Primary School Students and Teachers' Perceptions on the Role of Teachers as Moral Role Models

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Abstract: - **Moral values and ethical values are mostly used interchangeably by most of the people. However, there is slight difference between the two terms. Moral values are the social, cultural and religious beliefs which tell us what is right or wrong (Encyclopedia Encarta, 2019). Moral contain rules and standards to be followed by a society or a culture as right. Certain rules or standards in one culture may be considered as right while in another may seen wrong. Ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with the principles of conduct; it works as a guiding principle as to decide what is good or bad (Begley, 2017). Ethical values are abstract and the same regardless of any culture, religion or society. Some of the ethical values are truthfulness, honesty, loyalty, respect, fairness and integrity (Binder, 2015).**

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lickona (2011) defines moral values in education as the deliberate effort to develop good character of an individual person or a group based on core virtues that are considered as good for the society. Core virtues include social, cultural and religious values. Due to multi-cultural interactions, however, it is difficult to know whose values should be modeled to children in schools. Despite the fact that it is difficult to say whose moral values should be exemplified to the children; Ndibalema (2013) argues that, there are universal moral norms and values that have been passed down by previous generations, which form the basis for deciding on what values are to be emphasized.

In USA and Canada, Moral values in Education focuses on teaching social, cultural and religious values with critical thinking, for people could value something without critical mind about the thing (Kim, 2013). In Tanzania, the importance of moral values as important subject in schools and in teacher education was long advocated by Mbiti in 1970s (Betweli, 2013). Later many studies have been done in Tanzania (Anangisye, 2010; Lindner, 2014) proposed - the teachings of moral values education like religious values so as to eradicate extreme moral decay in the Tanzanian societies. Extreme Moral Decay in Tanzanian Societies include: the killings of people with albinism; the killings of old women with red eyes; physical and psychological violence; lack of accountability; Corruption, both within the public and in the private sectors.

A teacher is a person whose job is to teach, especially in a school. Therefore, he/she contributes significantly to the character of students. Pantic and Wubbels (2012) observed that teacher personality has a great role to play in molding students' behavior. Accorrding to them, younger children are attracted by the outer charm and repelled by the shabby look of the teacher. Therefore, teachers must be presentable all the time in simple and smart attires as students look at them as role models and seek guidance from them.

According to Aristotle (as cited in Nodding, 2012), it is important to transmit morals to students through practical examples since students tend to learn from examples. This is supported by Oladipo (2019) who observed that young children often idealize their teachers, watch them closely and tray to emulate their behaviors. It means students acquire acceptable behaviour due to their exposure to competent models that display positive behaviour in solving problems and coping with their world. In other words teachers are supposed to be moral role models to their students. Klaasen and Maslovaty (2010) hold that, despite the fact that teachers are overloaded with academic responsibilities, they are greatly stressed over normative problems, especially when it comes to children who seem to have lost their way in life. Since teachers in schools are overloaded with pedagogical tasks, they sometimes tend to assume that the issues of being moral role models are not their mission (Nodding 2013). However, Zombwe (2019) goes on insisting that a good teacher should be a role model to his/her pupils.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess primary school students and teachers perceptions on the role of teachers as moral role models.

Statement of the Problem

According to the Tanzania's Professional Code of Conduct Regulations 65 (2), every person joining the teaching profession has the duty and responsibility to guide children in their physical, mental and moral development. In spite of all moral roles assigned to teachers and the teaching profession, teachers are implicated to several incorrect practices which draw attention on how they perceive their roles as models in inspiring moral values. Teachers are involved in some form of professional misconduct which disqualifies them from being moral model (Anangsye, 2011; Betweli, 2013; Boimanda, 2004; Fussy 2012; Sabasi,2011). The 2010/11 Teachers' Service Department (TSD) report reveals a good number of public school teachers dismissed for reasons associated with professional misconduct (MoEVT, 2011). Specifically, the report shows that about 660 teachers were dismissed due to

absenteeism, 217 for examination irregularities, embezzlement and corruption and about 65 for sexually abusing students, not to mention a discouraging number of teachers being found drunk in the classroom (MoEVT, 2011). Similarly, on 21st October 2014 the government released the 2013/2014 educational report which, among other things, shows that 422 teachers were dismissed due to various forms of professional misconduct including absenteeism, sexual relationships with students and drunkenness (TSD, 2014). The situation made the researcher to assess primary school students and teachers perceptions on the role of teachers as moral role models.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Social learning theory contributes to a better understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying moral education. In social learning theory, modeling is most effective at stimulating learning and behaviours when observed (Bandura, 1977 in Santrock, 2015). It means learning takes place during a process in which children learn behaviors, attitudes, values and beliefs by observing others and the consequences of their action. According to Sanderse (2013), human behavior is transmitted largely through exposure to role models. Teachers identified by students as models in an educational context may play a particularly important role in students' learning processes (Lashly & Barron, 2006). Most of the behaviors that people display are learned either deliberately or unintentionally through the influence of example.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches with the qualitative one being dominant. The rationally of employing mixed method research was that one approach may not be enough for the study (Cresswell and Plano, 2009). The cross-sectional survey design was applied because of its ability of identifying attributes of a large population from a small group of individuals (Bryman, 2008). The study assessed the views of heads of schools, class teachers and students.

