Character Development through Education in Kenya:

A Pragmatic Perspective

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A project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Education (Philosophy of Education) of the
University of Nairobi

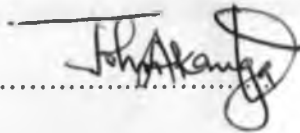August 2014

Declarations

Student's Declaration

This Research Project is my original work and has not been presented to any other university for examination or award of any degree

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This Project report has been submitted with our approval as University of Nairobi Supervisors

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Dedication

To my wife Violet Nasenya, who always encourages me to pursue important goals.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Prof. Samson O. Gunga and Dr. Reginald M.J. Oduor, who jointly supervised my work. They read the many drafts and offered invaluable advice. I wish to recognize Mr. Edalia Obote of the Department of Educational Foundations and Mr. Robinson Nzoka of the Student Welfare Authority, both of the University of Nairobi, for encouraging me to further my studies in Philosophy of Education. Last but not least, I thank my wife Nasenya, daughter Sandra, sons Gramwel and Grevis, and my parents and siblings for their keen interest in university education.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which the pragmatic theory of education can be employed as a basis of character development in Kenyan schools. It proceeded from the assumption that for children of school going age, education is the dominant agent of character development.

The study adopted the pragmatic theory of education as its theoretical framework, and employed the critical, phenomenological and historical philosophic methods to gather and analyze relevant information.

The study concluded that the poor state of discipline in Kenyan schools is attributable to the methods thus far employed for character development in the said institutions, hence the need for a new approach to this important endeavor.

Consequently, the study recommends a pedagogical strategy designed in line with the tenets of the pragmatic theory of education to guide efforts at character development in Kenyan schools.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this chapter a plan of the whole research is set out. In doing this, the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the study are presented.

1.1. Background to the study

This study is a philosophical inquiry into the teaching of character development in schools in Kenya. Battistich (2008) defines character development as the realization of one's positive development as a person, intellectually, socially, emotionally and ethically. Good character includes being committed to making a positive contribution to one's community and promoting a democratic way of life based upon justice, equality and respect for all people. Battistich goes ahead to define character education as the deliberate use of all dimensions of school life to foster optimal character development. In this light, education is viewed as the whole process by which one generation transmits its culture to the succeeding generation, or as a process by which people are prepared to live effectively and efficiently in their environment (Battistich 2008, 2).

According to Mugambi (2003), the significance of development of character through education in Kenya has been captured in the Kenyan government policies on education. The Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976 ("The Gachathi Report") made the observation that religious education as taught then

under the provision of the Education Act (1968) had not fully achieved the objective of inculcating national moral consciousness. It recommended therefore, the introduction of a common course on moral education which would be available to all students irrespective of religious identity. The recommendation for the introduction of this course was to complement the efforts of the faith-focused religious education syllabi (Government of Kenya 1976). In the end a new syllabus called Social Education and Ethics was proposed to be compulsory but non-examinable. Later the syllabus became examinable as an option to Christian Religious Education, Islamic Religious Education and Hindu Religious Education (Mugambi 2003).

The Gachathi Report (Government of Kenya 1976) recommended that Guidance and Counseling be supplemented by other subjects such as Religious Education and Social Ethics. The teaching of ethics was to be incorporated into the curriculum because it is one of the most important goals of education in Kenya (Government of Kenya 1976, 7).

The Gachathi Report (Government of Kenya 1976), The Koech Report (Government of Kenya 1999), The Kamunge Report (Government of Kenya 2001), all recommended character development as one of the goals of education. Nevertheless, at the formulation of the syllabus, those subjects earmarked to support character development were allocated very few lesson hours. For example three lessons a week (where each lesson lasts 40 minutes) are set aside for the teaching of Christian Religious Education. This compares poorly with subjects such as mathematics and English that enjoy seven lessons in a week, each also lasting 40 minutes. This, together with the low enrolment in Christian Religious Education examination in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary

Education (K.C.S.E.), is indicative of how moral education has been pushed to the backwaters of the educational pursuit in secondary schools (Mugambi 2003).

In the year 2001, overwhelmed by the rising number of student strikes in schools in Kenya, the government set up a committee to look into the causes of student indiscipline in general and to recommend ways of solving the problem. In the same year, the committee submitted a report called "Ministry of Education Report of Student Indiscipline and Unrest in Secondary schools". One of the recommendations of the report was the deployment of teachers with professional qualifications in guidance and counseling to secondary schools (Government of Kenya 2001).

In the same year 2001 when the recommendation of the deployment of guidance and counseling teachers to schools was made, corporal punishment, long believed to be a tool of instilling discipline by teachers was banned. This ban was as a result of the Children's Act 2001 which criminalized such punishment. The ban created the need for alternative methods of character development in schools. Contrary to expectations, cases of student unrest and general indiscipline among students are still high. Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) held the view that to realize order in schools, ways of empowering individual students to take responsibility for their action must be developed (Ajowi and Simatwa 2010, 16).

The level of indiscipline remains high even after the deployment of the guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools and the banning of corporal punishment. This indiscipline is exemplified by cases of assaults in school, arson, fighting, theft, vandalism, riots, rape and even murder perpetrated by students. This state of affairs

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poses a challenge to education managers to come up with new strategies of character development in schools in Kenya (Ajowi and Simatwa 2010, 15).

