to observe teachers in the social science classes. As I am a social scientist myself, I would not have been able to evaluate the content of a science subject satisfactorily. It was critical that I be able to understand the content of the subject so as to firstly appreciate the values embedded in the subject and have a wider vision of how values can be promoted in the subject, and secondly I needed to arrive at objective analysis.

This is only possible if one fully understands the subject. At the primary level, subject area was not an issue. The government and religious schools acceded to my request, but the private school gave me a teacher of pure science to observe.

I observed the traits as raised by the teachers during the interview sessions and enhanced this by observing how the teachers; in practice, promoted the universally acclaimed values of love, honesty and truthfulness, kindness, consideration and concern for others, compassion, obedience, responsibility, respect and diligence. Secondly, I listened to the language that was used in the classroom, particularly that which showed consideration, respect, understanding, helpfulness, knowledge ability, and humility. I also wished to determine how responsive the language was to learners' needs. Lastly, I noted the kind of relationship that the teacher had with his or her students. The literature on education has emphasised the importance of the teacher pupil relationship, terming it as critical to the learning of the pupil.

In order to manage the vast amount of information gathered, I decided to present it in four different ways. At the government school represented by Miss Atieno, the captured data has been synthesised into a single day in her teaching life. At the private school, as represented by Mr Okello, the information has been presented through the lens of three key characteristics of the students. At the religious school, as represented by Mrs Andia, the information has been presented using some unique incidents that took place whilst I was at the school. Lastly, the forum is presented in discussion format.

I am confident that this manner of presentation will bring out all the key observed findings. I therefore begin with the government school, followed by the private school, then the religious school and lastly the excerpt from the discussion.

## **6.1 Government primary school**

Miss Atieno is a young teacher (23 years) who has been practising for two years. The school she teaches at is located in a lower middle-income suburb known as Langata. Following the introduction of free education in 2002, the number of students has increased tremendously, and Miss Atieno now has a class of 70 children. The school is in close proximity to a high-density slum area known as Kibera, and this has been the major reason for the increase in average class numbers. Slum areas always contain large numbers of out of school children, and so free education and a government policy that does not permit any child to be turned

away from school, has resulted in the dramatic increase in the learner population at schools in these localities.

Miss Atieno has a diploma in education, and has specialised in Home Economics and English. She is head of the Home Economics department. Teachers in government schools are required to move with their students from grade one to five, and then return to grade one. The upper grades have subject specialist teachers. Thus, Miss Atieno teaches grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 in Home Economics and also supports the English teacher.

As an introduction to my one-month stay with Miss Atieno, I asked her for a definition of values education. The following summary provides some insights into her understanding of the subject.

Values are the things we like...anything you find important and would like to protect, for example I value my freedom and I will do anything to protect it,...in the school environment values are those things that guide the head teacher and the teachers to run the school,...they bring us together...

I will now proceed to describe a typical day in Miss Atieno's professional life. She arrives at school at exactly 7.45am every day. On this specific day, she arrived at 7.30am because she was on duty, and had to deal with a cross section of students and issues beyond her normal Home Economics or English class. She apologised for being unable to give me the attention I needed as she was going to be very busy. After ensuring that the Assembly ran smoothly, Miss Atieno had to refocus her attention back to her normal classes that ran without a break. The government does not have enough funds to employ another home economics teacher and so Miss Atieno is responsible for all Home Economics lessons in the upper primary classes.

Her first lesson was a grade six class in which she taught English. Her enthusiasm seems to suggest that she preferred this class to any other English class. She made use of the current English curriculum, which has "mainstreamed" the concepts of values. On this particular day, she was dealing with sentence construction, where we find the following:

## **Topic**

**Virtues:** Responsibility, generosity, obedience, honesty, hardworking, obedience, kind, kindness, kindly, trustworthy, trust, trustworthiness.

**Aim:** To enable the learner to develop further vocabulary and sentence structures relating to moral virtues and social responsibility and use them appropriately.

## **Specific objective**

By the end of the unit, the learner should be able to:

- Talk about some moral virtues that they know
- Use the sentence structures and vocabulary correctly
- Read text and passages and answer comprehension questions
- Read for pleasure

## **Some examples:**

- She reminded the children to tell the truth at all times.
- The teacher encouraged the pupils to visit the sick old lady.

I listened to Miss Atieno's meticulous teaching. Sentences constructed were of a high quality and the students demonstrated that they had understood the lesson on sentence construction. I waited for the time when she would move the discussion from sentence construction to an explanation of the virtues, as the syllabus demands. This did not happen, and the period ended. Miss Atieno had five minutes to collect her books and move to the next class, and this time the lesson was Home Economics.

The grade seven Home Economics class was a practical lesson, in which students were learning different kinds of sewing stitches. Each student was expected to bring their own material, thread and needle. The school only provided a pair of scissors and material for the teacher to demonstrate. Half the class did not have the necessary materials to participate in this lesson. This situation would have been very frustrating for most teachers, but, to my

surprise, Miss Atieno proceeded with the lesson as though there was nothing amiss. The students who had no material either tried to copy from their friends, or openly engaged in other activities like reading novels. At one stage, one girl who had appeared to have been following the lesson and taking serious notes raised her hand and asked a question. She elicited the following:

Nyambura      When do we use the backstitch?

Atieno          (Walked to her table and realised that she had no material)

“Why are you wasting my time, are you trying to show off to our visitor...how do you expect to learn without material...some of you students should have remained in the slums...”

This was the last lesson before break and by the time the bell rang for lunch, I felt really tired, and wondered what teachers like Miss Atieno felt like after the lesson. During lunch break, despite the fact that she was on duty, I looked for the first opportunity to refer her back to the standard six English class. Initially she could not remember what lesson I was referring to, until I reminded her of an incident where she had rebuked a boy called Musa and challenged him to work hard or the girls would soon surpass him. The following conversation ensued:

Atieno          “Ooh that lesson, the only way to get some of these boys to work is to tease or compare them to the girls...Boys feel superior to girls and will do anything to beat the girls in class... Is that what you wanted to know...?”

Maggie          “No”, I replied, “I wanted to find out how you ensured that the virtues you highlighted in the lesson moved from sentence level to actual practice?”

Atieno          “...I was trained to teach English; I was not trained to teach values in English. When I am teaching sentence construction I am interested in the subject/verb group and not necessarily that the word used is e.g. sharing, therefore I need to go into the details of explaining the importance of sharing. ... for me to do so, it would mean that I have to go through a different kind of teacher preparation..., secondly, when do you think I will complete the syllabus?”

Maggie          (Reflection): Must have seen the disappointed expression on my face and was thus quick to add, the following:

Atieno “Despite our tight schedule and limited resources, the school tries its level best to remind students of good values...look at all the posters on the wall, they cover different issues from HIV/AIDS to cleanliness and these are practical reminders to the learners.”

I was careful not to be judgmental, but remembered the transfer theory, which states that when the situation of acquisition is too dissimilar to the situation of performance, transference cannot occur (Brown 1999). Children in Miss Atieno’s school are expected to read the posters, understand and act on them.

From my initial encounter with Miss Atieno, I determined that she was a cheerful, polite and pleasant teacher. She knew her subject content and tried her best to impart the required skills to her students. Her greatest challenge, though, seemed to be in managing some of her classes. Some students took advantage of the fact that Miss Atieno would not punish them. On many occasions, I was surprised to witness her continuing with the lesson, even when a handful of students were definitely not paying attention or were involved in other activities. On this particular day, it was evident that in the grade seven Home Economics lesson, students were literally sleeping or conducting their own conversations. When I questioned Miss Atieno about this, she said,

Atieno “Do I look like I have the energy to tell students what they are in school for...these are big children? I did not force them to come to school...if they do not know why they are in school, it is not my responsibility... their parents should tell them...it is up to them...”.

The school day at this government school terminated at 17.00 hrs. Learners departed at 16.30 and the duty teacher had half an hour in which to ensure that the school was left with all in order for the next day. Miss Atieno and I decided to use the half hour to reflect on the events of the day. Just as this reflective period of 30 minutes was about to commence, we heard a raucous din coming from the headmaster’s office.

Narrative: Three grade three boys were caught fighting. The fight among the boys erupted because they were sharing one book, and two of the boys were faster than the third. The one who had not completed was trying to stop the others from turning over the page. The teacher



took the boys into the head teachers' office, for discipline. The head teacher started by calling the slower boy names.

Head teacher "Stupid, foolish boy, because you are slow you want to spread it to the rest of the team...take your stupidity home..."

Narrative In this same office was a poster hanging on the wall, which read, "A good word makes a child grow, any negative word pierces and wounds a child forever".

We were both tired, and Miss Atieno and I agreed to continue the following day. The incident with the deputy head teacher gave me something to reflect upon, and Miss Atieno needed all her time to mark books.

This was basically how she spent her teaching life, which was not any different from the majority of teachers at her school. In the one month that I spent with her, I witnessed changes in the language she used towards her students, and she began to cultivate a level of responsibility towards her students. She also began to seek my opinion on strategies she could use for under- or non-performing students who, according to her, were in school merely to pass time.

Her behaviour demonstrated the fact that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and support to take on values education. Initially, she could not imagine that in her English lesson it would be possible to take sentence construction further, and to discuss the values attached to the vocabulary she was using for sentence construction. But in the end, she was asking me how to do it. Based on the evidence of this study, I believe that teachers' misconception that values education is extra work can be dispelled if teachers are provided with the necessary skills.

I will now move on to the private school experience.

## **6.2 Private school**

Mr Okello is a 37-year-old science teacher. Initially, I was very surprised that the head teacher identified a science teacher for my observation sessions. But as time went by, I

realised why the principal made this decision. Mr Okello is a teacher with a great personality. His smart and calm outward outlook was a true reflection of how he conducted himself in his profession. At the time this observation took place, Mr Okello had been teaching at this school for three years. He found it very rewarding and interesting compared to his previous industrial environment. He taught various subjects, namely, computer studies, from primary to high school level, mathematics to Forms two and four, Physics to Form five as well as coaching the senior and junior school teams in hockey.

