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Adequacy of the Integrated and Permeation Approaches to Values Education

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Abstract

Since independence in 1963, the government of Kenya through the education ministry and its agencies has been advocating for the integrated and permeation approaches to values education (VE). This is premised on the assumption that these approaches are effectual. With reference to the secondary school Life Skills Education (LSE) programme, the paper interrogates this presupposition. This, the paper does through the lens of Socrates' insights on the concept of akrasia and knowledge, and Dewey's concept of appreciation. This way, the inquiry reckons that infusion and permeation are piecemeal approaches to VE, as such, they are inadequate. The approaches can often result in the acquisition of simulacra rather than knowledge of values. Hence, the inquiry makes a case for a separate values education subject in the formal school curriculum that should principally focus on helping learners to become virtuous people who appreciate values in lived experience. Such individuals can seldom perform akratic actions.

Keywords: *Akrasia*, Integrated Approach, Life Skills Education, Permeation Approach, Values Education

1.0 Introduction

The government of Kenya has since independence in 1963 sought to promote positive behaviour among students through the inculcation of values. The rationale for mounting values education (VE) programmes is entailed in the national goal of education which explicitly states that educational institutions should strive to promote sound moral and religious values. Nearly all education policy documents in the country attest to this. *The Kenya Education Commission* (KEC) of 1964 – 1965 KEC identified inculcation of values as a goal of education in the society (the Republic of Kenya, 1965). *Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies* (NCEOP) of 1976 also put much more emphasis on the goal. A recent policy document is *The Task Force on Re-Alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010* whose report of 2012 is the basis of rolling out the new 2:6:3:3:3 education structure in the country gradually replacing the 8:4:4 system which has been in place since the mid-1980s. The Task Force has retained the national goals of education and training identified by the KEC, NCEOP and subsequent education reports. On the goal of promoting moral and religious values which are the basis of mounting VE programmes, the Task Force elucidates:

Education and training shall inculcate moral and spiritual values, as well as, the valuing of cultural differences within the unity of Kenya. It shall instil the importance of integrity, honesty, respect for others and hard work. Further, it shall develop inter-personal skills and use the curriculum to instil these values (Republic of Kenya, 2012: 25).

By 1976, the curriculum planners had not assigned any specific subject the role of values education, a situation decried by the NCEOP (the Republic of Kenya, 1976). The inquiry infers that at that time the country offered VE using a thematic or integrated approach. The approach entails infusing themes related to VE into various curricular subjects, especially Religious Education (RE). The NCEOP corroborates the inference thus: 'The responsibility for the teaching of ethics of society has generally been left to be undertaken within the teaching of religion because of the traditional role of religion to provide a strict moral code for the community' (the Republic of Kenya, 1976: 6).

The NCEOP deprecated the integration of VE into RE. Memories of the colonial experience were still fresh, and the committee was keen to operationalize the ideology of African Socialism set forth in Sessional Paper Number 10 of 1965. Consequently, the committee attributed the failure to inculcate values in the young through RE (which was synonymous with CRE) to colonialism. The committee recommended that a new stand-alone subject, social ethics, be introduced in the school curricula as a vehicle through which African values could be taught to the young. The committee was categorical that 'the teaching of religion and social ethics should not continue to be mixed up' (the Republic of Kenya, 1976: 7). The NCEOP's recommendation was implemented in 1986 when Social Education and Ethics (SEE) was introduced in the secondary school curriculum.

While rooting for the introduction of a stand-alone VE subject called 'social ethics,' the NCEOP assumed that RE teachers could effectively implement the programme. 'It may, however, continue to be true that the teachers of religion are among the most competent and credible to teach social ethics' (Republic of Kenya, 1976: 7)). This assumption that there is no fundamental difference between a VE pedagogy and that of RE is a curious one that requires an interrogation. Mbae (1990) observes that the use of RE teachers to implement the SEE programme was the official position of the Ministry of Education (MoE) premised on the assumption that ethics has no special pedagogy. The ministry assumed that ethics could be taught in the same manner as RE as well as social education. This resulted in schools teaching about morals without necessarily instilling virtue in the student. Consequently, the phenomenon of *akrasia* as construed by Socrates in the *Protagoras* was not accounted for in the programme. However, a fuller treatment of VE pedagogy is outside the scope of this paper.