A few examples below illustrate how low the level of discipline in schools in Kenya has gone, and hence the need for some intervention. Tuiyot (2008) reported that in June 2008, 300 secondary schools in Kenya were hit by unrest that saw students disrupt learning, besides destroying property worth millions of shillings. On May 17th 2008, a student died in a fire at Nairobi's Upperhill Secondary School when he got trapped in a dormitory set ablaze after students rioted overnight. On 8[th]March, 2012, over 300 students of Gokeharaka Mixed Secondary School in Kuria West District went on strike demanding the removal of the Principal for being highhanded. In the neighbouring Kuria East District, St. Peter's Kagonga Secondary School had been closed after students went on strike just two weeks earlier (Bonareri 2012). On 9th July 2012 in the coastal region, students from Mazeras Boys Secondary School in Kinango District went on strike because their dormitories were infested with bedbugs (Kassam 2012). Yet again on 13th July 2012, students of Rwathia Girls High School in Murang'a County boycotted classes due to, among other reasons, the length of their skirts. The students complained that their uniform skirts were "too long" and not suitable for their age (Kamau 2012).

This study assesses the application of pragmatic principles in the development of character in Kenya's schools. It drew content and methodology from the two fields of philosophy and education, focusing on ethics and curriculum development respectively.

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1.2. Statement of the Problem

Society looks at education and schools in particular as one of the most important agents of character development. Towards that end, substantial investment in the form of financial and human resources have been channeled to education. However, the Kenyan Society still experiences high levels of student delinquency as manifested in the violent strikes in schools, theft, murder, riots, rape, vandalism and fights. The strategies that have been employed to deal with this negative trend have not been effective.

A report of the Task force on Student Indiscipline and Unrest (Government of Kenya 2001) recognized the need for character development programs in Kenya's educational institutions. Consequently, this study endeavours to use philosophical inquiry to interrogate the methods that have been used for character development in students in Kenyan schools with a view to proposing ways of improving them utilizing the pragmatic theory of education.

1.3. Purpose and Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which the pragmatic theory of education can be applied to the process of character development in Kenyan schools. Towards this end, the following are the specific objectives of the study:

(a) To critically examine the impact of the strategies that have been adopted in the Kenyan educational system in the effort to develop students' character.

(b) To assess the extent to which the pragmatic theory of education can contribute to character development among students in Kenyan schools.

1.4. Research Questions

This research project undertakes to answer the following questions:

- To what extent has Kenya's educational theory and practice had a positive impact on the development of character in schools?

- To what extent can the pragmatic theory of education contribute positively to character development   among students in Kenyan schools?

1.5. Justification and Significance of the study

(i)   The pragmatic theory of education was developed and tested in America by John Dewey and his colleagues. There is therefore need to assess the extent to which it can be applied to the Kenyan context. This study is a contribution towards meeting this need.

(ii)   This study contributes to the philosophical discourse on character development, and will hopefully encourage further research in this area.

(iii)   By suggesting ways of nurturing learners who are rational and who have moral integrity, this study will hopefully benefit stakeholders, among them teachers, education managers and guardians.

1.6. Scope and limitation of the study

This study assesses the theory and practice of education in Kenya with regard to character development. It assumes that for children of school going age, education is the dominant agent of character development. Consequently, it focuses on the search for educational strategies to guide character development.

The main limitation of the study is that although it isolates education as an important agent of character development, other agents concurrently influence this development.

1.7. Structure of the study

This study consists of six chapters:

The present chapter introduces the study, and consists of the statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, justification and significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and the structure of the study.

Chapter 2 deals with a review of related literature. It evaluates what other scholars and researchers have said about character development through education. The gap that exists in the studies is isolated for the purpose of this study.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework of the study. The rationale of employing the pragmatic theory to locate a practicable philosophical basis for character development through education is provided.

Chapter 4 describes and justifies the various philosophical methods used in the study.

Chapter 5 reflects on the pragmatic approach to character development through education. It analyses the employment of Religious Education, Social Studies and Ethics in the process of character development in schools.

Chapter 6 consists of the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

As noted in the previous chapter, the role of education in character development cannot be overemphasized. In this chapter literature related to the topic under the following subheadings has been reviewed:

(1) Concept of character development.

(2) Worldviews on character development.

(3) Methods of character development through education.

(4) Pragmatic approaches to character development.

(5) Character development through education: The Kenyan perspective.

2.2. The Concept of Character Development

According to Peters (1962), the word 'character' etymologically like the word 'trait' which is often associated with it is connected with making a distinguishing mark. 'Character' comes from the field of engraving; hence we talk naturally of the delineation of character. Traits bring out what is distinctive about people (Peters 1962, 38).

Peters (1962, 41) explains that a man who is ruthless, punctual or considerate does not necessarily have any particular goals but rather behaves in a certain manner, according to or not according to certain rules. To illustrate character traits, Peters uses the word greed. According to him, greed is not a character trait if it means just an appetite for money or food, but it becomes a character trait as soon as it carries the suggestion that this appetite is exercised ruthlessly or selfishly at someone else's expense, in other words in a certain manner.

