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Teachers' Perception of Values Education on Character Formation: A Case of Loreto Private Schools in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract:

Moral values seem to have no place in today's era of globalisation, competition, fragmentation of family and unrests in schools. There is an urgent need for a paradigm shift in our educational philosophy and practice if schools have to continue playing a leading role in teaching of values. The purpose of this study was to establish teachers' perception of values education on character formation in Loreto private schools. The target population comprised of 105 teachers in four Loreto private schools in Nairobi. A sample of 80 participants, purposively selected, participated in the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions. The study employed 95% confidence level. Qualitative data in the questionnaire was analysed thematically and reported in narrative form. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics generated from Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 10. The results indicated that the main guiding values in Loreto schools are hard work, freedom, sincerity, honesty, service, respect, justice among others. The study also revealed that the role teachers play in maintaining the school values include among others, guiding and counselling, performing their duties, being role models and upholding school values and rules. The study recommends that assessment of values should form part of the summative evaluation in both public and private schools.

Keywords: Teachers' perception, values education, character formation

1. Introduction

Teaching is a moral activity in which teachers have to consider the ethical complexity of teaching and the moral impact they have on their students. The purpose of values education in schools is to create values and raise individuals who convert their values to behaviour and the precondition of the values education is to prepare an environment for the child where he/she can use freewill to make decisions. Castillo (2017) described values education as a process by which values are formed in the learner under the guidance of the teacher and as the learner interacts with his/her environment. According to Koenig (2000), variables such as learner, teacher, school environment or atmosphere, family and society are considerably important in the acquisition of values. Wamahu (2015) also argued that it is only through education that individuals can develop a personality based on values. Kumar (2016) asserted that educational institutions should build moral essence and ethical values in students to produce socially desirable behaviour, personality and character. The purpose of educational institutions is not only therefore to provide knowledge but also to get the learners to gain values that make human beings human. This study seeks to investigate whether this is the same perception teachers in Loreto schools have on values education.

Values education has become a global agenda because of social and global events such as terrorist attacks, massive corruption, human trafficking, wars, shooting in schools, student unrests and burning of schools which make people ask questions like, and "What has become of humanity?" Does a human being or a student do that?" Because of such questions, Mimar (2013) asserted that the most important issues in values education should include among others, determining which values schools are to gain, deciding to what extent social, national and global values should be included in the curriculum, the way and quantity of teaching and the kind of model or method to be followed. Mimar (2013) is in agreement with Koenig (2000) that in teaching values education, variables such as learners, teachers, the school environment, family and society are important.

Thornberg and Oguz (2013) in their study on teachers' view on values education in Sweden and Turkey posited that literature describes and contrasts two general approaches to values education that is, the traditional approach and the progressive or constructivist approach. The traditional approach emphasises adult transmission of the morals of society through character education, direct teaching and use of rewards and punishments. The aim of traditional approach according to Durkheim (1961) was to teach and discipline students to develop good character and virtues such as honesty, hard work, obedience and patriotism. In contrast, Solomon, Watson and Battistich (2001) proposed a progressive or constructivist approach that puts emphasis on children's active construction of the moral meaning and development of a

personal commitment to principles of fairness and concern for the welfare of others through processes of social interaction and moral discourse. The progressive approach would therefore make values education more learner friendly than the traditional approach.

There is a global concern about the place of values education in schools both in developed and in developing countries like Australia, Scotland, South Africa and Kenya among others. A study by Ferreira and Schulze (2014) on teachers' experience of the implementation of values in education in South African schools revealed that there was a gap between policy makers' intentions and teachers' perception. The study concluded that education initiatives so far had little impact on the implementation of values in education in selected schools in South Africa. The study recommended that curriculum planners of values in education make a concerted effort to involve teachers in curriculum development so that insight may cascade down from national to school level. In a State of the Nation address (Nation Reporter, 2015) the Kenyan President directed that values should be taught at every level of the education system and that, the work of mainstreaming ethics and integrity awareness in the public and private education curriculum should be expedited. The recent wave of strikes in 40 secondary schools in Kenya challenges the place of values education in learning institutions. A report prepared by the Ministry of Education Quality Assurance and Standards Officers has linked the strikes to students reacting to tough measures aimed at curbing cheating in National examinations (Nation Reporter, 2018). Values such as hard work, responsibility, integrity seem to be lacking among most Kenyan learners. This reality has created a need to carry out a study of values education in Loreto private schools in Nairobi.

