

Challenges in Teachers' Practice of Values-education in Secondary Schools: The Case of East Gojjam Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges in teachers' practices of moral values-education in secondary schools. To achieve this purpose, a descriptive case study design was employed. The data was collected from students, teachers, and principals, mainly through semi-structured interviews. Based on this, interpretational and reflective analysis was made on a narrative basis. The finding suggests that there were challenges that include students' perception on the benefits of present education, abandoned religion and false narratives in the curriculum, non-supportive school leadership, lack of exemplars in relation to the value systems, lack of unity among teachers in managing student discipline, lack of authentic assessment of learning, and poor parental support. As a result, teachers were unlikely to seriously take on values-education as part of their responsibilities. It is thus implicated that the challenges need to be confronted and resolved in collaboration with moral actors. It is also advisable to take challenges as essential opportunities for innovation, criticality, and professional development rather than consider them threats. Furthermore, we suggest that other researchers conduct investigations into such sensitive issues of the century.

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Introduction

It has always been the demand of any society to get its members equipped with cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behaviors which are highly interrelated in real life situations. In this regard, UNESCO (1996) has put stress for the development of a whole person by forwarding four pillars of learning which include learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together. With regard to learning to live together, UNESCO recommended educational institutions to develop affective behaviors and social skills necessary for life. The affective behavioral dimensions are related to attitudes, feelings, emotions, and other social regards (Kuboja & Ngussa, 2015). This affective behavior depends on possession and realization of moral values

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which reflect common good that bind people to live together. Moral values are beliefs, principles, or ideals about what is right or wrong, desirable or undesirable, good or bad within a particular culture (Rokeach, 1970; Wringer, 2006). They affect our thoughts and feelings and guide our actions in everyday life (Leenders & Veugelers, 2006).

The development of moral values will help individuals to understand themselves, to have empathy and concern for others, and to discharge responsibility. That means educating moral values is fundamental for the development of moral character. Values-education involves educational activities conducted to provide basic humanitarian values such as respect, responsibility, justice, honesty, integrity, solidarity, tolerance, etc. (Katilmis, 2017) so as to produce citizens who apply fair treatment of others, demonstrate caring relationships, and practice virtuous behavior in general. It is intertwined in every school's activity toward development of morality and applies to all aspects of education to ethical dimensions of life (Thornberg & Oguz, 2013).

In ancient days, children were taught good habits by indoctrination and imitation of adults, who instilled shared values in them (Wynne, 1992). When formal education began, academic learning was merged with the learning of religious doctrines up to the end of the 19th century (ASCD, 1992). At the beginning of the 20th century, public schools increasingly adopted a secular form of values-education that emphasized student teamwork, extra-curricular activities, student councils, flag salutes, and ceremonies so as to teach moral virtues like honesty, self-discipline, kindness, and tolerance (ASCD, 1992). While such a values-education endeavor was popular throughout the first three decades of the twentieth century, it began to decline as the progressive movement and the advent of logical positivism recast values as dynamic, situational, relative, and improper for schools to impart (Titus, 1994). In the 1960's and 1970's, schools were again demanded to provide values-education based on values-clarification method which sought to have students clarify their own personal values (ASCD, 1992) and cognitive development approach which focused on the development of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1973).

In recent days, values-education is considered central and is provided through different strategies. It may be either through independent courses, integration of values in different courses, or both. As some countries provide values-education as a separate subject (Leenders & Veugelers, 2006), others provide values-education as an embedded part of all subjects, classroom management, extra-curricular activities, and other school culture (Leenders & Veugelers, 2006; Thornberg & Oguz, 2013). There are also countries that provide specific courses as well as integrated with all educational activities in schools (Maruyama, 2013; Zhao, 2005). We feel that provision of values-education only as a separate subject is not effective, and neither is it without having an additional specific curriculum. Effective integrated values-education is a way of doing everything in schools and beyond (Lickona et al., 2007). Thus, every curriculum, pedagogical strategy, staff behavior, and school-wide activities must include essential moral values, and all teachers should create opportunities for students to learn them (Curko et al., 2015; Leenders & Veugelers, 2006). Teachers' dispositions are important keys in coping with challenges and shaping their students' learning motivations (Thomas, 2013). Based on this theoretical framework, the

study aims to investigate the challenges and their effects on teachers' dispositions toward integrated values-education practices in the context of secondary schools in Ethiopia.