Peters (1962) goes on to give illustrations of character by indicating that a craving for, for instance, a beefsteak, a lust for a pretty girl, reveals one's nature, not character. An individual's character is revealed in what he does about them, in the manner in which he regulates or fails to regulate them. Peters' example becomes very apt when applied to learners in school where challenges face them and they have to make quick decisions that affect their colleagues, parents and teachers positively or negatively. Peters (1962) isolates one major way of speaking of 'character' which he refers to as the non-committal use of character - An individual is brought up in an elaborate system of codes and conventions. To speak of his character is to speak of the particular selection of rules which he has, as it

were, absorbed in regulating his conduct both in relation to others and in pursuit of his more personal ends. In the school environment, there are many rules and regulations both documented and verbal prescribing how students are expected to conduct themselves. The way they relate to the rules usually reveals their character. The school system's effectiveness will be judged by how it helps develop the students' inclination to operate within the realm of the rules and regulations.

Battistich (2008) enumerates the elements of character. He recognizes the fact that to some, having character simply means "following the rules." However, for him, character refers to a much broader constellation of attitudes, behavior, motivations and skills. Attitudes such as the desire to do ones best and being concerned about the welfare of others, intellectual capacities such as critical thinking and moral reasoning, being honest and responsible are traits of character. Character is also the realization of one's positive development as a person-intellectually, socially, emotionally and ethically. For Battistich, the important aspect of the concept of character lies in the fact that it can only be character if it is a positive development in an individual, that is, we can only talk of 'character' if the character is good (Battistich 2008, 2).

Character is observable in one's conduct (Huitt 2004). Furthermore, character is different from values because values are orientations and dispositions whereas character involves the activation of knowledge and values. Values are considered as one of the foundations of character. Character is not a subtle action of an individual but can be captured through actions. Such actions as a student avoiding retaliation in the face of an aggressive

counterpart, whether in school or in the streets, defines one's character. Repeated conduct in sports, in class, or in an argument reveals one's character (Huitt 2004, 4).

Character development involves the formation of a system of values on which to base decisions concerning right and wrong or good and bad. In the context of a school, character development is the growth of a student's understanding of ethical values, manifested in his or her attitudes and behavior. At the beginning of this process, the student is physically and intellectually immature, and is therefore not guided by values. The school is therefore a major determinant of learners' character development (Bjorn 2007).

The various descriptions above relating to character by Peters, Huitt, and Battistich have given an understanding of the concept of character development which includes the aspect of permanence in traits and the observable conduct. This study relied heavily on the above works and their   conceptualizations of character. Those studies did not however focus on the appropriate methods for character development through education. The current research adapted the definitions in the studies reviewed to pursue its objectives. It setout to investigate character development in Kenyan schools with a clear understanding that no one research was identified as having addressed this issue with a specific focus on appropriate teaching methods.

2.3. Worldviews on character development

Huitt (2004,2) submits that scholarly debate on moral development and character formation extends to as far back as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and continues through to modern times. Over the last several hundred years, character education has been considered a primary function of educational institutions. The seventeenth century English philosopher, John Locke (1824) recognized the role of education in pursuit of character development. This theme was continued in the 19th century by an English philosopher John Stuart Mill (cited in Wilson 2012). John Dewey, an influential American philosopher and educator of early 20th century, saw moral education as central to the school's mission (Dewey 1897; 1966). These philosophers established the basis upon which the past and current studies relating to character development have been conducted.

Education is a range of activities, both formal and informal, where people are initiated into or realigned with the evolving traditions, structures and social relations. The purpose of education is to equip individuals to participate in changing the world with a realistic understanding of its possibilities. To the youth character development involves realigning their social relations and structures (Klenning 1985, 36).

We agreed with Klenning (1985) that education is the transmitter of the evolving traditions. However, there are many instances where education attempts to impose on the learners completely alien traditions. Huitt (2004) and Klenning (1985) focused on the content of character development in their works. Often the content and methods are mutually interdependent. While this study appreciated the role played by Education in the

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process of character development as advanced by Klenning (1985) and Huitt (2004), their views do not focus specifically on the methods of teaching for character development. Nevertheless, their works were useful in highlighting the role of the school in character development.

Brennan (1999) identifies what he calls the four pillars of morality, namely, wisdom, virtue, service and leadership. He says that character which is the moral end of life should be central to the aim of education. Making reference to the character developing role of education, he says that "education consists in initiating others into activities, in order of conduct and thoughts which have standards written into them by references to which it is possible to act, think and feel with varying degrees of relevance and taste" (Brennan 1999, 4).

The above studies by Brennan (1999), Huitt (2004) and Klenning (1985) did not adequately address the search for the appropriate pedagogical strategies for character development.

Chukwu (2001, 162) joined other scholars in analyzing the role of education for character development. Making special reference to the African continent which includes Kenya, Chukwu (2001) viewed the development of character as an important undertaking. He observed that good character was necessary for the maintenance of order in the society. Good character could be cultivated through knowledge and appreciation of morals. People who do not have good character will be the cause of violence, crime and other forms of anti-social activities. The frequent waves of violence witnessed on the African continent

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could be associated with a weakened structure of character development. Knowledge of desirable character traits is very important. This study explores ways of imparting this knowledge. It is only after students know right from wrong that they are able to make choices with respect to character traits. This study unlike Chukwu's (2001) does not stop at the appreciation of the knowledge relating to character development; it goes further to look at the current approaches of imparting that knowledge. It is envisaged in this study that if the appropriate methods of teaching for character development are adopted, most of the social problems will be reduced to a minimum, since the youth who have gone through a holistic educational programme will be better equipped to adapt to the changing social environment.