The paper observes that the teaching of values through SEE was another integrated approach to VE. As Mbae (1990) points out, the NCEOP had in mind a rather broad conception of the term 'social ethics' which influenced Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) to merge two subjects, (1) social studies and (2) ethics into one: Social Education and Ethics.

KIE (now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development - KICD) phased out SEE from the secondary school curriculum in 2002 and experimented with another approach that Robb (1998) calls the cross-curricular or permeation approach. In this approach, VE is done through the formal, non-formal as well as informal aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are required to identify and treat value-related issues when they arise in the course of teaching their various subjects. Students are also expected to acquire values such as cooperation, tolerance, and honesty through sports, games, guidance, and counselling (KIE, 2002), informal interactions as well as school ethos.

In 2008 the Kenyan government was influenced by UNO/UNICEF to adopt Life Skills Education (LSE) as a value-based education subject in primary and secondary school curricula. However, LSE was not new at that time as it had been integrated into other subjects from 2003. As a stand-alone subject, LSE is a replacement to SEE phased out in 2002. Kenya saw the need to include LSE in the school curricula after the MoE officials realised it could be 'an important tool that could bridge the gap between students' knowledge and behaviour regarding HIV prevention' (USAID, 2010: 13). The introduction of LSE in the school curricula is yet another attempt to attain the goal of promoting moral and spiritual values in learners spelt out in various education policy documents as one of the eight national goals of education in the country. Of interest to the inquiry is the fact that the new system of education has retained LSE as a value-based subject at the lower secondary level and through infusion into other learning areas at pre-primary and primary tiers. Now that LSE is currently a value-based subject, the paper poses the question: Is LSE another integrated approach to VE? If the response is in the

affirmative, the implication is that the government still has faith in the efficacy of the infusion (and permeation) approach to VE. Hence, there is a need to interrogate the programme in order to ascertain the adequacy of the approach it takes to VE.

2.0 Methodology

Being philosophical in temperament, the paper employs mainly descriptive analysis and the critical approach. Descriptive analysis is akin to discourse analysis. The paper subjects the secondary school LSE programme in Kenya to this kind of analysis with a view to ascertaining its approach to values education. The paper takes recourse to the critical approach to interrogate the educational soundness of the approach to VE in the programme. The deliberations in the paper are informed by Socrates' conception of *akrasia* and knowledge as can be deduced from a close reading of the *Protagoras* and *Meno*. He conceives *akrasia* as acting against simulacra and not knowledge as is popularly believed. His concept of knowledge conflates the cognitive and affective elements of the human personality making it difficult for one to act akratically (Plato, 1891b). The discourse is also informed by Dewey's concept of appreciation which also combines a person's cognitive and affective elements in the valuation process (Dewey, 2001).

3.0 A Critique of the Integrated Approach to VE in Secondary School LSE Programme in Kenya

LSE is, no doubt, a value-based subject in the school curricula. The programme consists of two parts: Life skills (LS) and core living values (CLV). The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) categorises Life skills as skills of knowing and living with oneself, skills of knowing and living with others, and effective decision-making skills (KIE, 2008: 96). The CLV the programme seeks to instil in learners is twelve: cooperation, simplicity, tolerance, respect, peace, freedom, unity, love, honesty, responsibility, humility and integrity (KIE, 2008: 97). The two components of the programme imply that it is not a stand-alone VE programme; it is an integrated programme. Hence, the teaching of values through LSE, a programme that combines life skills with values education, is yet another integrated approach. A study by Wamahiu (2015) on the practice of value-based education in Kenya confirms the prevalence of the infusion and permeation approaches to VE in the country as well as the integrated nature of the LSE programme. In other words, since independence, the government through the agency of Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) still roots for the teaching of values through integration into other subjects.