The school was multiethnic and multi religious, although most of the pupils came from the Asian community. From the manner in which the students behaved, one could not help but note that they influenced the running of the school through their parents. Thus, the Head of the School was made aware of what the student community felt about each one of their teachers. In addition, the wealthy background of the learners played a major role in shaping their outlook. Discipline levels were generally high and many students put a great deal of effort into their academic work. I was keen to see how Mr Okello dealt with the racial issue, of students who came from diverse backgrounds, as well as rich students who drove better cars to school than their teachers.

As an initial exercise, I requested Mr Okello to describe how he would define values education. Although the concept was evidently unclear to him, Mr Okello stated, “Values are things we regard as being important and thus help make or shape our lives”. He said that he held values he acquired at home, which included a mixture of influences from the secular and mission schools he had attended. He remembered that in the secular school the emphasis was on orderliness, punctuality and neatness, whilst in the mission school he was struck by how the principal used psychological tactics to get them to achieve the same principles that were emphasised in the secular school. This exposure has left a lasting impression on Mr Okello, as he demonstrated by the way in which he conducted his professional life.

To facilitate rapid and focused observation, I requested Mr Okello to divide his class into three major groups representing the different types of student. I was then able to observe the teacher from the viewpoint of the three groups. This enabled me to easily make note of the changes and tactics that Mr Okello used in his classroom practice.

The first group was represented by Ajay. Ajay is a Computer Studies student who, I observed, was not bright. Although his parents were keen on assisting him to improve his grades, he did not seem to care much about doing well and was merely there to “finish school”. I could see the challenge that Ajay posed for his teacher. Ajay not only talked too much in class, he also had a terrible temper and lived in the “fast lane” (discos, girlfriends, and so on.). It did not matter to him whether he passed or failed, as he knew he would inherit the family business. He was an only son. Mr Okello had to deal with a number of students who had these attributes. I witnessed the patience and tact that Mr Okello applied in dealing with these students. Instead of directly confronting them, he used students having similar characteristics to challenge each other. This method seemed to work extremely well. When I asked Mr Okello how he managed, he replied, “Set a thief to catch a thief”.

I could see that these students often made Mr Okello really tired, and he could only respond to them with a shake of his head. When I asked him to explain what this meant, he said,

“At such times, just note that I am feeling pity for these learners. I look at the opportunities they have, and I compare it with what I had in school...but they really do not care, I feel for their parents...I would really like to make a difference in their lives, but the inner voice in me keeps telling me that I am wasting my time...”

Mr Okello also had to deal with boy-girl conflicts, mostly affecting the bright students. Due to his personality, the girls would individually ask for advice when they quarrelled with their boyfriends for not treating them with respect. In these instances, I saw Mr Okello switch from the role of maths teacher to that of counsellor. He would not only advise girls to focus on their studies, and not to develop serious relationships until they had left school, but he also comforted them, and made them feel valued despite the behaviour of the boys. At such times, I noted some confusion in him. In one of the after class review sessions I asked why he looked so confused when dealing with social issues. He would sigh, saying,

“I am not sure whether my attempts at putting the message across to the girls to focus on their studies will yield substantial results. You see this is a day school, the learners go out there and the school does not watch over what they do at home. I wish I knew what was happening in their homes”.

Mr Okello's sentiments reflected the fragmented value systems that exist in schools today. There is confusion about whether one is doing the right thing, and if you have the support of the parents. Mr Okello had students with whom he had more than a student-teacher relationship, whom he considered his friends. These students did not consider the racial difference between themselves and Mr Okello, and he was much sought after outside the classroom. The students enjoyed talking with him, and they shared with him intimate issues affecting their lives. He was quick to advise where possible. I could see that these were cherished moments for both student and teacher and, as an observer, I tried my best not to intrude. I noted that Mr Okello tended to describe real life experiences based on his own upbringing in response to students' questions. During Parents Contact days, parents would seek out Mr Okello and acknowledge the fondness with which their children spoke of him. When I asked him about using his own life experience to advise students, he said:

Okello            "This is what I know...I would rather stick to my experience than try to experiment with any textbook knowledge...".

Maggie           What do you mean?

Okello            "You see, I have a Christian background, and in this school the children come from different religions. You have to be careful not to say anything that will offend them...there are also some atheists, and the school rules clearly state the freedom of each individual...".

Maggie           Do you normally refer to the school regulations?

Okello            "Yes and no, the rules are simple to keep if you are a person who works hard ...they become a problem if you do not deliver, it will be noted immediately,...here people lose their jobs just like that!".

Mr Okello's response confirms that teachers make value judgments based on their life histories, rather than on what they read. It also confirms that teachers make the decision to conform to the norms of the school.

There were students whose motivation to do well was based purely on the need to "go to university just like their bigger brothers...or sisters". Such students were so dedicated to their studies that they would diligently follow lessons, do their homework and more. These

were the so-called “bookworms” and the least disturbing pupils for Mr Okello. I noted how he applied controlled pressure on these students to excel. He put in extra time and effort and they responded accordingly. He was at his professional best when he was with these students. He asked them to do research on emerging technology, and he arranged for them to meet leaders in the computer industry. I enquired why he spent so much time with these students. He remarked:

“The sky is the limit for these particular students...they know why they are in school...they do as you tell them...their parents also respond when you call them...they are a joy...what more can you want as a teacher...?”.

My one month with Mr Okello made me realise that values are not only very personal, but that they can be deeply influenced by the particular teacher. From the attitude and behaviour of many students, I could see that they believed in what Mr Okello said. I noted that the students were keen to look smart like their teacher. Others went to the gym so as to attempt to obtain a physique like Mr Okello’s. He was a role model for many of his students and helped shape their value systems by interacting with them.

I realised why the head teacher had chosen Mr Okello for the observation exercise. He did not only represent the ideal teacher, his personality was such that the Principal felt confident that he would portray an excellent picture of the school. This image issue as mentioned in chapter 5 is a critical question for private schools.

I will now proceed to present the findings of the religious school.

### **6.3 Religious school**

Despite having been allocated Mrs Andia as the teacher for the observation sessions, I was compelled to observe more than one teacher, due to the manner in which the values education strategy is planned at this school. I observed that on a weekly basis, a theme is chosen, for example, “Love”, “Forgiveness”, “Prudence”. Each teacher is allocated a week in the term to take the lead in promulgating the identified virtue, and prizes and points are awarded to students. These contribute towards the end of term house points. The teachers’ attention is constantly being drawn to the said virtue, for they identify the activities of students that warrant acknowledgement. Time is set aside at the end of each week to reflect on progress.

Mrs Andia was a motherly teacher. Everyone, including her peers, referred to her as mother, and accorded her that respect. Mrs Andia was not only the school counsellor, but was also the English and social studies teacher for one of the form 2 classes. As an introduction to the observation sessions, I requested Mrs Andia to explain what she understood the goal of values education to mean. Below is a summary of what she said:

Values are the things we believe in. These things are stored in our subconscious and are developed over time, based on the teaching we received at home and at school. Thus it is important that the things stored in our subconscious are positive, since they are the ones that help our decision-making. It is very difficult to influence things in the subconscious, and also difficult to remove, thus teachers have to be careful how they handle learners, they have to know what they are trying to influence...As a Christian, I uphold Christian values and this guides my day to day decision making and activities.

Mrs Andia was a very practical person, and her students loved her for this. They claimed that she made them feel “wanted” or “important”. During my month with her, I participated in a number of activities that she had organised for her class. I will give an example of one such activity. Mrs Andia taught the girls the virtue of being selfless, and quoted from the Bible, in the book of James 2:14-18 where the Apostle said, “You do not send your brother away to feel warm, when you actually know that he has no way of feeling warm”. This made the students think, and take action. They saved their pocket money for one week and contributed the funds to an old people’s home. At the old people’s home, the girls cooked and cleaned up the compound for a day. They were enthusiastic, and the message seemed to have been driven home - they had had one week of sacrifice and preparation. The other classes always admired Mrs Andia’s class.

What struck me about Mrs Andia was the manner in which she handled her classes. She did not seem to be in a hurry to complete the syllabus, which was a preoccupation of her

colleagues. I noted panic in some of her students who individually made the effort to keep pace with the other classes. When I questioned Andia on this, she laughed and said,

...no offence, but my new colleagues in teaching continue to surprise me year in, year out... they rush through the syllabus and are complete by the first term of fourth year... if you come to this school, in second and third term of fourth year, it is only revision taking place...the children are forced to revise and revise, they memorise and memorise in order to pass their final examination...This strategy, I do not believe in, I believe in training students for life, ...I really do not know why my colleagues rush, it is important to train the learner on the basic principles and provide them with time to explore and enjoy their learning...don't you see how the other girls wish they were in my class..., it is more important to internalise concepts than to memorise them...this is why our country is going down...we do not have educated people, only 'learned'...

Time spent with Mrs Andia demonstrated to me that there are different types of teachers; those who teach values because they believe in them, and those who have to practice values education for the sake of the syllabus they are teaching. I noted this distinction in conversations with different teachers. Whilst teachers like Mrs Andia punctuated their conversations with active expressions, including “We have” or “We do this...” other teachers spoke in terms of “if” or “could”. There was a distance in their language.

Mrs Andia was a confident and stable teacher. Her personality, together with her Christian beliefs, was her driving force. She desired higher goals for her students, beyond mere academic excellence. My experience with both Mrs Andia and Mr Okello demonstrated that the personality of the teacher plays a crucial role in determining how the values education syllabus will be implemented.

## 6.4 Exploring the observed moral dilemmas of values education

The following is a discussion held with three teachers who frequently attended the discussions that followed their colleagues' observation sessions. Whilst I had been in the schools, I had observed what I considered unusual behaviour, especially among the male teachers: they tended to avoid, or kept a particular distance away from their female students.