This study agrees with Chukwu (2002) that the bulk of violence in Africa is caused by lack of appropriate character development programmes in schools. This study contends that while there are efforts being made to develop character through education, the only drawback is the nature of methods deployed. Chukwu holds the opinion that no society in contemporary Africa can make genuine progress in its development initiatives if education fails to accomplish its task in relation to character building and self-discipline. With increased cases of corruption, theft in public service and general defiance of the law among citizens, the pace of development will be slowed down (Chukwu 2002, 286).

According to Tiffany (2010, 58), character development through education can be viewed as a way to combat behavioral choices that are unhealthy and the negative consequences that come with them. Character education helps to prevent unethical behaviour. Schools have not been successful in this. This is because schools have become places where

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children are sent to learn academics and skills. The society continues to engage in a paradox: the citizens demand value education and honesty but invest a lot of their effort in examination achievement only. Indeed some people consider character development in school as a questionable distraction from skill building and academic performance. Moral values have been watered down and in some cases completely lost. The end result is that the society has been afflicted with a crisis of character. The problem of work ethic, violence, and bullying among young people is a manifestation of this crisis. All these happenings make it necessary for the school to be evaluated as to how far the objective of character development is pursued, and this is one of the aims of this study. Tiffany equates education devoid of character development to putting guns in the hands of mad men, for it is not easy to predict what destruction can come out of them.

The youth who have undergone education for character development are capable of making decisions in every conceivable moral conflict and are at the same time able to improvise enlightened solutions to various moral questions as they emerge (O'Neill 1964, 50). Ayot (1999) holds a similar view, that the power of education to inform character and opinion is great and generally recognized. The deep-rooted beliefs of both parents and teachers are acquired by children in an almost unconscious way. The beliefs thus acquired become so deeply implanted that if the children were to stray in later years, the beliefs would be ready to emerge in times of crisis. Unless the school puts emphasis on guiding the way the teachers manage the students' character development, the society will be full of adults who hold on stereotyping. The adults will hold dearly on their parents' character traits even if such traits are obsolete. The school must progressively wean the growing

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youth from character that is irrelevant and instead equip them with meaningful and acceptable character (Ayot 1999, 85).

According to Ayot (1999) and O'Neill (1964), once the standards of morals have been established they always become helpful to the learners when they face day to day challenges. Given that no specific belief is prescribed to apply to every challenge, the learners are prepared to deal with any new moral issue.

According to Njoroge and Bennaars (1986, 169), the modern school system is concerned with training of a productive labour force and highly skilled manpower. The modern school system is however not directly interested in the traditional education which enforces its moral and religious values without compromise. Modern education encourages neutrality and objectivity which is inspired by the rules of science, technology, and a rationalized economy. Democratic principles that overprotect individual rights leave the students to make independent choices on character traits. Such unfettered freedoms to the students end up informing their moral choices. Often these choices are unpopular in the society. Modern education hence tends to be a moral in nature leaving the modern student in a moral vacuum - a sort of moral crisis. The education system is strategic in creating an environment where the character of students can be developed.

Njoroge and Benaars (1986) nevertheless focus on the content of moral education, but do not suggest strategies that can be employed in shaping character through education. The two scholars only dwell on prescribing the way students should behave, but do not offer any strategy of imparting such knowledge of expected behaviour. It was the objective of

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this study to identify a theory of education that will guide the development of an appropriate pedagogy for character development.

2.4. Methods of character development through education

According to Kibera and Kimokoti (2004) and Sifuna and Otiende (2006), African indigenous education had a normative goal. Normative goals were concerned with instilling the accepted standards and beliefs governing correct behavior. Although competitive elements within the education system were encouraged in intellectual and practical matters, they were controlled and subordinated to normative and expressive aims. Kibera and Kimokoti (2004) proceed further to recognize that what was taught related to the social life of the people concerned. Indigenous African education was not only concerned with the systematic socialization of the young into norms, religion, and collective opinion of the wider society, but also placed a very strong emphasis on learning practical skills which were useful to the individual and the society as a whole. Essentially indigenous education emphasized social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, spiritual and moral values. In contemporary times, the society outside the school has numerous appropriate character development initiatives in religious organizations and other cultural engagements. The school on the other hand has a concentration of experts in the form of teachers and counselors. The trained teachers are a resource for managing the strong desires of the youth. The youth are in their early

development stage and often experiment with many 'new things' that they encounter in their social environment (Kibera and Kimokoti 2007, 71).

On moral education, Kibera and Kimokoti (2007) stress the importance of transmitting the knowledge of what is considered to be right and wrong to the new members of the society. The reason they give is that human beings are born neither moral nor immoral. The 'new' human beings need to be guided towards those regulations that govern their existence within the society. African indigenous education dwelt a lot on the character development of the youth. However, due to the modern ways of life it is difficult for adults to find time to instill education using the methods applied in the indigenous education system. In the modern way of life, adults are busy with their own activities for income generation, and it is only in a school environment where one can find teachers who are engaged in facilitating character development of the youth. According to Kireet (2008), methods that are appropriate in the field of learning with regard to knowledge are not necessarily applicable in the field of learning of values which are central to the process of development of character. This study pursued the thinking that every field of knowledge requires relevant methods. Character development is no exception, for it requires unique methods of teaching (Kireet 2008, 96).