How is the infusion of VE into LSE done in the programme? The paper notes that although there is an attempt to relate the values identified in the programme to the life skills generally as well as linking specific values to particular life skills (KIE, 2008), the programme places a high premium on life skills at the expense of the values component. For instance, the introduction to the programme makes no reference to values. Instead, it makes it crystal clear that the programme 'concentrates on the development of psychosocial skills needed for life' (KIE, 2008: ii). Overstressing the development of such skills can result in a superficial treatment of the values component of the syllabus, a shortcoming that is attributable to the integrated approach. A casual practice of VE through infusion may not enable students to appreciate values in their lived experience as contemplated by Dewey (2001).

Further to that, the preoccupation with life skills in view of their envisaged benefits in the programme does not accord with values education. The benefits are grouped as educational, social/cultural, health and economic. The introduction to the programme mentions educational benefits such as: enabling students to make appropriate choices that enhance academic performance; and helping students deal with issues that may be detractors in their learning (KIE, 2008: ii). Other benefits of the programme include enabling learners to choose good and reliable friends and helping learners recognize and avoid risky situations.

Apparently, KIE regards life skills as instrumental in bringing about academic success. This observation is corroborated by a study done by Wamahiu (2015) on the practice of value-based education in the country. While academic excellence is a desirable educational goal, there is the danger of overemphasising it to the exclusion of other aspects of education identified by Njoroge & Bennaars (1986). In their unitary concept of education, which they largely deduced from Richard S. Peter's criteria of education, they submit that holistic education consists of

four dimensions: cognitive, normative, creative and dialogical. These dimensions of education, as they call them, correspond to the various aspects of the human personality.

A close examination of the said benefits reveals that LSE programme was also designed to equip students, especially vulnerable ones, with the art of living rather than help them become virtuous people. This runs afoul of the objective of VE. Mackenzie (1901: 16) is categorical that ethics, the study of moral values, cannot be described as art because ‘... in the art the ultimate appeal is to work achieved, whereas in morals the ultimate appeal is to the inner aim.’ The inner aim of VE is the actualisation of virtuous students. In this regard, the programme is more sophistic than Socratic.

Besides the improper conceptualisation of VE in the secondary school LSE course in the country, the infusion approach to VE adopted in the programme has inherent pitfalls. For instance, Robb (1998) argues that the approach provides little room for a Socratic discourse on values. Socrates devotes much time on the subject of virtue, its nature and constitutive elements called values. He discusses the subject with Protagoras in the *Protagoras* and continues in *Meno* with Meno without coming to a definite conclusion. He also treats the subject in several other Platonic dialogues. His general position is that values cannot be easily taught. Remember Socrates’ conception of knowledge (say of values) conflates both the cognitive and affective elements (Segvic, 2006); it is not a matter of a learner being aware of values. As Dewey puts it, a learner can put values into practice only if they appreciate them in their lived experience. He explains the meaning of appreciation thus:

The terms “mental realization” and “appreciation” (or genuine appreciation) are more elaborate names for the realizing sense of a thing. It is not possible to define these ideas except by synonyms, like “coming home to one” “really taking it in,” etc., for the only way to appreciate what is meant by a direct experience of a thing is by having it (Dewey, 2001: 240).

This implies that the practice of VE through an integrated approach is likely to be inadequate. Teachers can hardly afford the time to make learners ‘really take in’ (appreciate) values.