1.1. The Rationale of the Study

This study sought to determine teachers' perception of values education on character formation in Loreto private schools in Nairobi County. The study has been done at a time when Kenyan schools have had a lot of unrests due to examination phobia among other factors. The findings, discussions and conclusion of this study offer deeper insights on values education to education administrators, curriculum developers, policy makers, parents, teachers and students not only in private but also public schools.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Albert Bandura's social learning theory of 1961 guided the study. A Canadian psychologist Albert Bandura (1961) proposed one of the most influential theories of learning and development known as the social learning theory. Bandura stated that most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling and that from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action. According to Wheeler (2017), it was Albert Bandura's intention to explain how children learn in social environments by observing and then imitating the behaviour of others. In essence, he believed that reinforcement could not fully explain learning but that the presence of others was also an influence. He noticed that the consequences of an observed behaviour often determined whether children adopted the behaviour themselves.

Through a series of experiments, he watched children as they observed adults attacking *Bobo* Dolls. When hit, the dolls fell over and then bounced back again. Then children let loose imitated the aggressive behaviour of the adults. However, when they observed adults acting aggressively and then punished, Bandura noted that the children were less willing to imitate the aggressive behaviour themselves. From his research, Bandura formulated four principles of social learning, that is: attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. According to Bandura (1977), students cannot learn without focus on the task. If they see something as being novel or different in some way then they are more likely to make it the focus of their attention.

Social contexts help to reinforce these perceptions. Students also learn by internalising information in their memory. They recall that information later when they are required to respond to a situation that is similar to the situation within which they first learned the information. Students will reproduce previously learned information when required. However, practice through mental and physical rehearsal often improves their responses. Bandura also noted that students needed to be motivated to do anything. Often that motivation originates from their observation of someone else rewarded or punished for something they have done or said. This later motivates students to do or avoid doing the same thing.

1.3. Application of Social Learning Theory to Values Education

Social modelling is a very powerful method of teaching values education. A study by Edinyang (2016) on the significance of social learning theories in the teaching of social studies education in Nigeria concluded that social learning theories emphasize change in behaviour and learning through the observation and imitation of the actions and behaviours in the environment. If children see positive consequences from a particular type of behaviour, they are more likely to repeat that behaviour themselves. Conversely, if negative consequences are the result, they are less likely to perform that behaviour. Novel and unique contexts often capture students' attention and can stand out in their memory. Edinyang (2016) recommended that social studies teachers should be careful of the behaviours displayed in front of the students to avoid creating the wrong impressions.

Students are more motivated to pay attention if they see others around them also paying attention. Another less obvious application of this theory is to encourage students to develop their individual self-efficacy through confidence building and constructive feedback, a concept that is rooted in social learning theory.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are your schools guiding values or ethos?
- How do you make sure that students follow the school values?
- What role do the learners play in maintaining the school values?
- What teaching and learning materials do you use to teach values?

2. Values Education in Schools

Values education provides motivation and guidance to students through a desirable set of values and this is what each society wants for its children. Patil (2015) in his study on value-based education in India asserted that the goal of education in every country is the development of desirable values. It is therefore important to know what values students hold as they join institutions of learning because such knowledge is essential in designing curricular experiences for the achievement of objectives of values education. Values have social, psychological, economic, spiritual and philosophical aspects and so have a wide impact on the lives of students.

A study by Cullen, Powney, Schlapp, Glissov, Johnstone and Munn (2015) on understanding values education in the primary school in Scotland stated that the main principles in values education in Scottish schools are appreciation of learning, respect and caring for self, respect and caring for others, a sense of belonging and social responsibility. Cullen, et al., (2015) noted that the main values identified by head teachers in five primary schools were consideration for others, respect for others and for property and authority, religious values, a religious community, a school community, work, pupil self-esteem and self-discipline. The study found that behaviour seems to be so central to primary teachers' understanding of values that they actually list certain types of behaviour as values. The current study will look at both primary and secondary school teachers' perception on values education.