The Research Problem

In Ethiopia, character development in young people was fostered via close relationships between the youngsters and adults in ancient days. In such an indigenous education system, the country has preserved and promoted essential cultural and moral values. After the introduction of Christianity and Islam, religious education has become common to inculcate the fundamental virtues of society. As noted by the literature, religion is the source of moral obligation and is a foundation for moral education (McNamara, 2015; Swan, 2018). It has a vital influence on our behaviors (Karbo, 2013) and is used as a means of safeguarding public morality, thereby nurturing young people capable of living together (Williams et al., 2008).

Since the introduction of modern education, the imperial regime had been providing values-education in the form of a separate subject called *Moral Education*, which was equated with religious education (Fenta, 2007; MoE, 2006). Although those moral lessons were predominantly influenced by religious teachings, citizens who had a chance for the then modern education were equipped with knowledge of respect for social norms and moral values of the time (Fenta, 2007). After the downfall of the imperial regime and the replacement of the military government in 1974, the state and religion were separated because of secularism. The government removed religious contents and introduced values-education in the form of *Political Education* to inculcate its ideology (MoE, 2006). The formal religious and moral education has been isolated from modern government schools since then. In its principle, secularism constitutes equality of respect, freedom of conscience, state neutrality towards religions, and separation of church and state (Maclure & Taylor, 2011).

Following the military government's fall in the early 1990s, the current ethnic-based federal government has replaced the former *Political Education* with *Civic and Ethical Education*. The new curriculum, which has been working for the last three decades, includes eleven fundamental values that recur across grade levels with the necessary details: *democratic system, rule of law, equality, justice, patriotism, responsibility, industriousness, self-reliance, saving, active participation, and the pursuit of wisdom* (MoE, 2007). As stated by the Ministry of Education, these core values have been mainstreamed in other academic subjects and extracurricular programs. In order to inculcate the values, civics and ethical education clubs have been established, followed by the preparation of an implementation manual. A guideline was also created to get stakeholders involved in instilling these civic and ethical ideals (MoE, 2007). Teachers, principals, supervisors, parents, and the greater community all have roles to play in this framework. In this way, the country's value-education system appears to take an integrated approach at the policy level.

In real context, however, this value-based program has been found to be less effective. Various local studies have revealed that the *civics and ethical education* subject did not result in the required civic and ethical behavior (Dawit & Haftu, 2012; Mulualem et al., 2017; Mulugeta et al., 2011). Dawit and Haftu (2012) conducted content analysis on the subject and came to the

conclusion that the effort is more likely to deepen students' ethnic identity than their national common identity. The qualitative case study conducted by Mulualem et al. (2017) on the implementation of a single primary school revealed that the subject did not bring the desired change on the part of students. According to this finding, students were observed to exercise their rights ignoring their moral responsibilities. Similarly, Mulugeta et al. (2011) conducted a study on the effectiveness of civics and ethical education with a focus on primary and secondary schools and reached the conclusion that it did not produce the desirable behavior due to lack of resources, theory-practice gaps, and absence of stakeholder cooperation.

The above research undertakings focus on the status of the implementation of civics and ethical education and its challenges as a separate subject. They did not treat the potential challenges of teachers' values-education engagements in an integrated manner. Behind these researches, it seems like a common assumption that a formally structured, explicit special course in values-education is sufficient to produce desirable moral character. Furthermore, our lived experiences tell that many have currently evolved into unethical character traits such as individual or group selfishness that will lead to humanity's extinction on the basis of ethnic and religious affiliations. Thus, we have been initiated to investigate the challenges on an integrated values-education with particular reference to one secondary school in East Gojjam by raising the following guiding research question: What challenges do secondary school teachers face in their attempts to participate in values-education?

Methods

Research Approach

Our reading suggested that there are two main corresponding research approaches named as quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative research approach is based on the logical-positivist whereas that of qualitative research is on the interpretive paradigms (Best & Kahn, 2006; Ezzy, 2002; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Unlike the quantitative, qualitative study admits subjectivity and focuses on developing themes from the data collected (Creswell, 2012; Crompton, 2019). The nature of the problem in this investigation demands such kind of qualitative approach so as to get detailed information and understand challenges on integrated values-education. We have employed this approach to gain insight into the views of teachers about the challenges through collection of qualitative data from different key sources.

Research Design

In order to investigate and deeply understand the challenges teachers face on the practice of values-education integrated with their professional engagement, descriptive case study design was considered to be helpful. In order to have full picture about the teachers' views, it was our preference to undertake the research on one secondary school. Case study is essential to explore multiple truths or realities about and to have an extensive description of particular unique cases (Yin, 2009). Through case studies, researchers hope to gain in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved (Creswell, 2012; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). Since descriptive

case studies are set to describe the natural phenomena, our goal was to describe the data as they occur (Zainal, 2007).