Kireet (2008) found out that in any sound process of teaching and learning, three instruments which are available to the teacher are instruction, example and influence. In an ideal system of teaching, instruction should play a much less important role than example and influence of the teacher. In the domain of character development where volition and affective activities play an important role, instruction through methods other than lecture

and discussion is recommended. One of the objectives of the present study is to assess the appropriate methods of imparting knowledge for character development, and Kireet's study is complementary in this purpose. Kireet (2008, 113) advocates for the use of sports and Yoga as experiences that have a positive effect on the character of learners in school. However, Yoga is a practice commonly associated with Buddhism found in the Oriental world. Consequently, Kenya's educational programme can only apply Kireet's views on the use of sports for character development.

According to Njoroge and Benaars (1986), the world is fascinated by utility and practical sense, by efficiency and accountability, by management and control, and the educational enterprise is often perceived and evaluated accordingly. The level of scientific discovery and technological innovations in countries are the recognized measures of the success or failure of the educational enterprise. The role of education in character development cannot be sacrificed on the altar of material development. Njoroge and Benaars further recommend that practitioners of the education enterprise apply the philosophy of education to think logically, systematically, consistently and clearly about educational challenges. Therefore, it is the position of this study that the benefits relating to education insofar as character development is concerned must be analyzed and explanation for failure or success provided. A serious engagement by schools in character development will necessitate structured monitoring of the effectiveness of the methods of teaching. Ultimately, this evaluation will encourage ongoing research into the curriculum design of teaching for character development. This is part of the objective of this study.

Ing'ule (1996) recognized the role of the school in the shaping of character through the creation of a healthy emotional atmosphere using effective teaching methods. Ing'ule (1996) further appreciated that the school environment plays a role in molding the child's character. It is in the school where the process of personality development is continued, where dislikes, stereotypes, expectations and emotional behavior are molded (Ing'ule 1996, 125).

Salia (1989) observed that every parent wants their children to grow up into sociable, honest and persevering adults. Salia found out that one way of achieving the development of character is by instruction in elementary social, moral and religious codes, through folklore and through religious rituals.

In a paper presented at an annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago in 1991, Clarken was of the view that character education involves excellence in all fields, including intellectual and physical development. Interest in the provision of character education is exemplified by the high numbers of leading thinkers and social commentators who have become concerned about character development. This has been prompted by the increase in the moral breakdown in the society. Statistics regarding crime, suicide, unplanned births and other social problems have increased dramatically in the recent times. The teaching of character development is a response to these problems (Clarken 1991). The prevalence of the negative attributes associated with the youth justifies the need to find solutions to such social challenges. The present study is an effort in this direction.

2.5. Pragmatic approaches to character development

According to Patrick (2001), the word pragmatism is from the Greek word having almost the meaning of the English word 'active' or 'efficient'. One therefore at once understands that the spirit of pragmatism is to emphasize what is practical, efficient, fruitful, or satisfying. Pragmatism is the philosophy of action, of doing, experimenting, or overcoming. The pragmatist does not think of the world as ready-made, perfect or something to be enjoyed, contemplated or worshipped. Pragmatism opposes the traditional philosophical view that the truth of ideas is a property independent of human experiences. Philosophers such as Plato held that a theory was true absolutely, whether anyone knew it or not. On the other hand, the pragmatists contend that the only reason people have for calling one view true and another false is that the one works in human experience and the other does not. The pragmatist looks at the world as something to be made or made over when need arises. This philosophy is less interested in the world of the Cosmos, or the astronomical Universe, the world which the physical sciences try to penetrate. It is the human world, the social world, the industrial world, the world of human affairs which holds his attention. Due to the continuous change in character traits from society to society and from region to region, there is need to apply pragmatic theory in the process of designing education strategies.

It is the position of Brennan (1999, 16) that to be in line with the pragmatic theory, the curriculum should be learner-centered. It should also be reviewed as the needs of the

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learner evolve over time. Reality changes constantly, hence what is taught in school should be built around natural units which grow out of the pressing questions and experiences of the learner. The school experience of the learner should be treated as part of life rather than a preparation for life in the future. The function of the school should be to teach students to manage change. The methods of teaching for character development are as important as the subject matter. To the pragmatist since the only human reality is experience, the school should carefully define the nature of experience and establish certain criteria for evaluating outcomes. Thus for the pragmatist, education is a continuous, dynamic and open ended life long process that should contribute to the child's growth. This study explores the effectiveness of the pragmatic theory as a basis of appropriate methodology for character development in schools.

A method that subscribes to pragmatism in school will be one that has inbuilt flexibility, with the curriculum providing for the changes in the moral and social environment of the learners. This study aimed to test the applicability of the pragmatic theory to the purpose of character development in Kenya's education system.

2.6. Character development through education: a Kenyan perspective

According to Sifuna and Otiende (2006), character development driven by formal educational institutions was introduced in Kenya by missionaries linked to the Catholic and Anglican churches. Kenya's formal education was influenced by these missionary groups which established schools whose aim was to enable the African natives acquire

skills for reading the Bible and other liturgical literature. The Catholic schools, for example, offered the 3Rs that is basic reading, writing and arithmetic to the learners. A part from the 3Rs, the other subjects taught were life skills which included hygiene and technical skills. These schools run by the missionaries had a profound influence on the students, especially in terms of their faith formation and personal discipline. The main focus of these schools was evangelization, and any character that to the church deserved attention was that which could strengthen the student's religious belief. Simultaneously the Moslems were also organizing their religious activities around the Madrassa schools.