In Australia, renewed interests in values education emerged in primary and secondary schools after the release of the National Framework for Values Education in 2005. Australian Government (2011) recommended that schools should contribute to the lives of young Australians by providing opportunities for them to develop personal values and attributes such as honesty, resilience and respect for others. This report concurs with a study by Thornberg and Oguz (2013) on teachers' views on values education in Sweden and Turkey, which noted that raising teachers' ethical knowledge is particularly urgent because without a moral vocabulary, it is difficult to see how teachers can address the complexity of moral judgment.

A study by Sosu (2016) on hidden curriculum in Ghanaian school setting revealed that teachers consider the initiation of total development and assimilation of social values as the essence of the hidden curriculum in schools. The findings indicated that the hidden curriculum is important in school settings. Teachers see the hidden curriculum as another medium of teaching students values unknowingly. In Nigeria, Bette and Esu (2011) in their study on re-engineering values education in Nigerian schools as catalyst for National Development strongly advocated as a matter of necessity the development and introduction of a national policy on values education as a reference instrument to be used as a realistic paradigm for behavioural transformation and ethical reorientation. According to Bette and Esu (2011), the school is a worthy platform for the restoration of cherished values and at the same time used to change Nigeria's orientation. Bette and Esu (2011) concurred with Australian Government that schools needed to develop young people who are committed to national values. A study by Sekiwu (2014) on values for social development and the role of the Ugandan school further confirmed that values imparted in schools are the basis of promoting social transformation where learners must become change agents. The aforementioned studies have created knowledge gap for a similar study in the Kenyan context.

A synthesis report in Kenya by Wamahiu (2015) offered insights into the meanings and practices of values-based education. It indicated that the examination focus of the education system is a major deterrent to the development of a culture of values and ethics in and through schools. The report stated that the absence of values and ethical practices is the common denominator associating acts of corruption, criminality and terrorism in the wider society on the one hand, and cultures of violence, abuse and impunity in educational institutions on the other. The report strongly pointed out that education policy makers, opinion leaders and implementers must recognise these inter-linkages in order to address challenges confronting contemporary society, both Kenyan and global. The report strongly recommended an adoption of a whole school approach where the teaching and learning of positive values is seamless and reflected in the ethos of the school, an integration of four core values that is, respect, tolerance, equality and peace into the curriculum at all levels of education, including early learning and teacher training.

The report also recommended an elimination of the culture of 'mean score' and 'certification'. The government can do this through equitable re-distribution of resources to bridge gaps between few elite schools and vast majority of public schools. Other recommendations included: enforcement of policies and laws incorporating the four core values and reviewing school rules and regulations to align with the values and principles stipulated in the Kenyan Constitution and intensification of parental education and community sensitisation through partnership with civil society and faith-based organisations on values-based education and with an emphasis on the four core values.

2.1. Practices of Values Education

Educators have defined values education or character education as those educational practices that foster the development of student character. According to Berkowitz (2018) there are among others, 15 categories of educational practices that foster the development of character. These include: peer interactive strategies, service to others,

developmental discipline, role modelling and mentoring, nurturance, trust and trustworthiness, high expectations, school-wide character focus, family/community involvement, pedagogy of empowerment, teaching about character, teaching social and emotional competencies, induction and professional development. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) found that peer interactive strategies are at the core of effective character education strategy. They also found community service a prevalent component of effective character education programme. Developmental discipline is a long-term development of more desirable and effective behaviour choices. A case study by Watson's (2003) of one teacher's classroom that was looped for two years and her longitudinal follow-up of those students support the positive impact of developmental discipline on character development. Elbot and Fulton (2008) emphasised that character education needs to have a school-wide focus. It should be a core aspect of the school's authentic mission and vision. These strategies should provide guidance for those either beginning to design values-based education or interested in refining and improving an existing initiative.