Male teachers avoided bodily contact with their female students at all costs, even in situations where one would have expected the teacher to have contact that could not possibly be misconstrued. One such incident occurred in the sports field. A girl was injured in the hockey game and had to be helped from the field. The male coach approached the girl, but avoided touching her, giving instructions to her fellow students to carry her from the field. This was not the only incident that I observed, and so I sought first hand explanation from the male teachers. The discussion in Appendix 2.

The above dialogue brings out the dilemma that male teachers and the teaching profession in general seem to face in defining the limits of their actions, in order not to subvert the delicate teacher-learner relationship. The teacher is expected to be caring and trustworthy. These concepts are not clearly defined, and the confusion mounts when the situation is between male teachers and female learners. For example, the close association required for effective learning or counselling to take place, is a potential area of conflict of interest, as the teacher struggles with objectivity and impartiality. An example is the story of Mr Gitau, where a trusting relationship bred sexual attraction between the teacher and student, and this case, recreated a parent-child relationship, which is laden with emotions.

The dialogue with the male teachers also brings out the recurring theme of the teacher always being in the public eye, particularly a male teacher in a female or mixed environment. The male teacher is not only subjected to censorship from the head teacher, parents and community, but also from fellow female colleagues. The aspect of "being in the spotlight" has been discussed extensively by the likes of Burstein *et al.*, (1984), who in their contribution singled out what they considered a class of professions for which trust is a crucial element; namely, law, medicine and teaching. They explain why the teaching profession is included in this class of professions, by putting forward the claim that teaching is about mentoring and developing the mind. Carr confirms this position (1993:193.), when



he asserts that, “Values are inherent in teaching. Teachers are by the nature of their profession 'moral agents' who imply values by the way they address pupils and each other, the way they dress, the language they use and the effort they put into their work”.

Another point raised in the discussion with the male teachers, is the question of whose values should take precedence in the school. Kedogo asks whose interests teachers are supposed to serve. Strike (1990) is quick to caution against attempts to moderate the moral life of a teacher, arguing that a person’s private life should not come under scrutiny. Despite Carr’s (1993) assertion that everything a teacher does is a reflection on their morals, he joins Strike (1993) in saying that a teacher's morality is their own affair so long as their behaviour and conduct does not impinge upon the basic standards and professional ethics of the teaching profession.

My conclusion of the discussion session is that despite the teachers’ anxiety over their lack of confidence and training to confront the sticky but real issues of teaching values, the literature and interview sessions seem to reach a consensus in saying that teachers need to be conscious of their professional role of values transmitter, but at the same time have respect for the individuality of the teacher’s private life.

Sumison (2000) says that teachers should balance their commitment to their professional practice against an ethos of caring. The challenge, however, is in drawing a line between the teacher’s private and professional ethical life. Kedogo, in the discussion, pointed out the fact that even outside the school compound, his smoking habit, which he believed was his right, was still a cause of concern to some parents. The fact that Kedogo’s profession required that he bore the burden of responsibility and accountability with him beyond the school compound created discomfort for him.

## **6.5 Cross case synthesis**

I will now present my summarised key findings from the experience generated with the three teachers and the focused discussion. My findings, you will notice, serve to confirm some of the findings already presented in the interview discussions presented in chapter 5.

### **6.5.1 Teachers' practice is governed by their belief systems**

This study complements those of Shuck (1997) Thompson (1992), which noted that teachers' beliefs play an important role in shaping patterns of instructional behaviour. In this study I noted that these beliefs have their origin in personal experiences; this would include the religious beliefs of the individual teacher. The second level of beliefs is entrenched in the teaching profession and is normally held unconsciously. For example, I noted that most teachers held the notion that it is "them against the world"; i.e. they regarded themselves as the victims who were always blamed for all the problems found in the schools.

The third level of beliefs is embedded in the school ethos, which is either pronounced or assumed.

The assertion that practice is governed by beliefs means that teachers give personal meaning to the content of their subject and they eventually put into practice what they believe about the subject. Mrs Andia's teaching reflected her belief in the moral purpose of education. Her passion for her work is as a result of her belief that education is more than academic. She therefore infuses her beliefs into the text and expands the text beyond the class room to include real life experiences. Her colleague in the same school, who believes in academic excellence, places more emphasis on the mental understanding of the concept of sharing; basically preparing the learner to verbally respond to any question in this area, but not necessarily to practice it. This example shows how teacher beliefs systems permeate the meaning they give to text and how these are translated to the practices method.

I found the second level of beliefs embedded in the teaching profession. There is a belief among most teachers that they are on one side and the rest of the world is on the other side. Teachers complained of not getting the necessary support from parents and society in general and claimed that all they got was blame and condemnation. This being the case, teachers have developed a repertoire of teaching methods that they believe will serve two purposes; i.e. to promote the ideas that they think are important whilst at the same time maintaining a sober relationship with the world. An example can be drawn from the discussion with the male teachers about the sports teacher who was keen on ensuring that he did not touch the female student in case the world came tumbling down around him with accusations.

There was also a standing belief among the teachers regarding the ownership of knowledge of the profession. During my observation sessions I constantly got the impression that teachers did not feel comfortable being questioned on what they did in the classroom. I then realised that the teachers who allowed me to observe them had taken a bold step, since this was viewed as intrusion. The classroom is the teacher's domain and they strongly believe that they know how best to handle the issues. Whenever I put forward questions in a manner likely to suggest another method, teachers were quick to tell me that they have tried and it and it did not work. Teachers have therefore developed an assortment of methods that they believe will deliver what they want the learner to grasp. This belief partly explains why changing the teacher practice remains a challenge for education.

Another growing belief I noted among teachers is the temporary nature of teaching as a profession. Most of the teachers believed that teaching was a temporary career and a stepping stone to a more lucrative career. I tried to establish why this was the case, and it emerged that a majority of teachers had actually joined the profession not by choice, but on their academic performance in upper six, which determined the career options at tertiary level. This temporal outlook to the profession has meant that teachers are not ready to engage in long term teacher development programmes since they were ready to take a leap to the next job whenever the opportunity arose. Instead, I found teachers enhancing their skills in other fields like research, counselling and computer studies. Non-governmental organisations have been the key attraction and are represent a market to absorb these teachers. The second finding in regards to teacher practice was that understanding was not uniformly applied as discussed below.

### **6.5.2 Understanding and implementation of values is not applied uniformly across the school or the community**

Values implementation is generally fragmented. Even in schools which had strict rules and established value systems and guidelines, I noted that there was fragmentation in the understanding and implementation of values. As stated and further confirmed in the observation sessions, the religious schools and some private schools, made a conscious effort to ensure that a set of values were promoted within the school.

I noted in the observation of practice that, despite this, the individual teacher's belief system took precedence in the classroom. For example, while Mrs Andia, in the religious school, had the learners saving and contributing to an old people's home, her colleague in another class requested the learners to write an essay on selflessness. Both activities were an attempt to achieve the same goal as stipulated in the curriculum. It is the application, as determined by the respective teachers, that is different. In this case, the difference lay in the fact that Mrs Andia was a practicing Christian who was already involved in many charitable activities outside the school. She therefore used that knowledge in her classroom situation. This leads to the third findings which enumerates further on the individual's background.

### **6.5.3 Teacher practice is dependent on the individual's background**

I found that, although teachers may have rules that guide their behaviour, the ultimate action taken by the teacher is rooted in their personal belief system. These beliefs could be religious or experiential. The story of Mr Okello from the private school, of Mrs Andia, and even that of Miss Atieno, all demonstrate how the teacher's personal life plays itself out in the classroom. Mr Okello stated clearly that he used what he learnt from the mission school to manage the different simultaneous activities taking place in his class.

Miss Atieno on the other hand, asked me how she could possibly complete the syllabus if she was to embark on a discussion about values in an English class. But as we discovered later, Miss Atieno was sending the message that she was not fully aware of what I was talking about, which was why she felt that she could not do it. Scholarly literature on values has alluded to this issue, claiming that teachers have little room to reflect on their actions, but instead act impulsively.

With the kind of pressure found in classrooms, they argue, if a teacher has never experienced or internalised a strategy, they will not use it; let alone use a text book explanation as a reference point. The next finding builds on what authors have generally claimed; that the school is a reflection of the head teacher.

### **6.5.4 Teachers' practice is governed by the head teacher**

This finding reinforces the interview sessions which highlighted the fact that the school environment is key in shaping teachers' understanding of values. Observation of teachers

revealed that practice is largely determined by the school head. Although a school has regulations, the head teacher determines how these regulations are followed. This confirms the literature findings, which stated that a school is a reflection of its head teacher.

Teachers in the schools under observation passed comments like, "...that one, she is lazy and you can get away with it, but so and so, will dismiss you on the spot...". I also witnessed the change in teachers' behaviour in the presence of the head teacher, or during their planning of activities. The teachers would say, "...this is what is acceptable...; if we do it this way it will sail through...". Teachers have studied the head teacher and carry out their activities accordingly. Mrs Andia also mentioned that "I have the guts to do what I do, since I know that I have the head teacher's support". The next finding goes on to cement the individuality of classroom practice.

#### **6.5.5 Teacher practice on values is not always determined by knowledge or verbal claims of understanding, but more for personal survival**

Despite the assertion by scholars that moral consciousness functions best with knowledge, I noted that, although teachers were knowledgeable about some moral issues, they chose to act in a manner that would best serve their own interests. I found no direct correlation between holding a value and acting upon it. For example, Mr Okello believed in discipline and an open relationship with his students, but had to find a crafty way of dealing with the misconduct of his students because he claimed that due to their rich background, "...it will not make a difference; you just create trouble for yourself".

In a similar situation, I found that teachers take the shortest route possible to achieve their objective. The fact that teachers did not act on issues does not necessarily mean that they do not hold a particular value, but that they are silent to protect themselves. I observed this attitude especially with Miss Atieno, who did not bother to ensure that all students were attentive or that they had the necessary material to participate in her class. According to Miss Atieno, corrective action would require time, explanation to the head teacher, or even beyond. Thus the best strategy was to pretend to be ignorant. As long as the classroom was manageable, and her key students were attentive, she carried on.