Data were collected from three primary schools in Tanzania which were randomly selected within Kilimanjaro Region in Tanzania. The Kilimajaro region was selected because of its familiarity and accessibility by the researcher compared to other regions in Tanzania. This familiarity and accessibility made the research logistics possible and easy within a short period of time.

The data were collected from 51 respondents who categorized into 3 heads of schools, 18 class teachers and 30 students. Head of schools were involved because they are thought to have experiences of moral issues in schools. Class teachers and students were selected because they are considered as worthy and reliable source of data for the study. Students who involved in the study were high level classes (Standard six and Seven) as are the one who at least they can express well their ideas.

In this study the selected primary schools abbreviated as school X, school Y and school Z. School X contributed 17 respondents, Y 17 respondents and Z 17 respondents. The composition of the sampled population is given in the table below.

Sample Composition of Respondents

School	Respondents	M	F	Total
X	Head of School	1	-	1
	Class Teacher	3	3	6
	Students (STD 6 & 7)	5	5	10
Y	Head of School	1	-	1
	Class Teacher	3	3	6
	Students (STD 6 & 7)	5	5	10
Z	Head of School	1	-	1
	Class Teacher	3	3	6
	Students (STD 6 & 7)	5	5	10

Source: Researcher, (2019)

In the all three schools, purposive sampling was used in selecting heads of schools; and stratification and systematic random sampling was used to select class teachers and students. Class teachers and then students were first stratified into male and female categories and arranged in lists, and then random numbers were used to pick them. This sampling technique was considered useful to this study as it produced sample which was evenly spread and it was not costly. The study used semi structured interview and questionnaire as methods for data collection. Two methods were used in order to increase reliability of the research findings. Creswell (2012) states that no single technique or instrument will be adequate while collecting valid and reliable data. The use of two methods serves as a means to cross- check the authenticity of data from a single source. Since the research involved people, issues of ethics were considered. In the research area, the researcher sought permission from heads of schools before conducting the study. In addition, the researcher ensured that he got the consent of the participants before involving them in the research. In order to adhere to research ethics, confidentiality was ensured in this study whereby unauthorized persons had no chance to access the data collected. Also the data collected were used only for the purpose of this study. The names of participants were kept anonymous and the schools were named X, Y and Z.

In this study, validity was achieved through careful development of research instruments. The developed instruments were checked and criticized by the research peers in order to strengthen validity. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to check the certainty of content and exactness of language. Pilot study also served to ensure if the items measured what they were supposed to measure. In order to ensure reliability in this study, multiple methods of data

collection were used. Information obtained through questionnaire was cross-checked with those from interview.

The most data obtained in this study were analyzed using qualitative method known as thematic analysis; and very little data analyzed using quantitative method namely simple descriptive statistics for numerical data.

III. FINDINGS

The respondents were given Likert Scale which has five alternatives numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 to assess their perceptions of students and teachers whether one of the roles of teachers was to be moral role models. Number one (1) indicates the most agrees while number five (5) indicates disagrees. The table below summarizes the responses.

Heads of Schools (n=3), Class Teachers (n=18) and Students' (n=30) Response on the Extent Teachers Understand their Role as Role Models

Respondents	No	Frequency	Percentage
	1	2	67
Heads of Schools	2	1	33
	3	0	0
	4	0	0
	5	0	0
Class Teachers	1	9	50
	2	7	39
	3	2	11
	4	0	0
	5	0	0
Students (Standard Six and Seven)	1	1	3
	2	1	3
	3	5	17
	4	5	17
	5	17	57

The results in the table above, it is very interesting to see opposing ideas between heads of schools and class teachers; to their students. Heads of schools (67%) and class teachers (50%) ranked number one means they were in the view that teachers have big responsibility in moral modeling. In contrary a good number of students (57%) ranked number five means teachers have no accountability of moral modeling.

During interviews, the heads of schools, class teachers and other students were requested to share their experience concerning the extent one of the roles of teachers was moral role model. Heads of schools and class teachers mentioned that teachers were doing a lot which gave evidence that they were moral role models.

One of head of school said:

> *Our teachers have moral habits such as respects, integrity, hard working spirits and good manners. Teachers exemplified as role models to students in words and in deeds from the way they speak, dress, walk and doing things when you compare them to other workers in other professionals. I agree that all human beings have weaknesses but generally teachers are doing very well when you asses their characters*

In contrary, in interview with students, most of them were in the view that their teachers were not moral role models. As one of the students explained that:

> *Some of our teachers abusing … regularly when you go into their offices during class ours you find them loudly discuss female's sexual attributes. In classes and out of classes repeatedly tell us sexual jokes… Some come in schools late while are sobers and shabbily dressed; therefore, in most cases teachers are not moral role model*

IV. CONCLUSION

As far as the main objective of this study was concerned, the study established that the primary school teachers are supposed to be moral role models. The study explored that in the study area most of primary school teachers are not lived what they say; something which discouraging their students. This study urge for further research on teachers moral modeling in all levels of education in Tanzania. This will allow one to make comparisons and making general conclusions.

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