3. Research Design and Methodology

The researcher undertook the study in four private Loreto schools in Nairobi County, Kenya between March and April 2018. The target population of the study comprised of 105 teachers in the four Loreto private schools. The researcher selected a sample of 80 participants purposively for the study with 61% of participants being female and 39% male. The study used a descriptive survey design and the main research instrument was the questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. The researcher administered 80 questionnaires to Loreto teachers after seeking their consent. The study employed a confidence interval of 5.37 and a confidence level of 95%. Data analysis proceeded on a grounded basis and the researcher used SPSS software version 20 and MS Excel 2018 to generate graphs and themes across the study thematic areas. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The researcher used bar graphs to provide graphical representation of the findings. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and report given in narrative form. The researcher retained the original themes identified as main research questions as analytical strands.

4. Results

4.1. Values Education in Loreto Schools

The study set out to investigate teachers' perception of values education on character formation in Loreto schools. These were some of the direct quotes from the participants:

Loreto ethos integrate the spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical and emotional

Development of students

A Christian school with strong values offering holistic education and a firm spiritual formation

The Christian background brings out children who are self-disciplined and ready to face the world

The findings indicate that the main guiding values in Loreto schools are hope, hard work, felicity, love and joy, prayer, truth, Loreto ethos, honesty, humility, service, respect, freedom, sincerity, integrity, justice, the school motto, mission and vision. Figure 1 illustrates this finding.

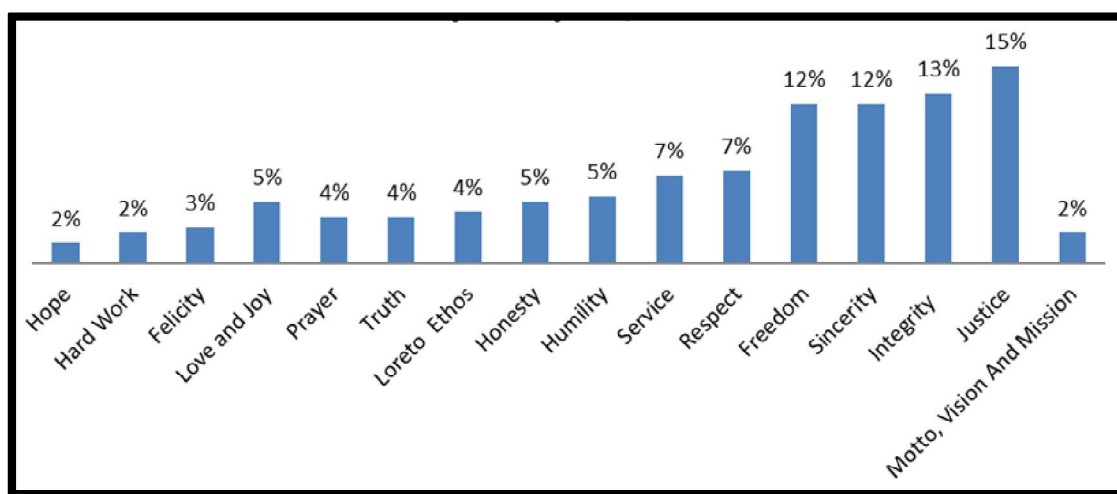
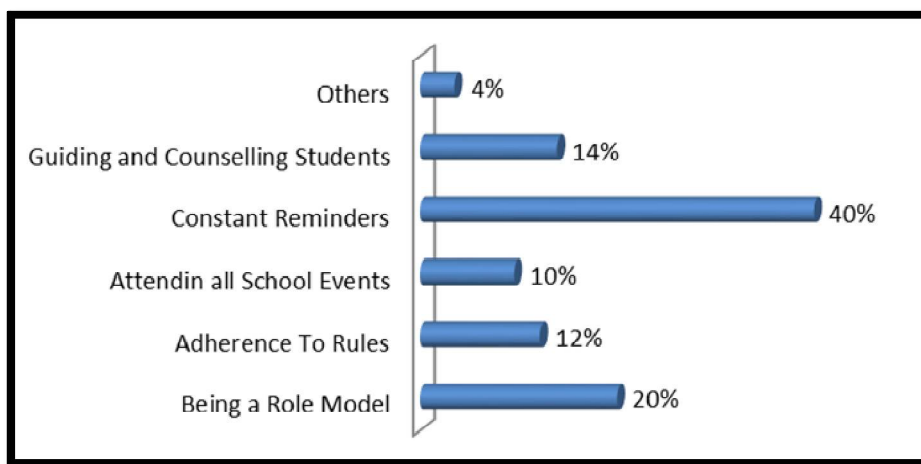