Further to that, hitherto, teachers in the country are not equipped with VE pedagogy. We have already noted the education ministry’s position that teachers prepared to implement the programme of RE can as well teach VE. This assumption has no sound theoretical and practical basis. Following Socrates, the pedagogy of values has to be somewhat different from that of other learning areas. Values education pedagogy should conflate the cognitive and affective aspects of the learner’s being, that is, it should be based on Dewey’s concept of appreciation. This entails helping learners acquire knowledge rather than simulacra of values. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates attributes the supposed value-action binary (or knowledge-action gap when *akrasia* is understood in its common conception as a weakness of knowledge) to the acquisition of simulacra instead of knowledge of values (Plato, 1891b). Since the practice of VE through LSE programme relies on teachers who are ill-equipped with VE pedagogy, such teachers are more likely to promote the acquisition of simulacra than knowledge of values in their learners. Even studies in the field of neuroscience indicate that the cognitive, affective and social learning outcomes are in fact not separable. That the cognitive and the affective aspects work together to inform behaviour. They do not work separately as earlier thought (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007; Damasio & Damasio, 2007). Hence, mere cognitive awareness of values is not a sufficient condition for behaving well.

4.0 A Case for a Stand-alone Values Education Programme in Kenya

The paper has observed that since the attainment of political independence in 1963, Kenya has experimented with two approaches to VE: infusion and permeation. The inadequacy of the infusion approach has been noted. The permeation approach also has its own inherent weaknesses. For instance, it relies on the incidental acquisition of values through the non-formal and informal curriculum. In other words, integration and permeation are piecemeal approaches to VE. As such, they are in and by themselves inadequate approaches to VE.

The shortfalls of these piecemeal approaches notwithstanding, they can make a modest contribution to the character development of students. This is borne out of the realisation that every human activity is value-laden. Similarly, every school activity is imbued with value-related issues. So the entire school curriculum, whether formal, non-formal or informal ought to make a contribution to students’ character development. For instance,

the preoccupation of each school subject should not only be to help students gain insight into its subject matter but also to acquire and appreciate values both intrinsic and extrinsic to the subject. Similarly, non-formal curricular activities such as sports and games as well as informal interactions accord students opportunities to 'catch' values. No aspect of the curriculum can afford to look askance at value-related issues. In other words, the integrated and permeation approaches to ensure that VE is practised in virtually all educational settings.

Even though, there should be a separate VE programme through which VE can be practised rigorously. As observed by Robb (1998), the integrated and permeation approaches do not subject value-related issues that arise to a thorough treatment. This is because through integration teachers are required to not only teach the content of the subject, say Mathematics, but also to promote in their learners two types of values, namely those that are intrinsic to the subject and those that are included in the subject or arise in the course teaching the subject. There is also the question regarding the educational legitimacy of using a subject to teach values that are not intrinsic to it. This could be the reason why some teachers seem to treat such values as an add-on. Besides, such teachers may not be adequately prepared to handle such. Hence, the integrated approach can result in superficial teaching and learning of values, especially those that are not intrinsic to the subjects. Ultimately, what students end up acquiring is simulacra rather than knowledge of values, and this may predispose them to perform akratic actions.

The observation that the practice of VE through integration and permeation approaches lacks rigour finds vindication in both quantitative and qualitative research findings on the effect of non-formal curricular activities on students' behaviour. These studies have yielded conflicting results. Some indicate a positive effect (Holland & Andre, 1994); others show that students' participation in activities such as athletics, music, clubs, and societies does not necessarily improve their behaviour (Manners & Smart, 1995). The discrepancy in the findings indicates that integration and permeation are not sufficient as approaches to VE. This anticipates a stand-alone VE course.

Hence, there should be a separate VE programme that principally focuses on improving students' character by helping them become virtuous individuals. The programme can also act as a referral where value-related issues that arise in the integrated and permeation approaches that cannot be adequately dealt with therein are taken up for a rigorous Socratic interrogation. This way, the three approaches should be seen as complementary to one another resulting in a grand VE approach. The grand approach will ensure that all value-related issues are addressed through one or a combination of the three approaches. The approach captures the observation that VE is not a separate domain. There is empirical evidence that employing several approaches is more effectual than reliance on one (Halstead & Taylor, 2000). The grand approach should serve as a template for VE in the country.