Nevertheless, the level of indiscipline in schools remained high. Apparently the methods of teaching produce the desired results. The guidance and counseling programme was exposed only to specific students found to be having discipline problems. The many cases of immorality perpetrated by students in schools in Kenya made it necessary for a deliberate attempt at providing structured methods of shaping character (Ajowi and Simatwa 2010, 264).

Mugambi (2006, 28) notes that serious concern for a formal shaping of character in Kenya was witnessed after independence. The new independent government recognized the role the schools could play in the character development of the learners. Various education reform documents dealt at length with the institutionalization of character development. At least two commissions on education reform, The Gachathi and the Kamunge Commissions recommended that one of the ways of shaping the character of the learners was through the establishment of Guidance and Counseling departments in schools. It was suggested that

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religious education and social education and ethics, should be fused with guidance and counseling, to enable schools promote the growth of self-discipline among students.

A course on moral education was proposed for inclusion to complement the efforts of the church sponsored Religious Education syllabi in line with the recommendations of the Gachathi Report. This was however misinterpreted as a strategy to craftily drive Religious Education out of the school curriculum. Religious Education and moral education came to be viewed as competing rather than supporting one another. In the end a new syllabus, Social Education and Ethics, was born. Social Education and Ethics became examinable in secondary school as an option to Christian Religious Education (CRE), Islamic Religious Education (IRE), or Hindu Religious Education (HRE). This was to be the arrangement when the 8.4.4 curriculum was introduced at the secondary level (Mugambi 2003, 26).

Furthermore, in the year 2004 the government of Kenya came up with a policy framework for education. This Sessional paper was geared towards meeting the challenges of education, training and research in Kenya in the 21st Century. Chapter 3 of this paper dealt with the Philosophy, Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives of education and training. The paper asserted that the development, management, organization and delivery of education and training services should be guided by the philosophy of education and training for social cohesion. It also stated that the focus of the various sub-sectors of education should be on the provision of holistic education and training that develops both the cognitive and affective domains. The paper states, "Quality and relevant education and training for Kenya must also address emerging challenges such as respect for human rights, drug/substance abuse, corruption, violence, and social exclusion" (Government of Kenya

2004,21). This was a manifestation of the importance the government attaches to character development.

Oduor (1990, 225) identifies Religious ethics as one of the sources of the Social Education and Ethics programme in Kenyan schools. He notes that Christian and Islamic ethics point to the need for moral ideals in the individual's moral development, and that these two religious ethics make a useful contribution towards meeting   this need. He further recognizes the challenges posed by the ethical plurality in Kenya, but submits that this need not be a set back to the character development efforts in Kenyan schools, whose basis is rationality and applicability. This study appropriately identifies Social Education and Ethics as one of the main subjects that should be employed in the efforts towards character development in Kenyan schools. This study therefore complements Oduor's work in the area of the content of Social Education and Ethics.

Kahigi (2003) also identified the manifestation of deviance in schools in Kenya as the breaking of school rules. These cases are indications of the failure of the education system to manage the character of the learners. The attempts made to use Guidance and counseling to develop character did not succeed. Consequently, other methods of developing character should be tried (Kahigi 2003, 1). This is the lacuna that this study setout to address.

2.7. Summary and Conclusion of the Literature review

In the foregoing review, the concept of education as expounded by Peters (1967), Huitt (2004), and Battistich (2008) was analyzed. Furthermore, the relevance of the pragmatic theory to character development in schools was examined. Some methods of teaching for character development were highlighted in this chapter. Finally the development of character through Kenya's education system over the years was explained. From the foregoing, it is clear that studies on character development are agreed on the potential of educational institutions to influence character development. The search for appropriate pedagogic strategies for character development is on-going. This research set out to propose an approach that can guide the education theory and practice so that the right character among learners in schools in Kenya is developed. From the literature reviewed above, it is clear that there is need for further research on character development through education with focus on Kenya.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study. The study was based on the pragmatic theory of education. Pragmatism as a philosophical movement was concerned more with real problems of life and practicability of ideas than with abstract philosophical issues. It was founded by Charles Sanders Peirce and gained popularity through William James. It was applied to education for the first time by John Dewey (Hookway 2013).

Following John Dewey, this study relied on the pragmatic theory of education as a rationale for a method of teaching suitable for character development in Kenyan schools. John Dewey held the view that education should not consist of imposing a mass of facts on the minds of the students. Instead, it should equip them with problem solving skills. The pragmatic theory recognizes the learner as the centre of the educational enterprise and also identifies the "cash value" of education. "Cash value" here means that the education enterprise is expected to bring about tangible results in the students through the process of learning (Dewey 1938, 67).

3.2. The Pragmatic theory of education

According to Patrick (2001, 115), the word pragmatism comes from Greek, having a meaning similar to that of the English word "efficient". Pragmatism is the philosophy of action, doing, experimenting and overcoming. According to pragmatism, the world is not to be thought of as ready-made, perfect, or something to be enjoyed, contemplated or worshipped, but rather something to be made to fit the needs of the moment through adaptation and manipulation.