Data Sources

The data sources were teachers, principals, and students. Academic subject teachers were the major sources of information about their views regarding the challenges they encountered in values-education integrated with their respective subjects and overall activities. Teachers of civics and ethical education were sources of information to reflect their views about the overall practices of teachers and the challenges on moral values-educational activities. Data were collected from principals regarding the judgment they have about the challenges. Students were also considered as the sources of data about the challenges their teachers face in trying to inculcate moral values integrated with their professional practices.

Sampling

It is believed by qualitative case study researchers that knowledge and theories are developed only for that particular setting. It is not always generalizable due to small sample sizes and the subjective nature of the research. The main purpose of case study is to gather data from relatively small samples and provide a micro view of whatever issues examined. For our study, purposeful sampling was preferable to select the research site and participants (Suri, 2011; Flick, 2009; Best & Kahn, 2006). Deshet Secondary School (DSS) was chosen for this investigation because it is a full cycle, has a wealth of experience, and has a large teacher and student population. It was selected as an instrumental case to obtain a more thorough understanding of the challenges on integrated values-education.

The principal was considered as a key informant in many respects. Teacher participants were selected in consultation with the principal and then using snowball techniques, by considering experience, resourcefulness, genuineness, and information-richness. Students were taken from grades eleven and twelve because we believed they had better experience of the school's moral culture than those of the remaining grades. And they were selected with the help of unit leaders and homeroom teachers on the basis of expressiveness and genuineness. Therefore, there were one principal, one civic and ethical education teacher, three other academic subject teachers, and six students.

Data Gathering

The major tool of data collection in our study was semi-structured interview from which specific questions were emerged during the discussion. The data from interviews consist of verbatim or direct quotations from people about their experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge with sufficient context to be interpretable (Patton, 2002). It tends to be seen as involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it (Mason, 2002). To conduct a successful interview, we have identified key participants related to the research questions, developed interview guides and means for recording the data. The interviews with the staff and students were conducted on a face-to-face individual and group bases

respectively as supported by Mason (2002). Based on the consent of the interviewees, we recorded the talks in an audiotape, thereby transcribing them carefully.

Data Analysis

Qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly interpretivist in the sense that it is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted (Mason, 2002). The qualitative case study depends on data analysis characterized by explanation of deeper meanings and understandings through the subjective views of participants (Akinyode & Khan, 2018). Creswell (2012) noted that it is fundamentally interpretive which includes developing a description of an individual or setting, analyzing for themes or categories, and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusion. Huberman and Miles (1994) also stated that once actual field notes, interviews, tapes, or other data are available, data summaries, coding, finding themes, clustering, writing stories, and so on are activities in qualitative data analysis. One cannot escape from the personal or subjective interpretation brought to qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2012). The qualitative data analysis depends on an investigator's own style of rigorous thinking, along with the sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations (Yin, 2009).

In this study, the collected raw data were organized and then categorized into different themes using coding strategies. The themes were then discussed in the context of the participants' perspectives by using interpretational and reflective analyses. By interpretational analysis we mean examining the data to find constructs, themes, and patterns. In a reflective analysis, we have relied primarily on intuitions and judgments to evaluate the phenomenon being studied (Gall et.al, 1994). The data analysis in this investigation was conducted manually as it was not beyond our control and managerial scope to demand software application. The findings were discussed in light of the available literature and professional views of the researcher thereby making generalization from the themes about the phenomena in question. Lastly, we come up with scholastic interpretations and understandings beyond what the data says (Amera, 2016).

To strengthen the reliability and validity of the research, attempts have been made through different enhancing mechanisms. At the stage of data collection, we started sort of interpretational analysis integrated with the process of data collection. At the stage of data analysis, we have exerted efforts to enhance the rigor through quality description of the meanings, feelings, and interpretations of participants. More specifically, we tried to ensure trustworthiness through purposeful sampling, member checking, thick description, expert review, and transparent in reporting of the findings.

Ethical Considerations

The participants of the research have the right to be informed about the nature of the research and kept securely confidential (Punch, 1994). After getting school permission from the principal, we presented the written consent agreements for the selected participants regarding the purposes of the research, the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the techniques for maintaining their

privacy and confidentiality. To minimize potential risks faced by the participants, identities and locations of the individuals were hidden and data collected was held in anonymized form. That means we used pseudonyms not only for participants but also for the schools during the analysis and discussion work of the study.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the experience of one secondary school (DSS) to demonstrate the challenges teachers are facing in their attempts to participate in an integrated values-education. The challenges mentioned by the participants are found to be problematic in the teaching of academics in general and moral values in particular.