In spite of knowing the damage that abusive words can have on a child, the head teacher in Miss Atieno's school went ahead and used them. Statements made about education did not

correspond with the lax and casual attitude towards critical value based issues that affect learners. I witnessed how teachers in staffrooms openly discussed learners, showing scant regard for personal challenges faced by students, such as their parents' HIV status. As a silent observer, I concluded that values are regarded as unimportant by some teachers, who are preoccupied with completing the academic syllabus. The discussion held with the three male teachers is a clear demonstration of how teachers make decisions in order to survive.

#### **6.5.6 Values are contagious; therefore modelling is a powerful strategy in teaching values**

I confirmed that the teachers' personal lives played a major role in their teaching of values. The old saying that teachers need to practice what they teach is still relevant in Kenyan schools. The private school teacher, Mr Okello, had students who made personal decisions modelled on his behaviour. For example, he did not tell students to trim down and look smart, but some literally went to the gym in an effort to look like Mr Okello.

The religious school teacher, Mrs Andia, also had a powerful effect on the girls in her school. Despite the age difference, girls admired and respected her. Many girls said that they wished she was their mother! One girl said, "I would tell her anything... because I trust her...". On the other hand, the lack of interest that Miss Atieno showed towards some of her students was reflected in the behaviour of those students. They did not respect her, as could be observed in the way that they behaved in her class.

#### **6.5.7 Teacher practice makes use of stereotyping**

A leading example of this is that boys are expected to perform better than girls. Although teachers claimed otherwise during the verbal interviews, it was evident in practice that such stereotyping existed. Miss Atieno even used it as a wakeup call for the boys. In Mrs Andia's school, due to the principled manner in which she conducted herself, she was referred to as the "holy Joe" by her colleagues, notwithstanding the fact that it was a Christian school.

#### **6.5.8 Teacher practice of values has a gender dimension**

Despite the teachers' claim that their values are not affected by their gender, observation confirms that gender is a factor in teachers' decision making on values. These considerations are quite pronounced with respect to the relationship between male teachers and female

students. In the discussion with the male teachers, it emerged that female and male teachers are judged differently and the expectation of the school community of the values they are expected to espouse, differs slightly. People are often unaware of these expectations.

## **6.6 Summary**

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the observation sessions confirmed, disputed, or built on some of the findings presented in the interview session. Among those that were confirmed is the fact that values are largely determined by the teachers' own histories and belief systems; that values are interpreted differently, thus leading to a fragmented implementation; that the environment plays a critical role in determining how values are understood; and that the head teacher is the one who ultimately determines how values education is implemented. This is confirmed by a growing volume of literature, which indicates that verbal knowledge claimed by teachers does not necessarily translate into action. Other factors, among them the school environment, gender and job security, will also determine a teacher's behaviour.

In the next chapter, I synthesise my findings and locate them among other previous works by identifying any similarities or unique features in the Kenyan environment. Most of the information presented in chapters 5 and 6 represented what the teachers said directly to me. In chapter 7, I include the key informant expert comments on the issues regarding values education, alongside that of the international scholar, as found in the literature review.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION OF THE TEACHER'S INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

#### **7 Introduction**

My study was an inquiry into teachers' interpretive framework. I sought firstly to investigate how a teacher's beliefs and perceptions determined the importance and meanings that they attached to values education; and secondly, whether there was a correlation between the meanings they themselves hold and teaching practice in relation to the SMRV policy. I focused specifically on teachers' understanding, interpretation and practice of values in the Kenyan basic education curriculum.

In order to locate my study in the prevailing policy arena, I chose the acclaimed education goal of "Sound Moral and Religious Values". My hypothesis at the beginning of the study, subsequently confirmed by my findings, stated that teachers, due to their limited understanding of the government's acclaimed goal of "Sound Moral and Religious Values," are using other sources of knowledge besides the government to interpret and implement policy.

In this chapter, I re-trace my steps back to the genesis of my study and synthesise the key findings gathered from the documentary search and primary information sources that address my research question. I include findings from key informants to supplement the information gathered from teachers. I use pseudonyms for the key informants and code them (K1, for key informant one).

I have presented my synthesis according to three main research questions: (1) An interrogation of the concept of values education, (2) an explanation of the gap between policy and practice, and (3) teachers' understanding and implementation of values in the Kenyan basic education curriculum. I sum up the chapter by presenting the new knowledge that this study has generated, and propose possible areas for further research. I conclude by presenting some policy suggestions.

Before I begin to address these three issues, I will describe some of the problems that kept recurring at both documentary and practical levels during the course of my study. The first,



and key among them, was the question of “which values, and how best to promote values?” However, as the research progressed, some consensus began to emerge on the question of “which values”, with contention remaining around two issues. The first contention is strictly religious. I noted that suspicion between religious groupings is rife, with each group advocating for its own values to be recognised and promoted in schools. Parents have been at the centre of this controversy, arguing, and rightly so, that they would not want their children introduced to religious beliefs that they do not subscribe to. The second dispute arises where religion interfaces with secular, political beliefs. At this level, a myriad of issues seem to influence the value decisions, including competing materialistic concerns and national interests. At both levels, I noted that power relations seemed to take precedence: the larger the constituency, the more powerful the group, thus increasing the chances of influencing the agenda.

I encountered several extraordinary attempts, both in practice and in the documentation, aimed at getting to grips with the concept and implementation of the values curriculum. However, these efforts have been characterised by either good theory but weak implementation, or vice versa. Success rates vary, compelling me to conclude that values education remains a sensitive, contested and grey area of the Kenyan school environment, with teachers having no access to an established discourse or framework for discussion of values education.

As a prelude to a detailed analysis of the study, I will enumerate my key primary findings as presented in chapters five and six.

I noted that teacher understanding is strongly influenced by their religious beliefs, coupled with their personal experience. The school context, and the head teacher in particular, as opposed to government policy documents, determines teacher awareness and practice in values education. Teacher understanding of values is fluid in nature. Their understanding continuously shifts depending on the circumstances in which they find themselves. Teachers do not have one clear definition of values education. Immediate professional and practical needs also affect the understanding of values, as opposed to the government policy goal of life-long learning. Furthermore, teachers’ values are a microcosm of societal values and, since values are contagious, modelling is a powerful strategy in teaching it. Teacher practice is not always determined by knowledge or verbal claims of understanding, but has more to do

with personal and professional survival; including the need to complete the curriculum, and job security. Lastly, universal values may exist, but understanding and implementation of values cannot be applied uniformly, even within the same school or community.

I will now proceed with the synthesis of the three central issues arising from my research study question; namely, the concept of values education, offering an explanation for the discrepancy found between policy intentions and practice and, lastly, factors that determine teachers' understanding and practice of values education in Kenya.

### **7.1 Values: the trotting concept**

In this study, I confirmed that the concept of values is a contextual one, both in understanding and practice. It therefore follows that the meanings and interpretations attached are dominated by the personality of the individual, and the environment in which they find themselves. That being the case, it further follows that values education will remain a mutating concept, allied to the external environment, and absolute conformity of practice may be difficult to achieve.

In chapters 1 and 2, I drew attention to the controversy that has surrounded values education, stating that because values hinge on personal, religious, and deep-rooted beliefs, people are not ready to negotiate or easily abandon what they know. The documentary analysis in chapter 2 noted how authors like Veugeles (2000) and Dune (1997) have been in the forefront of research that has revealed the shifting and fluid nature of values; both in the definition of the concept and the different ways they are transmitted in the classroom.

In chapter five, the classification of primary data based on school types, illustrates how the different philosophical backgrounds of the schools determine how teachers understand the concept of values in Kenya. Of note in this chapter is the clear difference in emphasis recorded in the different schools due to ideological orientation. In private schools, values are promoted for the sole reason of ensuring that students achieve academic excellence; in religious schools, the emphasis is on life-long learning; and in the majority of government schools, values were important as far as they enabled a harmonious relationship between learners and teachers.

In chapter 6, which focused on information gathered while observing teachers in the classroom, I confirmed that teachers' practice is largely influenced by their individual beliefs, as well as the school environment at large. This finding confirms what scholars like Datta (1992) mean when he says that the way the teacher's role is enacted in any particular situation depends on a number of factors, including age, sex, marital status, socio-economic background, personality structure, experience and the institution in which the teacher works.

As Roger and Louzencky (2003) note, everything teachers do in the classroom reflects their personal beliefs. In this study, I noted that teachers, as the final implementers of values education policy, have adopted and modified the policy to suit their professional practice. In the same chapter I also confirmed the influence of the head teacher on an individual teacher's practice. These issues confirm the fact that values and therefore education is a contextual concept.

To reinforce the contextual nature of values, the key informant interviews established the fact that teachers' understandings of values are a reflection of their immediate environment.

Thus, practiced values have the unvoiced sanctioning of society. Mujomba (K1) emphasised the importance of society when he stated that teachers get values from society, "...just as the school is a reflection of the head teacher, the school is also a microcosm of society, and therefore society has to take responsibility for what is taking place in its schools...".

Jansen (2004) also raises the same issue, and agrees with Mujomba (K1) that teachers are just part of society, and should not be expected to carry the banner of high ideals whilst the rest of the community proceeds with life. The private schools seem to concur with Ryan (1995:428) who observes, "What goes by the name of character education nowadays is for the most part, a collection of exhortations and extrinsic inducements designed to make children work harder and do what they are told...". In my study, I noted that the private schools' definitions and strategies were oriented towards academic achievements and not necessarily how to live one's life.

Authors are cautious about community-based values. Dunne (1997) claims that community acceptance proves cultural congruency and not moral excellence. Mali (K2) concurred with Dune when he described national strikes in Kenya carried out by teachers mostly demanding better pay as "mob psychology." In his words, "Though the reason for the strike might be

genuine, the message understood by students is that to get what you want you have to demonstrate or be violent... Calling a strike negates the all-important value of negotiating in a peaceful manner. So, society and the “mob” determine the way the teacher implements values in the curriculum”.