John Dewey was critical towards the theory of education of the America of his time. On the basis of pragmatism, he developed progressivism, a philosophy of education with emphasis on change and democracy. Progressivism was critical of the approach in education in America that regarded the teacher as the sole authority in the classroom, forcing learners to abide by a rigid system of rules and regulations. Progressivism recognized learners' ability to construct their own methods of solving problems (Dewey 1990).

The pragmatic theory of education is a philosophical position that practical consequences are the criteria of knowledge, meaning and value. It proceeds from the assumption that the world of experience, accessible to scientific enquiry, is all that can be known, and propositions and acts have meaning only in terms of their verifiable public consequences (Njoroge and Benaars 1986, 38).

Pragmatism looks forward to results rather than backward to the first principles. Everything has to be judged by its consequences. Any idea, theory, or dispute which does

not make a difference in its practical consequences for human beings ceases at once to have any significance (Patrick 2001, 366). According to Njoroge and Benaars (1986, 46), the pragmatic theory of education holds that true knowledge can only be found within ordinary experience as the individual interacts with the environment. Through this interaction, one's personality is formed. According to pragmatists, children learn through experience by exploring the environment. The pragmatic theory of education espouses the value of child-centeredness and method centeredness in the pedagogical process.

In view of the fact that the authoritarian method is dominant in Kenyan schools, this study utilizes the pragmatic theory of education to develop a practicable method of teaching for character development. Working from a pragmatic perspective, Brennan (1967) proposed six principles to guide the method and product of the education process. These principles are relevant to education for character development. These are:

(1) The process of education finds its genesis and purpose in the child.

(2) Learners are active and not passive.

(3) The teacher's role is that of an advisor: a guide, a fellow traveler, rather than an authoritarian classroom director.

(4) Since the school is a microcosm of the larger society, learning ought to be integrated within life's chores.

(5) Classroom activity ought to focus on solving problems.

(6) The social atmosphere of the school ought to be cooperative and democratic.

These six principles are emphatic on the role of the child in the learning process. With regard to education for character development, the learner ought to be at the centre of the process. Various subjects and experiences in school ought to be designed to develop learners' character. The school is a microcosm of the society, and the learners' character ought to be developed so that they can fit into the school's social environment. The child is supposed to see the relevance of his/her life in the present rather than at some future date, and to integrate the fragmented pieces of learning on his/her own (Brennan 1999, 4).

In sum, this study employed the pragmatic theory of education to evaluate the teaching method for character development currently in use in Kenyan schools, with a view to gaining insight into ways of addressing the shortcomings therein entailed.

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Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the main philosophical method used for this study, namely, the critical method is discussed. The methods that supplemented the critical method are the historical method and the phenomenological method. According to Oduor (2010), there is considerable overlapping among the methods used in philosophy, and several of them may be simultaneously applied to a single study. The critical method is applied in this study to assess the current status of the process of character development in Kenyan schools. This is undertaken with the view to formulating a practicable strategy for character development through education in Kenyan schools.

4.2. The Critical Method

According to Njoroge and Bennaars (1986, 24), the critical method in philosophical inquiry is based on a questioning attitude. Socrates, the great philosopher, is considered to be the father of this method. The critical method is characterized by reflective thinking. It

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is a process of searching for the basis of beliefs. It does not encourage the taking of any idea or phenomenon for granted. As a method of inquiry, the critical method encourages honesty of thought, and seeks to protect people from fanaticism, intolerance and dogmatism (Njoroge and Bennaars 1986, 24).

The term critique is derived from the Greek verb *Krinein*, which means to judge (Njoroge and Bennaars 1986, 24). To provide a philosophical critique is not a matter of assessing something in a negative manner; rather, it involves evaluating a problem through careful reflection. It is possible to analyze character development through education in Kenya in philosophical terms because the country's education system has been designed in line with the Western education system, and the West has had a profound influence on technical philosophy.

The critical method focuses on the need to examine a claim from all possible perspectives, with a view to ascertaining its truth or applicability with the highest degree of objectivity possible within the confines of human finitude and objectivity. The critical method identifies and evaluates arguments. It is a way of searching for meaning and truth. Accordingly, a philosopher may prescribe what ought to be done when people are facing a crisis. In this study we speak of prescriptive philosophy with reference to the task of providing guidance in values. This prescriptive task is closely linked with the critical function of philosophy (Njoroge and Bennaars 1986, 25). This is due to the fact that in the process of assessing phenomena, recommendations will usually be offered.

The Critical method is also concerned with problem solving: it proceeds by encouraging awareness of problems, keeping one's mind open to a variety of solutions, and breaking problems into smaller units for ease of management. It broadens and deepens insight and sharpens focus on issues (Njoroge and Bennaars 1986, 23). The Critical method is adequately expressed by Fuller's definition of philosophy as a reflective and reasoned attempt to infer the character and content of the universe, taken in its entirety and as a single whole, from an observation and study of the data presented by all its aspects (Fuller 1955, 1).

This study employs the critical method to evaluate the strategy used for character development in Kenyan schools with a view to recommending a workable alternative in line with the pragmatic theory of education. It analyses the subjects offered in schools for this purpose, namely, Religious Education and Social Education and Ethics.