Perceiving the Present Education as Worthless

Participants reported that one of the major challenges is related to the students' perception about the current benefits of education. Participants of the study commonly explained that there is no attractive future to enable the students to be enthusiastic in learning. Tamene, one of the English teachers, told, 'If they see attractive future, they will exert high mental effort; nothing will stop them. They will go forward challenging whatever the barrier.' This reveals that the benefit of education after completion was not directly visible for the learners. The students perceive that there was lack of job opportunities after graduation. On the other hand, the students see their teachers poorer than the non-educated people. In this condition, Tamene believes that it is difficult to motivate the students to work hard in their academic engagement. Inherent with this, the efforts of moral and ethical education will be more challenging for the teachers. He said:

...In my attempt to be a model in dressing for example, I do not have sufficient cloths. I am a person poorer than many of the students. If the teacher as an educated person is not better than the student in economy, how could education be attractive? Where is the benefit of education in this perspective? (Tamene)

Tamene is bothered about his dressings due to the scarcity of finance. He has no alternative cloths to wear and to be model for the students. He seems to feel inferior being economically not wealthy. Furthermore, the students are experienced with the presence of wealthy people without the modern education. If it is weighted with revenue, being educated may be annoying for learners and grownups. In this regard the students may feel that education has nothing to do with personal economic life. This kind of mentality hinders the students to exert high mental effort on academic activities. At worst, it is a challenge for teachers in their efforts of moral character building. Academic disengagement will add a burden on the process of shaping morality. Here, it would be advisable for teachers to ascertain with their students that an educated man can be economically wealthy with enlightenment while uneducated people become wealthy haphazardly and blindly.

Similarly, one of the civics and ethical education teachers, Debasu, witnessed that the teachers could not see academic courage on the part of students because of different factors. He said, '.... Students express that they want to finish 10th grade and become a driver or policeman.

They do not want to be pressured by their teachers. If we hold them tightly, they will end up in conflict with us.' From this expression, we can see that there seems to be an assumption on the part of students that they are not able to attend university. Here it would be good if they wanted to finish school and get a job as a police officer or driver. But it is a moral problem to think that these jobs do not require academic courage and quality learning. In this case, misbehavior would be likely to happen, and it would be challenging for teachers to build moral character. Therefore, teachers need to take a position that they can affect student motivation in ways that facilitate learning (Svinicki, 2005).

The Curriculum Abandons Religion and Promotes False Narrations

Curriculum-related challenges are impeding factors for teachers' engagement in teaching values in schools (Jie & Desheng, 2004). According to the participants, the detachment of religion from the present curriculum has made the efforts of values-education difficult. Being informed by his rich experiences, one of the teachers, Areya, told that the value system of the past was by far better than that of the present. In his words, he stated:

In the generation we had passed through, respect and responsibility were typical cultural values. We used to respect our teachers, the education system, and the school. This in turn led teachers to care for students and be responsible for teaching at the expense of that moral practice. Therefore, the teacher student relationship was based on respect and responsibility. We cannot see this kind of morality at these days. Civics and ethical education, which was trusted to bring up morally excellent citizens, paradoxically made students to exercise their rights and neglect their obligations. Unless and otherwise there is rethinking and the situation is reversed, it will be hazardous for our country to survive even as a nation. (Areya)

The verbatim here shows that respect, responsibility, and caring were crucial virtues demonstrated in every interaction of the then school community members. There was mutual understanding between teachers and students in the past. One was doing for others in the sense of return for good deeds. That golden era had become fable and history. In his closing, he ascertained that the generation is in danger if it continues this way. Tamene, who is also known for his religious knowledge and experience, expressed his feeling that the current education system and its curriculum have brought about destructive behavior. He has some reflections as,

The education system of our country has brought several complications in terms of ethics and morality. Moral education has been detached from the education system by the name of secularism. Accordingly, students are deviated from the accepted traditions, religious practices, and moral culture of the society. We have seen them to violate essential cultural norms by the name of rights. I am doubtful that civics and ethical education curriculum is talking about ethics and morality. Had it been so, we wouldn't have seen such crises of ethical behavior. (Tamene)

As indicated in the vignette here, Tamene expressed his grief in that the crises of ethics and morality are resulted from the principles of secularism implemented by the government. To put his view in simple terms, enlightening virtues were omitted and shedding vices have been promoted. The separate course affiliated with the ethnic-based federal government has dissociated the grownups. Essential moral values have been gradually excluded from the social system. They are not regarded as the guiding principles of human actions in the present scenario. This has become a challenge for teachers to moralize students which in turn resulted in moral deterioration from time to time. Neglecting role of religions is a critical challenge in the efforts of integrated values-education (Lickona, 2006). We thus feel that it could have been possible to include contents that cross different religions.