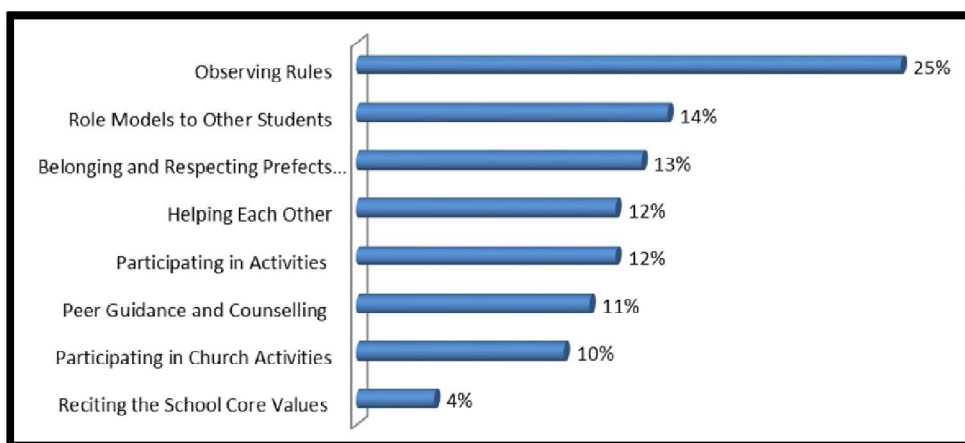
Figure 1: What Are the School' Guiding Values and Principle /Ethos?
Researcher, 2018

The teachers identified several ways that values and principles were followed by students and these included among others, being role models, adhering to school rules, attending all school events, having constant reminders, and guiding and counselling students as depicted in Figure 2.



*Figure 2: How Do You Make Sure That the Principles Are Followed by Students?
Researcher, 2018*

Some of the roles that learners play in maintaining the school values include among others, reciting the school core values, participating in church activities, peer guidance and counselling, participating in school activities, helping each other, belonging and respecting prefects, being role models to other students and observing rules. Figure 3 illustrates this.



*Figure 3: Role of Learners In Maintaining Valuse
Researcher, 2018*

Some of the teaching and learning materials used to teach values education that teachers identified included Loreto education ethics book, school core values, mission and vision, articles, storytelling and peer teaching. The teachers also indicated that through Loreto alumni success stories and outstanding personalities, students in Loreto got values. Teachers also identified use of social media as learning and teaching aid and these included, short educative movies, stories with values among others. The teachers also indicated that other teaching material included the Bible, catholic catechism book, Loreto pastoral, life skills books, Mary Ward writings, internet and written materials, flash cards, posters, videos, stories and personal experiences. Other teaching and learning materials included use of text books, use of power points and demonstrations, pastoral programmes, mass, audio visuals (movies and songs) cartoons, pictures, newspaper cut outs, posters, charts, placards, plays and the way teachers carried themselves, addressed the learners and being a role model. These findings reflect what Castillo (2017) described as strategies and approaches of teaching values. Castillo (2017) asserted that values can be taught through stories, music and videos. He noted that simulations, games and role playing are viable alternatives for learning about and experiencing real-life situations. This is demonstrated in Figure 4.