The documentary search and the primary data collected concur in many respects. Whilst the literature recorded the diversity and near superficial treatment that values education has been accorded through the years, the primary data on the other hand clearly demonstrated the vagueness, and the variance that occurs even between two classrooms in the same school.

As a concluding remark to the stated finding of values being contextual, I concur with previous authors and institutions, among them Kidder (1994), Ennet, Suh and Traiger (1999), Lickona (1993), and UNESCO (2001) and the Josephson Institute of Ethics, that universal values can be defined as comprising love, truthfulness, fairness, freedom, unity, tolerance, responsibility and respect for life.

However, my findings, supported by previous works from authors like Newell (2003:7), compel me to add a caveat to the notion of values being universal. My position is that values, though shared, will not be uniformly interpreted, and implementation of the identified values will differ depending on the environment. The difference in understanding and practice is embedded in the unique political, social, economic and cultural beliefs of the individual teacher. I will now proceed to offer an explanation as to the reasons for the variance between policy and practice.

## **7.2 The variance between policy and practice**

Central to my study was finding the reasons for this variance between values education policy statements as compared to classroom practice. As noted in previous scholarly works such as McLaughlin (1998), written policy does not necessarily determine how implementation finally takes place. I therefore set out to unveil the reasons behind why teachers have not responded fully to the widely-applauded policy on values education.

McLaughlin (1998) remarks that implementors do not always do as instructed, nor do they act to maximise policy objectives, but instead they respond in ways that often seem quite

idiosyncratic, unpredictable, and even resistant. My study sought to analyse what these idiosyncratic, unpredictable, and resistant ways were in Kenyan practice.

The variance between policy intentions and the practice has more often than not been explained by stressing technical and institutional deficiencies, such as lack of resources. This study, among others including Hargreaves (1998) and Fink and Stoll (1998), claim that there are other “soft” issues that influence the dynamics of the school environment. I confirm that due to the absence of an “absolute truth”, various stakeholders note that efforts to implement values education in Kenya have been fragmented. Authors like Bauman (1992) have referred to the same concept but called it the lack of a “centre of knowledge,” meaning that everyone is a creator of knowledge. I will continue to illustrate how the absence of an “absolute truth” or “centre of knowledge” has had an impact on the values education policy arena in Kenya.

This study established that a principal stakeholder affected by the absence of an “absolute truth” is the Curriculum Developer. The analysis of educational materials (chapter 4) noted that, despite the fact that the curriculum now mainstreams values, the means for achieving this is not made clear in some disciplines. I observed that because Kenya is a multicultural society, and because the current constitution does not mention values, as well as the way policy documents have dealt with values, it has left curriculum developers uncertain as to how to proceed.

These issues, coupled with the limited capacity of the curriculum development unit of the Kenya Institute of Education, have made the interpretation of values as identified in the policy documents a daunting task for the curriculum developers. Consequently, I recorded high levels of assumption in both the learning materials and teacher practice. This was especially pronounced in Geography and History and Government. In the science subjects, hardly any attempt has been made to mainstream values.

Limited capacity at various levels emerged in the key informants’ interview sessions as a reason for the variance between policy and practice. Authors such as Korthagen and Kessels (1999) argue that one of the central problems with teacher education is that the theoretical body of knowledge taught in schools is not the kind of knowledge that teachers draw upon while actually teaching. In my study, experts pointed to the fact that teachers are ill prepared to effectively transmit the aspirations as enshrined in the education goal of SMRV. They,

however, said that the weakness found among teachers was largely due to the fact that no institution is confident of their knowledge base.

Secondly, no institution seems to have the clear undivided mandate of the people as the implementing agency or “centre of knowledge”. Mr Furaha (K3) said that although there were in-service courses for teachers, they took the subject for the sole purpose of passing their final examination. He also said that the Curriculum Development Unit of the Kenya Institute of Education has not been able to develop appropriate methods for examining the effectiveness of the subject in transforming the lives of students, as the policy envisages. What these findings seem to suggest is the fact that when policy does not have evaluation strategies, it tends to fall short of addressing issues that which would have contributed to positive achievements.

Unfortunately for the Kenyan situation, limited capacity at various levels has meant that nobody can technically monitor and lend support to the policy implementation process. Dr Mujomba (K1), when commenting on the dropping of SEE as a subject in the Kenyan curriculum said, “The challenge of values education was not the subject per se, but the translation and implementation of the same into the day to day professional lives of teachers”.

Another factor which contributes to the distance between policy and practice in values education is what some teachers termed as unrealistic demands from the Ministry. Teachers complained that the syllabus was crowded and that some of the expectations had financial implications that were beyond the means of their schools. I witnessed teachers struggling with professional obligations against personal consideration.

An example is presented in chapter 6, where the teacher (Miss Atieno in the government primary school) is forced to close her eyes to the fact that some students do not have the necessary materials for the lessons. Miss Atieno knew that what she was doing was not professionally right, but had no choice since both her workload and lack of school resources prevented her from delivering the lesson with all the necessary materials. At a personal level, Miss Atieno battles with the reality of a low paying job that does not adequately meet her basic needs. She is not alone in this predicament. In other words, this new policy did not arouse any feelings of ownership in the teachers, and this means that they will not go out of their way to fulfil the requirements.

I witnessed conflict at the level where teachers interface with society, and more specifically, parents. In chapter 5, the experience of the teacher in the private school, who was taken aback by the fact that parents were the reason some pupils could not participate in sports activities, is one example of how a teacher's professional or moral knowledge comes into direct conflict with that of the main stakeholder, i.e. the parent. In the above case, the school had to find ways of evading direct confrontation with these parents, by confining sporting activities to the school. Such incidences not only hamper teachers' efforts in values education, but also destroy morale. Teachers give up when they feel that they do not have the necessary support from the parents.

Another result of the absence of an "absolute truth" is that diverse interpretations lead to differing pedagogical experiences. At face value this divergence may not appear to be a problem, but in some situations, as was noted in the study, teachers do not achieve the policy intentions due to laxity or misinterpretation of the concept. The literature review in chapter 2 recorded that teachers confused obedience with good character. The same could be said of the Kenyan environment, where values were associated more with discipline and religion than good character.

Semegi (K4) and Dr Mali (K2) concurred with the above, regarding fragmented implementation, but also brought in the question of the capacity of the whole system to effectively plan, implement and evaluate values education. In chapter 2, authors like Hydon (1997) highlighted the same issue, saying that despite recent attention given to the development of virtues as an educational aim, it is by no means clear how the aim is to be pursued or how far it can be achieved.

Semegi (K4) and Mali (K2) specifically point out that the education system is not oriented towards acknowledging and rewarding teachers for character development of their students. Instead, the system holds teachers accountable for pass rates at examination level, and to a lesser extent, performance on the sports field. A review of the teacher promotion and training programme confirms the sentiments of these two experts. In chapter 5, I noted that teachers, for a number of reasons, were more inclined to concentrate on issues from which they derive short-term rewards. Thus teachers do not see the need to excel in areas like values education, since they are unable to realise the immediate benefits.

Close scrutiny of the teacher-training programme shows that it realises the importance of values education, but I found no evidence that this is included in the daily activities of the teacher training programme. This has led educationists like Semegi (K4) and Mujuku (K5), a head teacher in a religious school, to apportion blame to poor preparation, which they claim, does not give teachers enough time to reflect on their moral role or gain the necessary skills for managing students at the school level. Motion, another head teacher in a private school, specifically points to the small amount of time allocated to important subjects such as psychology, which she argues, are particularly relevant in understanding and handling adolescents. Dr. Mali (K2) states that current teacher preparation is riddled with many inadequacies, resulting in poor preparation of teachers in key areas like values.

The Kenyan experience is not unique. In chapter 2, I highlighted how a survey conducted by the Boston University Centre for the Advancement of Ethics and Character in 1999 demonstrated that over 90% of the deans and directors of teacher education across the USA supported the teaching of core values in schools. Yet over 81% reported that they were unable to adequately address Character Education in their own teacher preparation programmes.

In conclusion, I postulate that the distance between policy intentions and practice will remain a challenge as long as the Ministry does not get to grips with the ambiguities, especially with regards to the teacher. The absence of what people can refer to as the “truth” or “centre” of knowledge are critical to the success of policy.

In the above discussion, I elucidated what I found to be contributing factors to the ever-increasing gap between policy and practice in values education. I will now proceed to highlight factors that influence teachers’ value beliefs and practices in the Kenyan environment.

### **7.3 Teacher beliefs and practices in values education**

The challenge of this study was to explicitly identify the various beliefs and premises upon which teachers’ value judgments are based. The following section is a direct response to the key question of the study. The literature review in chapter 2 highlighted the fact that this has been an area that research has only just begun to explore, with scholars like Perjures (1992) attributing this silence to the fact that teacher emotions and experiences are “messy” – and



“an inappropriate subject for empirical investigation.” Mortimore (1998), in his study on *Reflecting on research on schools and their effects*, shows that schools which operate in the same environment, provided with the same curriculum, still show different outcomes. I will thus continue to expound on the prevalent Kenyan experience.

My study noted various influences on teacher understanding. In this section I focus on four main factors that seem to recur both in proclamation and practice. These were; the personality of the teacher, the head teacher, school ethos, parents and the school community.

### **7.3.1 The “unbroken chain” of personality**

My study established that the personality of the teacher is the predominant factor that governs his or her value judgments in the Kenyan context. I refer to the personality of the teacher as the “unbroken chain”, because the teachers’ teacher, whose personality is also developed by their teacher, plays a part in the development of the personality of the teacher. The assertion goes further; the “teacher” in this context, is not only the formal teacher but also the family setting. Whereas other studies seem to give prominence to the head teacher and school environment, I noted in the interviews and observation sessions, that teachers try at all times to make decisions that suit them as individuals, and only follow the system when they have no other choice. This finding is comparable to that of Schwarzwald *et al.* (1978), who claim that teachers’ attitudes and practice in values were based on a combination of variables; namely, interaction with people and inherent personality traits, especially dogmatism.