Apart from marginalizing religion, the present curriculum has encouraged the spread of false narrations. Subjects like history and civics and ethical education were considered as key instruments for shaping the generation. However, participants claimed that what happened is the opposite. Tamene felt that these subjects were less supportive to shape the generation. He said that civics and ethical education has resulted in a generation celebrating rights and ignoring responsibilities. It has inculcated ethnic based values than national ones. When we come to the system of history education, it became even the cause for the erosion of essential common moral values in the country. The discussion made with the students in the group interview suggested the following:

...If we take grade ten history textbook, a narrative about Emperor Minilik discusses the expansion movement as humiliating other ethnic identities rather than conveying message about unification. How could the so-called humiliated people feel about this event? In general, we feel that curriculum was intentionally designed to break the generation and bring fragmented society. (Group interview with students)

When we look at the verbatim here, history as a subject has played great role in the destruction of national values. Separating values were inculcated and common bonds were eroded by the subject. As a consequence, the generation has been confused with false narratives. That is why we see the fruit at the moment. The country has become home to the development of stereotyped behavior at best and feeling of resentment and revenge at worst. Therefore, it would not be easy to reverse this. It would be hard to teach the truth while the formal curriculum has preached something else. That would be very challenging for the development of pro-moral character.

The impact of false narratives could be associated with the absence of peace and security in higher institutions. Tamene extended expressing his idea that these are basic challenges that block students' motives which in turn resulted in disciplinary problems. He has words to say as follows:

Last year (2019) one of the slogans in the peaceful demonstration made by our students about the chaos that happened in different universities of the country was 'You do not have to be afraid of being arrested! There is a possibility of attending university!' They did this since they saw the reality. The secondary school students saw university

students being hammered like a snake, thrown down from upstairs like dirt, stoned to death like a beast, slaughtered like a bull, and chopped like a tomato. How shall I motivate them to study hard and join university with this situation? Because they are experiencing the reality, I am afraid that they will consider me even as liar. (Tamene)

As boldly presented by Tamene, one of the major challenges facing students in their academic learning and moral development is the security situation at universities. The students are not mistaken to raise this strange slogan to show that joining university is worse than joining jail. It is a disgrace that universities are the source of disintegration when they are supposed to be the source of unity, source of destruction when they should be the source of wisdom. It is a shame that they have become the laboratory for troublemaking when they had to be problem solvers. This destructive behavior was the result of false narrations. In this case, Tamene was right, saying that there was no reason for the students to have motivation for excellence in the line of universities. If he attempted to initiate them to join universities, he would feel that it was like he had pushed them to die.

Lack of Exemplars

Profound character development will be facilitated if there are good role models. Noddings (2007) contended that we do not merely tell them to care and give them texts to read on the subject; we demonstrate our care in our relationship with them. It has been frequently discussed so far that the present civics and ethical education system has been preaching students to develop desirable citizenship behavior. However, the students in the group interview session explained that people exercise individual rights and abandons responsibilities for others. One of the reasons is the practices opposite to what the students learn at their school. This rhetoric-reality gap can be justified by the following vignette extracted from the discussion we had with the students in the group interview:

... We are not practicing what we learn in civics and ethical education. We have knowledge of values in theory but have not realized them in our action. This fact is also true in our school culture, government bureaucracies, and the community at large. What we see in reality is the opposite of what we learnt in the classroom. For example, Article 19 of the Constitution articulates how to handle the human rights of arrested criminals. However, the security and regulatory bodies are observed to be violating basic human rights in a heartless manner.

The verbatim shows that there are practices opposite to the theoretical lessons in the class. The people in the different government organs and community structures are weak in demonstrating positive role model for the students. The school teachers are not committed to perform teachable moral activities. The different authoritative figures in various sectors of the government are failing to be exemplars in their moral behaviors. There is nothing beyond human rights; however, rule protectors themselves are violating hardheartedly. The theory is one way; the practice is another way. The constitution itself is not respected let alone other moral principles. If

the leaders are not guided by the constitution, no one (follower) will be guided by their rhetoric. In this situation, we can say that the students are subjected to know the good in the milieu of devilish practices.

The other manifestation of the theory-practice gap is that people of the contemporary era are seen to focus on their personal interests. They are hunting for private business at the expense of public needs. One of the students in the group interview put, ‘...authorities and experts of the present government are business-minded ignoring public needs.’ From this expression, they seem to put themselves dominantly in the circle of their personal matters. It would be likely to say that they have fewer tendencies to do good deeds for others. This further implies that they are less likely to be modeling relational values for the learners; they are modeling individualistic personality.