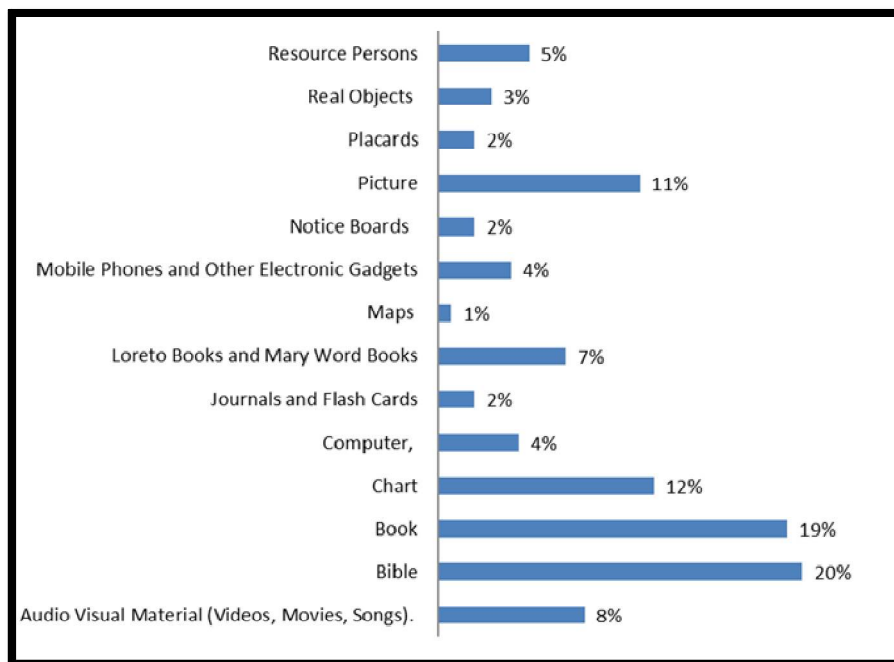


Figure 4: What Learning Materials Do See?
Researcher, 2018

4.1.1. Educational Practice of Values Education

Loreto teachers were able to identify ways by which values education in Loreto schools was changing the attitude and behaviour of students. Some of the ways included, reduction of discipline cases, observing changes in students, success among students as depicted in figure 5.

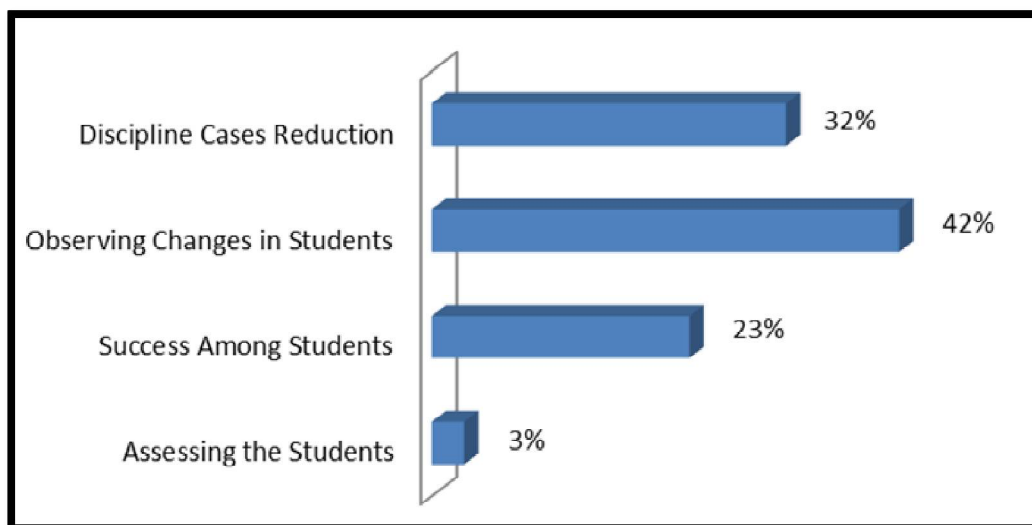


Figure 5: How Do You Know That the Values/Principals/Ethos Are Changing
Attitude and Behaviour of Students
Researcher, 2018

5. Discussions

The results of this study concur with Bandura's four principles of social learning theory that is attention, retention, reproduction and motivation (Bandura, 1977). The study confirms that students cannot learn if students do not focus on the task and that is why teachers use different methods to teach values. Students also learn by internalising information in their memory. They recall that information later when required and this described by the teachers when they indicated ways through which students keep and follow school values and principles. The findings are in agreement with what Cullen, et al., (2015) identified as principle values in Scottish schools. These include appreciation of learning, respect and caring for self and others, a sense of belonging and social responsibility. What Berkowitz (2018) describes as working in values education is true for teachers in Loreto schools. They point out that peer interactive strategy, service to others, developmental discipline, role modelling and mentoring, nurturance, school-wide character focus, teaching social and emotional competencies among others are ways of fostering values education. The teachers also asserted that they could teach values through the curriculum. This is demonstrated in Figures 6 and 7.