In chapter 6, Mrs Andia, the teacher in the religious school, comes across as a confident and secure teacher in both her profession and her beliefs. She compares well with Jane Elliot from Iowa, USA (see chapter 2). The confidence of these women enables them to take on the risk of breaking new ground in the curriculum by allowing students to apply the experiences of their lessons in practice. For Elliot, this was the experience of discrimination, and for Andia, one of sharing.

On the other hand, Mrs Andia’s counterparts in the same school chose the safer alternative of essay writing. Essay writing as an option does not draw the attention of the head teacher or the parents. The teacher therefore remains safely within the confines of the classroom, and also maintains the superior position in the teacher/learner relationship. Both Mrs Andia and

her colleagues are operating within the framework of the policy, but their respective personalities are responsible for the different pedagogical choices they make.

In chapter 5, through the interview sessions with teachers, I highlighted a number of situations where teachers confirmed that they did not refer to government policy, but more to their own experience as learners. This was also clearly demonstrated in chapter 6, where I observed teachers faced with a number of simultaneous activities in the classroom, leaving them with very little time to reflect on their actions and the potential repercussions of their actions. This finding confirms that a teacher in a classroom situation, more often than not, uses knowledge that they have been exposed to and which is stored in their subconscious.

This study noted that the teacher's personal and professional self are intrinsically interconnected. But my study also established that there is a third level of consideration which remains hidden as long as there is no threat to the survival of the teacher. When faced with a survival decision, the variables disconnect, and survival assumes the upper hand. The story of Miss Atieno in chapter 6 is one such example. Miss Atieno detached her emotional and professional self from her need to "survive" at work, when she realised that, although her decision to continue with the lesson was not professionally right, and she furthermore did not enjoy what she was doing, she had no choice. She had to complete the syllabus since that is what the system expected of her. Another example is found in chapter 5 during the private school discussions where a teacher claimed,

"I distance myself from the decision; this enables me to be "fair" and "objective" (PH4).

In the same focus group another teacher noted that,

"When I am in school, obedience means no explanations or compromise..., at home, I negotiate with my children and give them the freedom to choose ..." ...here I am at work and have to follow..." (PH6).

My findings therefore build on what other scholars such as Day (2000) have established (rational and emotional mind), by adding the fact that the teacher also has a "survival" mind that in most cases takes precedence over the emotional and rational mind. In his study, Day (2000) declared that teachers make decisions using two minds, the rational and the emotional. The rational is deductive, careful, analytical, reflective and frequently deliberate. The

emotional mind, meanwhile, is powerful, impulsive, intuitive, holistic and fast, and most often illogical.

In the table below, I provide a summary of the traits and the ensuing practice as observed among the teachers in this study. I begin by singling out religion since it seems to have played a major role in shaping the person of the teacher. As I recorded in one interview,

“The church and my upbringing have played a bigger role in forming my professional values; the psychology lessons in the teacher preparation were useful though very short...” (RP4).

It is important to note that, in the Kenyan context, religion does not remain at belief level, but plays an important role in forming the identity of a person. Friendships and day-to-day close associations are contingent upon shared religious beliefs. It is for this reason that, in this study, religion featured as a fundamental premise upon which teachers’ understanding, and to some extent their practice, was grounded. The fact that decisions on SMRV have a profound religious inclination means that values in the Kenyan environment can still be considered as a “private” matter, since religion is a personal choice. It therefore follows that the discourse about the professional lives of teachers needs to take cognisance of the importance of religion if the goal of values education is to be achieved.

The table below depicts a summary of personality traits and resultant behaviour as observed in the three teachers. Please note that other traits may exist, but I limited myself to the three teachers I observed.

**Table 7-1 Summary table of personality traits**

<b>Personal Trait</b>	<b>Resultant Practice</b>
<b>Confident</b>	Creative, stable in disposition, role model,
<b>Patient</b>	Accommodate students with various concerns, confident, counsellor,
<b>Spiritual</b>	Internalised virtues meaning that those take precedence over government policy, caring
<b>Aloof</b>	Less caring, conceited, reactive to learners needs

I will now proceed to the second, most referred to, premise as identified by teachers and my observation sessions.

### 7.3.2 The head teacher

Interview sessions and observation confirmed the central role of the head teacher in determining how values are promoted in the school. I noted that teachers, as a second level of consideration, decide to employ pedagogical techniques that they think will not only have the desired impact, but will also meet the demands and approval of the head teacher.

The expert interview sessions concurred with my observation. Teachers claimed that responsibility for setting value systems in the school rests with the head teacher. Powney and Schlapp (1996) noted that head teachers generally saw it as their role to set the tone for values in the school and ensure a policy of values education. The head teacher decides, consciously or unconsciously, the manner in which individual teachers will perform their role. If the head teacher is keen on high moral standards, the teachers at the school will follow, and if the head teacher adopts an indifferent attitude, the teachers, too, become indifferent in their approach.

Chabalala (2004), at the International Head Teacher's Symposium, said that "A school is a reflection of the head teacher". Semegi (K4) raised the example of a primary school head teacher who was found guilty of sexual harassment of students and, on further investigation; it was found that this was a common practice among teachers and students at this particular school. But the matter had not been addressed, because the head teacher was also involved.

The head teacher is the first level of authority that the teacher encounters. It naturally follows that this is the reason why the influence of the head teacher features as a reference point for teachers. Anderson (1991) also showed how school principals manipulate teachers. In this study, teachers said that they respected the head teacher since they were operating in the same environment, and it was only on very rare occasions that the head teacher would request the impossible from a teacher.

On a more strategic level, I noted that the head teacher was responsible for the promotion of teachers, thus it was in the teachers' interest that they maintained the approval of the head teacher. This fact alone adds significance to the authority of the head teacher. From my interview sessions and observations, incidences of patronage are rife in the schools. In one school, it was claimed that the head allocated extra duties based on his relationship with the respective teachers.

I will now proceed to discuss the third level of reference for the teachers; namely, the school ethos. The findings on the influence of the school ethos on teachers shows a close linkage with that of the head teacher, although the ethos of the schools have their own unique influences since the demands and expectations are set by a wider constituency that goes beyond the head teacher.

### **7.3.3 School ethos**

A third factor, but similar to that of the head teacher, was the ethos of the school. This study noted that teachers' levels of understanding are enhanced and influenced by the environment in which they are operating. The study recorded a knowledge base of 50% of the existence of the goal of values, with high numbers among religious and private schools.

The school determines whether a teacher will take on the role of values promoter, and whether he or she will be held accountable. Religious and some private schools ensure that the teacher is constantly aware that he or she is to act as a role model, and teachers are evaluated not only on how well they perform academically but also socially and spiritually. Thus, as much as values are personal decisions, the environment creates a framework for teachers' decisions.

In chapter 5, I recorded how one teacher claimed that the school sponsors determine the code of conduct that is observed at the school. The code of conduct at schools is determined independently of government codes. For example, a school might not employ anyone who is not a born-again Christian. In the expert interviews, Dr Mali (K2) singled out Catholic schools as having a tradition of espousing particular moral values, and teachers in such schools have no choice but to toe the line.

Lastly, I discuss the fourth factor that influences teachers' knowledge about values. These are the parents and the community. I combine parents with the community since they expressed similar concerns, mostly based on image and pride.

### **7.3.4 Parents and the immediate community**

I observed that teaching, quite unlike other professions, is performed in an environment that comes under the scrutiny of different, and sometimes competing, forces that exert themselves on the school. The literature review in chapter 2 supported this point, with authors such as

Avalos (2002) stating that, “Education is vulnerable to a host of internal and external forces”. Maveneke (1999) also added that the teachers’ response to any curriculum is governed by society and government’s attitude.

In this study, I recorded a number of considerations that teachers have to make as they perform their duties. Apart from their own interests, teachers had to ensure that they operated according to the school rules. They were keen not to clash with the head teacher, and thus made every effort to learn what their Principal liked or disliked.

Secondly, teachers tried to accommodate the expectations of the parents. This was especially so in the private schools where the parents seemed to have a keen interest in everything taking place at the school. I recorded teachers in situations where they were helpless, even when they knew they were right. Keeping the peace or ensuring professional survival is central to the teacher’s practice in values education. I noted that teachers were much better off opting for an inactive approach to value-based issues, rather than risk taking action and clashing with the parents or the head teacher. This finding is closely related to Hartshorne and May’s research (as cited in Lickona 1991) which claimed that value decisions are made based on the degree of risk envisaged.



**Figure 7-1** Circle of importance from centre to outer circle

The four considerations shown above are the main determinants of teacher decision-making, and range in importance from the centre to the outer circle. There were also other social issues that teachers described as hampering their efforts to promote values - among them, if there are many different secular influences, the teacher feels uncertain as to which one to follow. Government policy may contradict some beliefs, particularly where family life education is concerned. Teachers feel that they are not adequately prepared to discuss current issues.

Teachers in government schools had various concerns: inadequate teaching materials; children from affluent backgrounds who were a threat to them; limited parental support; broken homes; drugs; no time to evaluate outcomes due to heavy workloads; influences which teachers at a day school cannot control; the abolition of corporal punishment, leaving teachers no alternative means for disciplining their students. In addition, teachers mentioned the general hypocrisy and contradictions found in society that left them with no choice but to step back from key issues of values.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated how the imbalance and assumptions in policy emphasis has resulted in a gap between policy intentions and practice in values education. The findings show that teachers' understanding of values education does not touch them personally, so education policy has to consider both technical and "soft" issues in policy formulation. I put forward the claim that teachers' focus on values will continue to be closely linked to the immediate environment and its demands. My study did not record a situation where teachers religiously referred to government policy, and where government policy was referred to at all, it was in terms of ensuring compliance.