According to the interview report from the school principal, Mamaru, there are many students who do not take their teachers as a role model. He complained that they are being captivated by the realities outside of school. In his words,

...Teachers are teaching values not only by telling but also through their interaction with students, their dressing style, and other model behavioral characteristics. In this regard, my evaluation is that most of them are not bad models. For our teachers, improper modeling in terms of dressing style and personal demeanor is not a major problem. They attempt to be careful. However, the students are not ready to take their teachers as a model. They are under the influence of outside environment. Whatever best ethical practice might the teacher demonstrates in the school, it is very rare to get students who look into his quality. (Mamaru)

At the level of his understanding and belief, the principal tried to explain that there are various ways of teaching values among which modeling is the one. Many scholars also believe that teachers should be exemplary in their behavior. In practice, however, it is clear that there are no problems with dressing and personal disposition on the part of the teachers. He tried to explain that they were trying to be good examples in this regard. But his expression shows that it is hard to find a student who attempts to take a teacher as his/her role model. The students are not impressed even though the teachers are good role models.

Non-supportive Leadership Practice

Good character is fostered by orderly schools and classroom environments and by clear rules which are fairly enforced (Titus, 1994). The inconsistent practice of teachers and the subsequent response by the leaders to their performance were the main challenges that block the development of morality in the case school. For instance, the issue of tutorial was believed to be the teacher’s moral obligation. When it became component of result-oriented checklist, it would be binding to be controlled by authorities. In this case, implementation tends to be nominal; the checklist has made teachers to go to the opposite and unproductive performance. Many teachers are found to be running to collect fraud documents targeted to performance appraisal. On the other hand, Tamene complained that there were teachers who provide tutorial but did not habitually

report. There were also teachers who work hard but not praised. That means the teachers are not uniquely treated as per their excellence. He said,

... Their target is mainly helping. These kinds of teachers are not hunted.... In general, there is no mechanism of identifying and incentivizing best teachers. There is no system of identifying ineffective teachers. This condition made the teacher to be less motivated, to miss or partially miss class periods, and to be far from school level engagements. (Tamene)

There is no lesson giving measure when teachers make mistakes. There is no system of appreciation when teachers are smart in their performances. In this scenario, best performing teachers and the ineffective ones are not treated differently. This will be demotivating teachers to perform their duties and exercise their moral obligations. Therefore, such absence of appropriate reaction by the authorities will make education in general and values-education in particular more difficult.

The other leadership-related challenge is the gap in their relationship with the teachers. According to Tamene, there was no synergy between teachers and administrators; there was social distance among them. Sometimes, teachers were not trusted by the leaders. During the interview session, he shared his experience as follows:

... Once upon a time, I was teaching a topic called "Traditional Cloths". To make my lesson meaningful, I entered the class wearing traditional clothing. The principal of the school opposed the fact that I was not secular. I tried to convince him, but he insisted on his position that the dressing was a reflection of the Christian religion. (Tamene)

Tamene was trying to teach traditional clothes in practice and was making an attempt to make his lesson live, according to this vignette. However, the principal suspected that he might oppose secularism and promote Christianity in the classroom. Whatever argument Tamene suggested to persuade the principal as it is a teaching aid; the principal has shown less willingness to accept his justification. This indicates that the teacher has not earned the principal's trust. Effective leaders, according to Covey (2004), should have smart trust in their workers and followers. Teachers are expected to have a moral obligation to do the right thing. Teaching is a moral practice (Pring, 2004). Once they are trained and licensed, teachers are to be trusted by their leaders. If they are discouraged in this way, the teachers will keep silent about the essential moral values and cultural practices.

As it has been frequently articulated so far, teachers are expected to involve in the process of discipline management and values-education as a whole. This will be effective if there is synergy between the teachers and school leaders. In relation to this one of the civics and ethical education teachers, Debasu, has complained that when a student is caught with misconduct, teachers may take their own measure but reversed by school leaders. He has shared one experience on an encounter to justify his argument:

... This year, I faced a student holding construction metal (tubular) and wanting to take it away. When I asked him to put it away, he confronted me as if he had the right to

make it his possession. In the meantime, he attempted to attack me. Subsequently, I took him to the principal for further action. However, the principal advised him to ask me for an apology without taking the expected measure. Even though I was appreciative of the apology, I was offended by the principal's decision. Many students and teachers were observing the incident. They were expecting a serious step to be taken. From that point onwards, I became reserved for this kind of engagement. How could other students get disciplined when they saw this scenario? What lesson will they learn? How could other teachers try to regulate misbehavior? (Debasu)

In the first thing, the student tried to steal the school's property. When Debasu tried to correct this misconduct, the student has rejected the decision of the teacher. That means he has shown an inclination to continue with his theft. In the second place, he tried to attack the one who attempted to interfere with his theft. That means he was not ready to learn from mistakes, rather he considered the teacher as mistaken. The third point is the solution given by the principal. Even though the student was made to ask an apology for the mistake, Debasu was not satisfied with the principal's decision.