The submission that KICD (formally KIE), tasked with the responsibility of developing, reviewing and approving programmes, curricula and curriculum support materials for basic and tertiary levels of education, should introduce a stand-alone VE programme is implicit in Socrates. In both the *Protagoras* and *Meno*, Socrates lengthily discusses the subject of virtue and its parts, values, as well as its teachability. The discourse commences in the *Protagoras* and continues in *Meno*. He also evaluates its purported teachers and students, such as Hippias, Cleinias, Protagoras and Aiphron (Plato, 1891b). The rigour with which Socrates treats the subject of virtue and its various aspects, values, is such that the piecemeal integration and permeation approaches cannot afford.

Among the current scholars who advocate for a separate VE, programme is Bill Robb. He writes,

For me, without a set time (period or class) to discuss values issues in depth, with a specialist (specifically trained) teacher who knows how to draw out the values implications and how to encourage youngsters to think rationally about complex and sometimes sensitive interpersonal issues, the separate contributions made by cross-curricular mentions, hidden curriculum, and school ethos, would be ineffective (Robb, 1998: 9).

Robb is unequivocal about his stance. He makes it crystal that a stand-alone VE course is inevitable if we are serious about the effectiveness of VE.

The policy basis for a separate VE subject is already in existence in the form of a goal of education. The goal requires education in the country to 'promote sound moral and religious values' (KIE, 2008: v) in students. The goal has been retained as a framework for VE in the 2:6:3:3:3 structure of education. The goal is rendered in *The Basic Education Framework* as follows: Education in the Republic of Kenya is expected to:

Promote sound moral and religious values: Education should promote the acquisition of national values as enshrined in the Kenya Constitution. It should be geared towards developing a self-disciplined and ethical citizen with sound moral and religious values (KICD, 2017: 11).

Through the framework, the KICD seems to give VE a place of prominence by identifying values as one of the pillars of the basic education curriculum, the other pillars being theoretical approaches and guiding principles (KICD, 2017). Even though, the institute still favours the integration and permeation approaches to VE which the study argues should be used besides a stand-alone VE programme. For instance, the institute recommends the integration of VE with religious education from pre-primary to upper primary levels of schooling. Life Skills Education, another integrated VE programme, is introduced at lower secondary level but is abandoned at senior secondary. Just as in the 8:4:4 system, KICD views LSE programme in the 2:6:3:3:3 structure as more of life skills than a VE subject. Regarding the permeation approach, KICD explicitly states: 'The Framework will adopt a values-based approach to education that will create learning opportunities within the formal, non-formal and informal curriculum dimensions to inculcate the desired values in all learners' (KICD, 2017: 14). As noted earlier, the two approaches to make a contribution to a learner's character development save that they are inadequate in and by themselves which necessitates the introduction of a stand-alone VE programme. It is ironic that KICD can make values one of the three pillars of the basic education curriculum without deeming it necessary to have a separate VE programme.

5.0 Conclusion

The paper has demonstrated that the practice of VE through the secondary school LSE programme in Kenya is an integrated or infusion approach. The inquiry notes that the programme is biased towards life skills. Values education is an add-on rather than an integral part of the programme. Besides, both the infusion and permeation approaches to VE have inherent inadequacies. As such, these piecemeal approaches are more likely to result in the acquisition of simulacra of values (cognitive awareness of values without appreciating them in lived experience) than knowledge of values as contemplated by Socrates in both the *Protagoras* and *Meno*.

Owing to the inadequacy of the infusion and permeation approaches to values education, the paper recommends that the Government of Kenya through the education ministry and its agencies should introduce a separate values education subject at pre-primary, primary and secondary tiers of education. The separate VE programme should primarily focus on developing learners' character by enabling them to appreciate fundamental human values. The stand-alone VE programme can also supplement the infusion and permeation approaches resulting in a grand VE approach.

The paper also advocates for the establishment of a National Values Education Council (NVEC) to coordinate the practice of the various values education initiatives in the country. The initial assignment of the council should be to formulate a National Values Education Framework (NVEF). Besides informing the operations of the council, the framework should act as the basis for implementing VE in the country.

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