I will now proceed to identify what my study has contributed to the field of values education.

#### **7.4 New knowledge**

This study has confirmed several findings of previous studies in the area of values education. The major difference has been the fact that findings from this study are a direct representation of teachers' perceptions.

Secondly, the findings of this study build on, or offer a refinement to, previous studies. In other words, rather than identifying a range of factors that may influence teacher

understanding, this study specifies exactly which variables. Thus, the study captures critical data which fills in the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of teacher interpretation and practice in values education.

Before I delve into the details of what my study has contributed to values education, I feel obliged to briefly mention that scholars like Lawrence Kohlberg, Jean Piaget and John Dewey have been in the forefront of laying the foundation of moral interpretive frameworks. Lawrence Kohlberg, among others, advanced the notion that humans developed morals based on a series of stages. More recent studies have tried to distinguish the specific interpretive frameworks that are used by teachers. These studies include that of Day (2000) and Hargreaves (1998).

The study by Day (2000) noted that teachers make decisions using two mindsets, the rational and emotional. The study claims that the two mindsets identified are intrinsically connected. The study by Hargreaves (1998) and his colleagues assert that the undoing of education has been the ignoring of the emotional side of the teacher's mind. More recently, scholars like Jansen (2005) have focused on the importance of race and gender as critical in influencing teacher behaviour.

My study concurs with the above findings, and I add that, despite the rational mind being occupied with objective and professional concerns, there is yet another framework which is not exactly professional or emotional, but more to do with the survival of the individual. I refer to this as the "survival" framework. The cornerstone of the "survival" framework is the teacher's personal needs. I put forward the claim that, at any given time, a teacher's decision to act may fall within the following three frameworks:

Do I believe in, or like what I am doing? – Emotional.

Is it professionally right to do what I am doing? – Rational.

What are the consequences of my action for me? – Survival.

For example Carlin (1996:724) says, "...but if schools rise to this challenge and decide to tackle the sex question, they are right back in their original quandary. Should they take an abstinence approach or a safe sex approach; in the latter, they'll outrage moral and religious conservatives while in the former, they'll outrage moral liberals and secularists...".



In the above case, the teachers are clearly using the “survival” framework. The decision taken does not necessarily have to be “correct” (an example being avoiding or skipping the lesson) but at least it ensures that the teacher is not in trouble with any of the stakeholders. The other example can be drawn from the private school teacher in this study.

“When I am in school, obedience means no explanations or compromise..., at home, I negotiate with my children and give them the freedom to choose ...” ...here I am at work and have to follow...” (PH6).

The teacher’s response serves to show the dynamics of the survival framework, where teachers act differently in an environment that they have more control over – in this case the household rather than in the school compound, where they may not believe in what they are doing. If a comparison were to be made with Kohlberg’s stages of moral development, the above example would fall within level 2, stage 4, where, according to Kohlberg, the individual has reached a stage where the need to maintain law and order supersedes all other concerns. The teacher, in the above case, is ready to sacrifice what he believes in, in order to ensure that his duties are not disrupted. Please note that the value here is not necessarily what is right, but what will ensure that the law is followed, with no disruption to the peace.

The survival framework corroborates the fact that the personality of the teacher is central to their understanding, interpretation and implementation of values education. Crotty (1998) puts forward a similar claim, when he states that meaning is not discovered but constructed. Piaget (1932) also claimed that morality was an individual construct. Therefore, teachers who find themselves in similar circumstances will construct meaning in different ways.

Other studies have highlighted the various premises upon which teachers’ value judgments are anchored. Wright (1990) says that a teacher’s understanding is largely implicit and unexplained. In this study, I agree with the various scholars, but single out the personality of the teacher as the underpinning factor in value judgments. I noted earlier that teachers like to do what they as individuals believe in, and only follow the system when they have no choice. The nature of values education in the Kenyan context provides for this flexibility, and this explains why schools or teachers in the same environment, under the same conditions, record different results and practices.

The “survival” framework builds on what authors like Cochran-Smith (1998) had advocated, when she said that educational theory needed to move from only providing knowledge to providing knowledge and interpretive frameworks. I note that the survival interpretive framework has not received attention in the values education policy. This framework is principally a result of two issues arising from the Kenyan environment. Firstly, the policy on values education has been riddled with challenges not only on the religious front, but also because of the changing political scenarios, which, as mentioned, are the cause of certain curriculum changes. Consequently, no single group has stood out as an authority in this area. Teachers, as the final implementers of policy, take the strategic decision to “play it safe.” The unfortunate result is that values education is not properly implemented. This position is similar to that of the prevailing Constitution, which does not incorporate any values.

The “survival” interpretive framework confirms three basic principles. Firstly, that values will be in a constant state of construction and reconstruction; secondly, that there is no direct correlation between holding a value and acting upon it; and thirdly that values education efforts can only hope to reduce the gap in interpretation and implementation, but there will never be a standardised democratic system across the board.

## **7.5 Areas for future research**

The findings of this study negate the widespread policy assumptions that teachers would naturally accept the new values-based curriculum, make sense of the complex concept in theory, and practice and mainstream such values in all school subjects. This research has established that teachers develop personal theories of teaching which influence the content and eventual practice in values decision-making. This being the case, I agree that teacher development is important, as claimed by previous authors like Good (1973: 15) who says that “To have attitude without skills is to have a heart with no vision or direction”.

Likewise, to have skills and a direction for institutional goals without passion of the heart brings tragedy. Checkoway (2001) has clearly stated that good character is not formed automatically; it is developed over time through a sustained process of teaching, example, learning and practice. Further research therefore needs to establish the finer details of what an effective teacher preparation programme should entail in order to equip teachers with attitude and skills to interpret the inherent values in the curriculum.

The training programme would, amongst other issues, provide time for the prospective teachers to engage in what Schwab (1978:342) called "polyfocal conspectus", that is, the systematic, critical analysis of subject matter through multiple perspectives that are inevitably value-laden. The programme would, for example, identify continuous performance assessments for teachers that would help to demonstrate that a teacher candidate is reflective, collaborative, and knowledgeable.

However, on a cautionary note, as stated by McCarthy (1993), the programmes have to ensure that they are structured in such a way that the centrality of teachers' work is brought to the fore, but at the same time without implying that teachers - individually or collectively - are the panacea for all the problems we face in the values policy arena.

This study, amongst others, has shown that curriculum change does not automatically bring about compliance; therefore it would be important for research on values to draw lessons from the experience of the HIV & AIDS campaign, where it was realised that the mere provision of information on the dangers of the pandemic was not enough to change people's behaviour patterns.

In the education environment, values policy and curriculum change has to research and develop strategies that will ensure consented compliance from the teachers. The research would have to take note of the fact that schools, as stated by McCarthy (1993), are not neutral grounds, but contested sites where power struggles are played out. The study would thus consider the structural inequities embedded in the social, organisational, and financial arrangements of schools and schooling, and those that help to perpetuate dominance and stereotyping. This research would help propose ways for policy makers to address the demonstrated glaring differences that exist in the school environment and the various salient but important issues taking place in the school environment that determine school outcomes.

As I carried out the study, a recurring theme within the school environment was the issue of adequate time to complete the set syllabus. Teachers continuously complained of an overburdened syllabus and felt that they could not change their pedagogical methods, claiming that if they were to do so in the interest of incorporating a fully fledged values curriculum, they would not complete the syllabus on the specified time. This being the case, there is need

for research on education to review the period set for formal education against the backdrop of what an individual needs to learn to enable them participate productively in society.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

In 2002, Kenya moved from taking SMRV as a separate subject to having the key concepts mainstreamed into social science subjects. The efforts made to date are commendable, though much still needs to be done, as pointed out above. A positive acknowledgement though, is the fact that stakeholders in this multicultural environment seem to have agreed on basic principles, chief among them being the acknowledgement that values education should be central to the education curriculum. This consensus has allowed for the launch of the mainstreaming process of the values education curriculum.

The onus is on policy to take the process forward by incorporating a holistic approach that will create the opportunity for teacher training colleges to strategically nurture teachers who will have a fine understanding of their subject and a moral obligation towards their learners. As Davies (1991:18) highlighted in chapter 2, “If a teacher’s professional conduct does not underscore the written content of the curriculum, then we have no alternative other than to admit that even the most relevant curriculum can become totally irrelevant...”. This calls for a total ideological and methodological shift from the current unbalanced system, which is tilted more towards academic achievement than to character development.

Baudrillard (1988) described the current development age as a revolution that has engulfed people with information to the extent where the distinction between reality and the word/image has broken down into a condition of hyper-reality.

A further observation emanating from this study is the shallowness and generality of the teachers’ recognition of values education. Drawing on these positions, I advocate the development of a centre of knowledge for values education. The centre would work to reduce suspicion and build confidence in people. Besides providing precision to values and according it professional status, the centre would guide research, policymaking and implementation, including evaluation of values education.

I compare values education with other subject areas, which have established theories that are continuously under research and evolve within a framework that serves to guide the process

until such a time that they are overtaken by new discoveries. A good example is raised by Gichure (1997: 20) where she argues that ethics needs to borrow from the field of medicine, which, although it has set theories, for each particular case, the doctor has to gather more information, take a case history, consider the age and condition of the patient, and go over all the symptoms, before arriving at the decision to apply the agreed scientific law to the specific case.

This study also noted that the personality of the head teacher, rather than government policy, determined how teachers responded and practiced values education. This being the case, it would be wise for the government to focus attention on influencing head teachers on issues of curriculum reform. Currently, during the introduction or change of curriculum, government efforts have been concentrated on in-service training and seminars to build the specific teacher's capacity. The results of this study indicate that with regard to values education, without the head teacher's support all efforts will come to nothing. Secondly, there are fewer head teachers so that they are a more cost effective group to manage, taking into consideration the time and financial constraints facing the government system.