The multiple offensive acts of the student were not to be passed in that easy way. This discouraged the teacher to participate in discipline management. The other teachers who observed that scenario might also be less engaged in the efforts of discipline management and values-education as a whole. This kind of teacher-leader relationship is not constructive for teaching ethics and morality. Prior to notifying the decision for the student, the leader would have to make private discussion with the teacher in order to capture his genuine agreement.

The other management-related challenge was the physical environment of the school. According to our observation, there was no staff lounge for teachers to refresh. There was no television to watch and enjoy. There was no recreational center and game zone. There was no place and comfortable seat to take rest when getting tired of work. These aversive environments, we think, made the teachers not to stay in the school. They come to school for covering their class periods and run out of the school to enjoy their private dealings. All these things we observed revealed that there was no attractive physical environment for the teachers to spend their time in the school and celebrate their caring relationships among each other. The absence of these facilities, we felt, added fuel on the problem of existing social distances. In general, there was lack of effective leadership in the school. This finding is consistent with the report of Mulugeta (2018) who indicated that the participation of school leaders in the process of building up good citizenship in Ethiopia was unsatisfactory. In relation to this, Lickona (2006) also asserted that one of the major potential challenges in values-education efforts is the lack of committed moral leadership in schools.

Absence of Authentic Assessment, Ground for Moral Corruption

The implementation of continuous assessment is becoming a cause for unethical behavior. Areya claimed that high school students have passed through a system of continuous assessment that let them promote to the next grade without fulfilling the expected academic profile. He said, '...Almost there is no detainee at lower grades. These students will face difficulties in

academic performance when they join secondary schools.’ This reveals that academic inefficiency will cause misbehavior. If someone is academically poor, he will not be interested to attend the class and perform academic activities. Subsequently, there will have been many more kinds of undesirable moral character.

Once upon a time, one of us (researchers) has contacted an English teacher having thirty years of experiences. In the middle of the chat, he irritatingly complained about the academic performance of students. Being eager, the interviewer moved to him and made him continue with this agenda. The teacher said, ‘In any section, we are teaching only four or not more than four students; the rest are passively sitting in the classroom.... It is the result of massive promotion at lower grades’ (Yimenu). The teacher here complained that very few students are trying to exert high mental effort on learning. The vast majority of them are incompetent. They are detached with learning engagements because of various reasons. He attributed the problem to the lower schools and their grading system. The students have got easy access to join secondary schools without having adequate proficiency. They are also ambitious to complete schooling with least mental effort on learning.

If there is no intervention here, the student may complete at the end of the day but without learning. Areya expressed his feeling as, ‘He has stayed in schools but not learnt. His future is dark. He didn’t learn agriculture. He didn’t learn business idea.... He is made to remain idle.’ He seems to remind us critically observe and analyse what has happened and is happening in our country. If one shares this idea, he or she will come to the conclusion that the generation will completely fail somewhere if continued this way. We may not escape from that. If we do not alleviate this kind of misbehavior happening in secondary schools, there will be fertile ground for moral corruption. Thus, it is advisable to make our students independent and autonomous learners through the proper implementation of authentic continuous assessment.

Lack of Teacher Unity and Parental Engagement

The beliefs of many teachers about the roles they have on the values-education endeavor were generally expressed positive. In practice, however, their roles regarding discipline management were found to be almost negligible. They have low interest in supporting students in terms of behavior regulation. They consider that discipline management was the duty of principals and unit leaders. On the other hand, there is no unity among teachers in handling disciplinary problems. One of the teachers, Nebyu, speaks in the interview as, "... while there are many teachers being ignorant of misbehavior displayed, there are also teachers being strict in handling discipline." This means managing discipline and developing moral behavior is left to certain groups, which in turn will result in challenges for the committed teachers.

Being civics and ethical education teacher, Debasu has proved in his own words that he strived to educate students by setting an example for others, but the lack of co-operation in the process would make it difficult for students to achieve the expected change in moral behavior. He said,

I attend at a flag-raising ceremony. I let students line up. I sing the national anthem along with them. Observing this action, the students are surprised. Some teachers make fun of

me; they portray me as an impostor. But since I am the owner of the subject, I will continue to with this, no embarrassment. That is a small model; much is needed from me. (Debasu)

In view of the vignette here, Debasu has tried to be an example of a flag celebration. He felt that he would join the students and sing the national anthem. In the process, however, he was receiving discouraging feedback from some of his colleagues. He was even being teased and ridiculed. This cynical action of the colleagues did not reverse his mental position. The good thing on the other hand was that the students commended him because of his action. Apparently, that might be why he asserted that he would continue to do so. In summary, there was no unity among the teachers on such kind of moral education. This kind of situation would not only harm motivation of the working teachers but would also lead to fruitless student moral behaviors. A morally competent teacher is the one who sees the development of student's moral life and character as a professional responsibility and priority (Mulugeta, 2018). If we do not first have our moral house in order, students will tend to discount our moral claims (LaFollette, 2007).