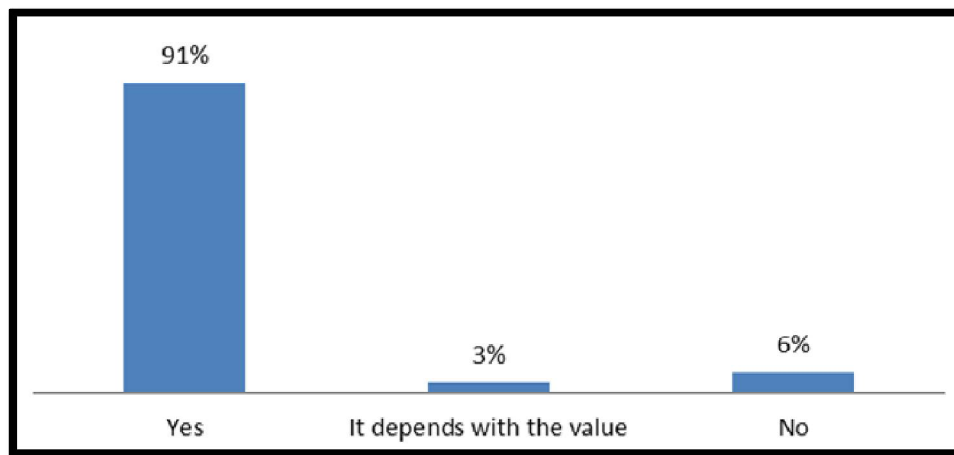


Figure 6: Can Values Be Taught through Formal System?
Researcher, 2018

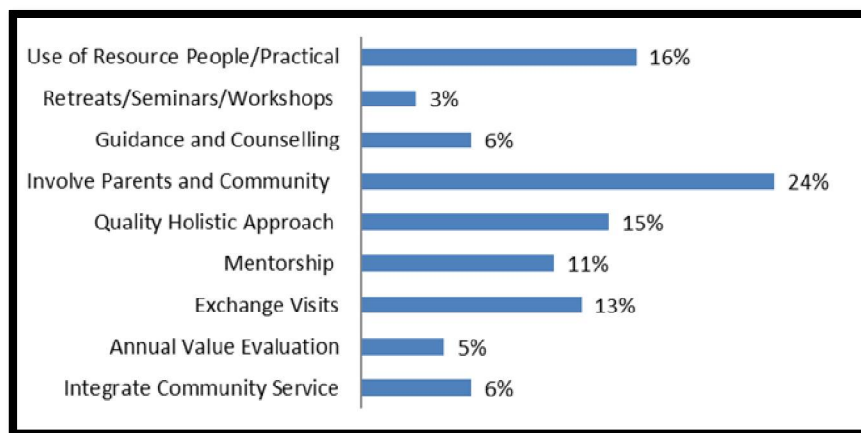


Figure 7: What Other Approaches Would You Recommended For Values Education in School/Institution
Researcher, 2018

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is evident from the discussions that providing value-based education to our children from early childhood especially during adolescences can help us overcome the problem of deteriorating moral values in society and among our youth. Schools should be able to keep up with the educational expectation of today's youth by using innovative and teaching techniques to transfer values to students. Other ways would include participation in community service so that students can experience real-life situations. Assessment of values should form part of the summative evaluation in schools. The findings are a clear indication that teachers should be encouraged to understand and appreciate their role of imparting values to their students. Different co-curricular activities and other such programmes should be organised in schools from time to time to promote values in students. Parents should also try to invest more time with their children rather than vesting their time in earning money.

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