This study brings to the fore the individualistic and contextual nature of values. Consequently, it calls on policy to recognise the intricacies involved in values education. The current policy environment has treated the values curriculum like any other subject. This study recommends for a total change. I quote from one of the head teachers:

“For the first time somebody is interested in the quality of teachers I have, and not only coming to find out the pass rate of my learners or how many more learner I can take on” (Private head teacher 1).

Policy needs to clearly state its goals, and teachers should be trained so that they can creatively utilise the knowledge gained at a practical level. This study showed that if teachers are to effectively aid learners, they have to have a fine understanding of moral issues, coupled with the skills to deal with a dynamic multicultural society. To get teachers to change their pedagogical practice requires more than refresher courses. I will thus elucidate what I think needs to be done with regard to teacher preparation.

- Multicultural and multiethnic grounding

There is a need to investigate what it means to teach "all students" well and what it means to adjust teaching practices according to the needs and interests of "all children.". We need to broaden our knowledge about the different ethnic communities (Kenya has 42 major ethnic groups) and foster appreciation and accommodation of different cultures. The advantage of such knowledge, as emphasised by Banks and Banks (2001), is that it will help teachers understand that, in order to be advocates for equitable and just education, they must speak against racism and discrimination.

Secondly, multicultural education will accord the education system an opportunity to begin interrogating some of the taboos that still afflict some societies. One key issue is that of power relations in the class. Lisman (1991), Allard and Cooper (2001), and Manke (1997) claim that the methods that teachers use in promoting values is largely determined by uneven power relations, and negotiations between the teachers and respective students in the classroom. Wells (1992) reinforces this point by saying that "Teacher-child discourse is a central aspect of classroom life whose moral implications have been ignored".

Buzzelli (1996) bemoans the fact that few studies have examined the moral implications of the teaching/learning activities that occur in classrooms.

- Multi religious grounding

Religion is deep-rooted and is the source from which a good number of teachers draw their knowledge. Kenyan religious groupings, in order of majority, are Christians, Muslims, traditional African, Hindu, and Buddhists. It is therefore critical that the Kenyan teacher is familiar with the different religions and has the skill to negotiate the intricate diverse beliefs to create a fair democratic environment for learning.

- National goals

Teachers should be conversant with the national goals of development and understand how the education system contributes to these goals. This will reduce the chances of teachers not knowing how their work fits into the bigger picture of the country. Dr. Mali (K2) in the interview sessions, claimed that

"CRE is not able to capture in detail the aspirations of the nation as a whole, secondly, Christianity gives choices, that is, a person is not obliged, but an appeal is made to them...a

nation can only be built with people who have a shared vision and value system... values education is a key foundation for the education and upbringing of children, thus it cannot be left to chance or choice...”.

- Human rights

Teachers should know that as custodians and educators of the next generation, they have the responsibility to protect the rights of children. They should not only keep abreast of national regulations such as the teacher code of conduct, but international regulations like the international convention on the rights of the child.

- Content knowledge

The teacher should be competent in the subject content and ensure that they continuously upgrade their knowledge base. This is an area that has received much attention in the current education paradigm, with the focus on the economic benefits of knowledge.

- Participatory pedagogical skills

Training has to provide teachers with new modern teaching skills. The old methods that ensured that the teacher was the provider of knowledge are outdated. As Korthagen and Kessels (1991) conclude, the kind of knowledge provided in teacher training programmes rarely comes to mind during lessons.

Another area for policy should be a reorientation of the system to take cognisance of values education. The prevailing focus on academic achievement, rather than the building of a person's character, will hamper progress in values education. A shift in ideology will ensure that details pertaining to values education, including evaluation of impact, will become part of the policy agenda. This will compel curriculum developers to find means and ways to evaluate and reward good character in teachers.

Some private schools, such as those administered by the Pentecostal churches, emphasise that they do not only employ teachers in terms of academic merit, but also consider their spiritual standing. Semegi (K4) pointed out clearly that she interviews teachers according to their spiritual standing, and monitors their behaviour and interaction with children on a daily basis. Head teachers highlight the fact that the formal education system does not have a realistic

engagement with real life situations, so the two environments have failed to effectively complement each other. Cotton (2003) noted that teachers believe that schools can teach values only if parents and teachers agree on which values to teach, model these values and agree to work together to support children.

This study recorded experts pointing out that pastoral lessons held every Friday are a good beginning towards the integration of school and community, since guest speakers from the community are invited to lead the sessions. However, more support from society is needed.



## Appendix 1

TABLE SHOWING OBSERVED BEHAVIOURS AS DEVELOPED BY TEACHERS

<b>Value</b>	<b>Resultant Practice</b>
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	Able to explain their subject and the values in their respective subjects
<b>Cooperative</b>	Able to help and work harmoniously with other teachers and asks students to support each other; one able to involve all students whether weak or intelligent
<b>Confident</b>	Able to stand for what they think is right under any circumstances,
<b>Respect</b>	Takes discipline seriously and they take appropriate action on students, one whom students in turn obey, a teacher who is able to control their class,
<b>Concern</b>	One who listens to students attentively and helps them to learn
<b>Patient</b>	Accommodates students with various concerns even the slow ones,
<b>Spiritual</b>	Able to guide students and be a moral role model, does not smoke or drink alcohol in front of students, uses proper language, does not insult students
<b>Negative traits</b>	<b>Resultant Practice</b>
<b>Aloof</b>	Less caring, conceited, reactive to learners needs
<b>Lazy</b>	Not bothered to make the extract effort required of values education

## Appendix 2

### GENDER FOCUSED DISCUSSION

Maggie: Good evening gentlemen, it may come as a surprise to you that today I have asked to talk with men only. This is because I want to clarify what I have observed amongst male teachers in schools that are either female only or mixed schools.

I will get straight to the point. I have notice that when you are dealing with your female learners you tend to keep an artificial distance and secondly, the manner in which you address them is different from how you address the male students.

Kedogo: It is not artificial; it is a proper distance, to ensure that we are not liable to be blamed for any sort of misconduct that may arise, such as the accusation of sexual advance.

Maggie: But even though you keep this distance, we still have cases of male teachers having sexual relationships with their female students.

Bodo: People always claim that these relationships are promoted by the male teacher, but some of the girls are the ones who approach the men and advance the relationship.

Kamau: You remember the case of Mr Gitau, the girl was the one who made the advances, but it is Mr Gitau who was finally sent from the school. He is lucky he was not interdicted.

Maggie: The Gitau case sounds unique, what really happened?

Kedogo: It is was unique, ...it was even in the daily papers..., you do not know the case because you do not live here. You see, this student was facing a lot of problems at home, and the new curriculum expects all teachers to take on a counselling role... in the process of listening and counselling, the student became infatuated by Mr Gitau...all along this student was looking for a parent figure and the accompanying security...she does not live with the father and she was not emotionally stable at home. One thing led to the next..., but when the axe fell, it was Mr Gitau who suffered.

Maggie: What happened to Mr Gitau?

Kedogo        He lost his job in this school, so when you tell us to be caring to students, we are very conscious, for example, the incident of the teacher on the sports field seems to come though to you as a very unreasonable and maybe uncaring attitude, but to me, and I think I speak for my colleagues, he did what was best - he stopped the game, he made a quick observation of the student, albeit not touching her, and he saw to it that she got treatment from the matron. This to me constitutes caring.

Kamau        You see for female teachers, they can hold the girls without any fear, they therefore are seen in the eyes of the public as more caring,... this is not always true, some of us, are much more caring.

Kedogo        Kamau, even if a female teacher touches a male student, nobody is shocked, it is not consider abuse, but for us males it is different.

Maggie        Please share with me any other incidences you feel curtailed your free will to do what you think is best.

Bodo        In this school, we have a system where every week there is a moral theme and the student that displays the best example in relation to the virtue is selected as winner. Points are given to the winner and this adds to their house points....during my week on duty, I find it difficult to select a female student for the best example; I play it safe by selecting a boy... you know, when you chose a student you have to elaborate the good things that the student did. Thus, I do not want my statements to be misconstrued to mean that I favour so and so... because I like her by the things I say about her... do you know that even the student may mistake what you say about her.

Kamau        Hah! What Bodo is saying is really true, even our own female colleagues are suspicious of anything we do or say about the girls.

Kedogo        For me I like to smoke, but since I am teaching in a religious school, I have to hide anytime I want to smoke. What annoys me is that even when I am not in the school compound, I have to hide when I am smoking. One day a parent reported to the head teacher saying "I saw your teacher smoking like a chimney all over town. What does this say about your leadership?". When the head teacher brought up this issue, it dawned on me that as long as I remained a teacher, my private life will never be private.

Maggie            Why do you address the female students differently?

Kamau            I am not sure, but female students tend to be the “weaker” sex and they also expect some form of special treatment, especially the older ones.

Kedogo           To me, I find that it is much easier to wrong a female student than the males...so my approach will always be different. With the guys, there seems to be a gentleman’s agreement or understanding, which allows for students to be equal with their male teachers, you cannot do the same with the female students.

Bodo              It is rare to find a male teacher clashing emotionally with male students on issues of values. The challenges normally surround discipline...there is less demand from male students.

Kedogo           When in a male-only environment, you hardly hear us teachers use some terminologies, like love and care. Instead we use words like justice and fairness...I tell you, when I am dealing with Kamau for example, I never expect love from him, but fairness.

Kamau            There are some values more associated with female teachers than male teachers, Maggie, be honest, you were once a female student, can you remember ever expecting or referring to a male teacher as “loving”?

Maggie           I think I assumed a lot when I was a student and worse still I was never in a mixed school.

Kamau            Hah! Dealing with female students can be a challenge. For example in the social ethics or HIV/AIDS classes, as a male teacher, you cannot have an open discussion at the level you would want, because you fear to offend the ladies.

Maggie           In your training programme, were you exposed to the challenges you face today in promoting values?

Bodo              Not to the level at which we experience it. What I remember is that we were exposed to different discipline methods.

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