Parental engagement is decisive for the development of moral character. Students are only required to attend school for a certain number of hours per day, with the vast majority of their time spent with their parents. Different virtues like honesty, responsibility, and respect for teachers or elders are expected to be taught also by parents. However, participants mentioned that parent-related challenges are among the barriers in the works of values-education. There are gaps on the part of parents to support the values-education process. One of the teacher participants, Nebyu, puts, '...some parents, for example, consider that the money they give for their children's educational services would be taken by teachers for private use.' This reveals that there are parents who do not even know for what purpose they give money to their children. If parents do not keep a close eye on their children, they will never know what is going on in school. Nebyu has also reflected on other related experiences as follows:

... There are cases when parents complain or oppose what the teacher is doing regarding disciplinary problems. They consider their child is correct but the teacher is wrong. When we call parents for certain disciplinary matters, they try to deny, protect, or are not ready to accept mistakes. There was one student who was not attending the practical lab in my ICT lesson. Subsequently, I forbade her to sit for the lab practical exam. Her father came and shouted at me. He even took the case to the principal and accused me. So, how can students accept me as a teacher and their leader? How could they possibly obey me? (Nebyu)

As it can be observed in the verbatim here, there is no integration and close contact between teachers and parents. If parents oppose what the teachers are working with discipline management, it means that they have no trust on the teachers. When we see Nebyu's encounter, the father of the girl was to protect his daughter by any means. But he did not understand the intention of the teacher in maintaining the quality of education. This signifies that parents do not appear to be willing to admit their children's mistakes, as they suspect a history of blacklisting and potential harsh measures in the future. We feel that if teachers do not communicate with parents about the school's

behavior, parents may become distant from cooperation. A similar result was found by Mulugeta (2018), who explored that lack of key stakeholder support is one of the potential problems in the efforts to build good citizenship in Ethiopia. As a result, it will be a challenge to discipline the students within this circle of influence. Therefore, every teacher needs to establish close contact with the parents and enable them to have an understanding of the intention of the teachers in maintaining discipline. This is because, as Lickona (2006) argues, parents are key actors in the teaching of moral character. It is also advisable to remind that when children commit mistakes, reasonable steps need to be taken to help the individual see why his/her actions are unacceptable rather than simply ensure conformity under threat of more severe sanction in future (Wringe, 2006).

Conclusions and Implications

The research suggests that there were significant challenges that affect teachers' practices of values-education. The challenges were found to be the causes for the disengagement of teachers in the efforts of integrated values-education. One of the common challenges was the improper view perception of students on the benefits of education. The second challenges are related to the exclusion of religious-oriented common moral values and the presence of false narrations in the curriculum of the present education system. The theory-practice gap and lack of exemplars was found to be the third hindrance in the efforts of values-education. There were also significant challenges which include lack of unity and coordination among the staff in handling discipline, lack of effective leadership on the part of the principals, lack of authentic assessment carried out by the teachers, and poor parental support. Even though some of the difficulties mentioned by the teachers are general that would affect any educational process, they have further influence on the teaching of ethics. These all were found to be challenges for teachers to shape the students to the desired moral line.

Due to those factors, teachers tended to be reluctant to take on values-education passionately and enthusiastically. We also felt that the challenges mentioned by the teachers are problematic in the teaching of sound moral character. However, if we are afraid of the challenges and do not exert more effort on our value-education system, the situation here in our country will continue to worsen. Therefore, all teachers need to be concerned about the imminent fragmentation of society unless they confront and work with the challenges. We suggest that the challenges be resolved in collaboration with key stakeholders. In accordance with this view, teachers can discharge their responsibilities for wholistic personality development. On the other hand, the challenges encountered do not always have disadvantages. They also have their own benefits. Thus, it is advisable to take the challenges as essential opportunities for innovation, criticality, and professional development rather than consider them threats. In this regard, it is implied that the Ministry of Education needs to enhance teachers' moral competencies and professional demeanors, possibly through pre-service and in-service training. Furthermore, we suggest other researchers conduct investigations into such sensitive issues of the century.

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