CHAPTER SEVEN

TOWARDS AN EXPLANATION OF THE TEACHER'S INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

7 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.1 Values: the trotting concept

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

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

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

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

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

To reinforce the contextual nature of values, the key informant interviews established the fact that teachers' understandings of values are a reflection of their immediate environment. Thus, practiced values have the unvoiced sanctioning of society. Mujomba (K1) emphasised the importance of society when he stated that teachers get values from society, "…just as the school is a reflection of the head teacher, the school is also a microcosm of society, and therefore society has to take responsibility for what is taking place in its schools…".

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.2   The variance between policy and practice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.3   Teacher beliefs and practices in values education

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

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

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

7.3.1 The "unbroken chain" of personality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the same focus group another teacher noted that,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 7-1 Summary table of personality traits

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

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

7.3.2 The head teacher

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.3.3   School ethos

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

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

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

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

7.3.4   Parents and the immediate community

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.4   New knowledge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.5   Areas for future research

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.6   Conclusion

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

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

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

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

I compare values education with other subject areas, which have established theories that are continuously under research and evolve within a framework that serves to guide the process

until such a time that they are overtaken by new discoveries. A good example is raised by Gichure (1997: 20) where she argues that ethics needs to borrow from the field of medicine, which, although it has set theories, for each particular case, the doctor has to gather more information, take a case history, consider the age and condition of the patient, and go over all the symptoms, before arriving at the decision to apply the agreed scientific law to the specific case.

This study also noted that the personality of the head teacher, rather than government policy, determined how teachers responded and practiced values education. This being the case, it would be wise for the government to focus attention on influencing head teachers on issues of curriculum reform. Currently, during the introduction or change of curriculum, government efforts have been concentrated on in-service training and seminars to build the specific teacher's capacity. The results of this study indicate that with regard to values education, without the head teacher's support all efforts will come to nothing. Secondly, there are fewer head teachers so that they are a more cost effective group to manage, taking into consideration the time and financial constraints facing the government system.

This study brings to the fore the individualistic and contextual nature of values. Consequently, it calls on policy to recognise the intricacies involved in values education. The current policy environment has treated the values curriculum like any other subject. This study recommends for a total change. I quote from one of the head teachers:

"For the first time somebody is interested in the quality of teachers I have, and not only coming to find out the pass rate of my learners or how many more learner I can take on" (Private head teacher 1).

Policy needs to clearly state its goals, and teachers should be trained so that they can creatively utilise the knowledge gained at a practical level. This study showed that if teachers are to effectively aid learners, they have to have a fine understanding of moral issues, coupled with the skills to deal with a dynamic multicultural society. To get teachers to change their pedagogical practice requires more than refresher courses. I will thus elucidate what I think needs to be done with regard to teacher preparation.

- Multicultural and multiethnic grounding

There is a need to investigate what it means to teach "all students" well and what it means to adjust teaching practices according to the needs and interests of "all children.". We need to broaden our knowledge about the different ethnic communities (Kenya has 42 major ethnic groups) and foster appreciation and accommodation of different cultures. The advantage of such knowledge, as emphasised by Banks and Banks (2001), is that it will help teachers understand that, in order to be advocates for equitable and just education, they must speak against racism and discrimination.

Secondly, multicultural education will accord the education system an opportunity to begin interrogating some of the taboos that still afflict some societies. One key issue is that of power relations in the class. Lisman (1991), Allard and Cooper (2001), and Manke (1997) claim that the methods that teachers use in promoting values is largely determined by uneven power relations, and negotiations between the teachers and respective students in the classroom. Wells (1992) reinforces this point by saying that "Teacher-child discourse is a central aspect of classroom life whose moral implications have been ignored".

Buzzelli (1996) bemoans the fact that few studies have examined the moral implications of the teaching/learning activities that occur in classrooms.

- Multi religious grounding

Religion is deep-rooted and is the source from which a good number of teachers draw their knowledge. Kenyan religious groupings, in order of majority, are Christians, Muslims, traditional African, Hindu, and Buddhists. It is therefore critical that the Kenyan teacher is familiar with the different religions and has the skill to negotiate the intricate diverse beliefs to create a fair democratic environment for learning.

- National goals

Teachers should be conversant with the national goals of development and understand how the education system contributes to these goals. This will reduce the chances of teachers not knowing how their work fits into the bigger picture of the country. Dr. Mali (K2) in the interview sessions, claimed that

"CRE is not able to capture in detail the aspirations of the nation as a whole, secondly, Christianity gives choices, that is, a person is not obliged, but an appeal is made to them…a

nation can only be built with people who have a shared vision and value system... values education is a key foundation for the education and upbringing of children, thus it cannot be left to chance or choice...".

- Human rights

Teachers should know that as custodians and educators of the next generation, they have the responsibility to protect the rights of children. They should not only keep abreast of national regulations such as the teacher code of conduct, but international regulations like the international convention on the rights of the child.

- Content knowledge

The teacher should be competent in the subject content and ensure that they continuously upgrade their knowledge base. This is an area that has received much attention in the current education paradigm, with the focus on the economic benefits of knowledge.

- Participatory pedagogical skills

Training has to provide teachers with new modern teaching skills. The old methods that ensured that the teacher was the provider of knowledge are outdated. As Korthagen and Kessels (1991) conclude, the kind of knowledge provided in teacher training programmes rarely comes to mind during lessons.

Another area for policy should be a reorientation of the system to take cognisance of values education. The prevailing focus on academic achievement, rather than the building of a person's character, will hamper progress in values education. A shift in ideology will ensure that details pertaining to values education, including evaluation of impact, will become part of the policy agenda. This will compel curriculum developers to find means and ways to evaluate and reward good character in teachers.

Some private schools, such as those administered by the Pentecostal churches, emphasise that they do not only employ teachers in terms of academic merit, but also consider their spiritual standing. Semegi (K4) pointed out clearly that she interviews teachers according to their spiritual standing, and monitors their behaviour and interaction with children on a daily basis. Head teachers highlight the fact that the formal education system does not have a realistic

engagement with real life situations, so the two environments have failed to effectively complement each other. Cotton (2003) noted that teachers believe that schools can teach values only if parents and teachers agree on which values to teach, model these values and agree to work together to support children.

This study recorded experts pointing out that pastoral lessons held every Friday are a good beginning towards the integration of school and community, since guest speakers from the community are invited to lead the sessions. However, more support from society is needed.