4.3. Phenomenological Method

Phenomenology is a 20th Century method in philosophical study, founded by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). As a method of inquiry in philosophy, it studies the structure of experience or consciousness. In other words, it studies things as they appear in our experience and the meaning that they have in that experience (Smith 2011, 239). Phenomenology starts from ordinary human experience,because it is through experience that we interact with the world around us. According to Njoroge and Bennaars (1986, 26), philosophers use the term "phenomenon" to mean something that appears to us through

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experience. Njoroge and Bennaars (1986, 27) also point out that the way things appear to someone, that is, the way one perceives or experiences happenings, may differ from the way they appear to others. Phenomenology envisages situations where one must try to come to terms with the most basic, yet most common, human experience of things in everyday life such as pain, fear or frustration. By reflecting on such basic human experiences, the phenomenologist can explain them not in abstract terms, but in concrete, existential terms, indicating the manner in which they affect human lives. In short, phenomenology is a philosophical reflection on ordinary human experience that is considered and reconsidered in the light of fundamental human values (Njoroge and Bennaars 1986, 26).

According to Cohen (1994, 30), the aim of phenomenology is the dismembering of the constitution of objects in such a way as to free human beings from all the preconceptions of the world. Cohen further notes that phenomenology helps to build up knowledge by means of which we are able to typify other peoples' behaviour and come to terms with social reality which varies from situation to situation. Bennaars (1984) equated phenomenology with reflective philosophy that helps to arrive at a deeper insight into the essence and significance of all that constitutes people's world, that is, their culture, science, law and education. The phenomenological method is not concerned with providing abstract definitions of things; rather, it searches for the meaning of things within the human context (Bennaars 1984, 29).

Character development has a profound impact on people's experience, and since it is the main concern of this study, the use of the phenomenological method, with its focus on

experience, is relevant to the study. The practice of education touches greatly on human experience. Education prepares people to serve a purpose in the society. The conduct of members of any society has a great impact on the institutions of the said society. For example, manifestations of moral decay such as drug abuse, theft and murder negatively affect people. As such, there cannot be harmony in any society where character development is not given priority. The phenomenological method is employed in this study to gain insight into the challenges of moral decay in Kenya, and how character development in schools can be used to address them.

4.4. The Historical Method

The historical method provides a chronological and systematic body of knowledge that enables one to understand what happened in educational thought in the past. It enables an educational philosopher to understand the origin of educational objectives in a Country. According to Mwendwa (2011, 39), the historical method helps to illuminate the practices that have evolved over time, and to highlight the fact that what we consider new departures in education are really only statements of ideas that go back Centuries.

This study, by using the historical method, analyses the way John Dewey developed and applied the pragmatic theory of education to America in the 20th Century, and to investigate the relevance of his philosophical ideas on education to present day Kenya. The historical method is also used here to link the various economic, sociological and political

changes in Kenya in the past to the changes that have been witnessed in character development strategies in the country's schools.

Through the historical method, an appreciation of educational traditions can be developed to become the basis for more informed educational reforms. This method puts the study at a vantage point from where to evaluate the practicability of new teaching methods (Ozmon *et. al.* 1995, 78). This study traces the path of character development through education in Kenya over the years. This is done due to the fact that a meaningful evaluation of the current practice in education can only be complete if the history of Kenya's education policy is understood.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology applied in this study to gather and evaluate philosophical ideas. It has indicated that the main method employed is the critical method, supplemented by the phenomenological and historical methods. These methods have been employed in this study in the light of the observation by Bennaars (1984) that the methods of philosophical research are distinct from each other yet they are inter-related.

Chapter 5: A Pragmatic Perspective of Character Development through Education in Kenyan Schools

5.1. Introduction

In chapter one, we indicated that the main objective of this study is to develop a practicable method for character development in schools in Kenya. In this chapter, we discuss the employment of the pragmatic theory of education as a philosophical foundation for character development in schools in Kenya. We pay particular attention to the use of the content of the Social Education and Ethics programme and that of Religious Education in this endeavour. Employing the methods of philosophical inquiry discussed in chapter four(the critical, phenomenological and historical methods), we attempt to provide a rationale for the pragmatic theory of education as a basis for character development in Kenyan schools. The threats that the current character development strategy in schools is facing are also discussed.

This study agrees with Chukwu (2002) that the task of philosophy is to take a critical approach with a view to providing suggestions on strategies for solving problems. To achieve this, philosophy takes the results of the sciences, adds to them the results of

religious and ethical experiences of mankind, and then utilizes all this to reflect upon the world (Chukwu 2002, 36- 37). For the purposes of this study, the arena of the philosophical activity is in the school, which is an important agent of the society in the character development enterprise.

5.2. The School as an Agent of Character Development

Philosophers view education as a process of inculcating culture in the youth. In his *Pedagogic Creed* (1897), John Dewey defined education as a continuing reconstruction of experience. Writing in *Experience and education* (1938), Dewey described education as an intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience. Dewey saw education as the reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience (Sifuna 1994, 122).

According to Dewey (1910, 20), knowledge comes through the process of experience by intelligence, using the problem solving method. The aim of education is therefore the development of learners' ability to solve problems. The school must be an extension of the home, so that the children can relate their experiences both at school and at home. The school is a specialized agency set up by the society to facilitate the acquisition of experience by the child. This makes the process of learning more economical, faster and more thorough. Dewey (1970, 30) also described the school as a social institution. He posited that the school is a form of community life, in which all those agencies are

concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of their race and to use its own power for social ends.

Thus it is clear that the school is an important agent of character development.

5.3. Application of the Pragmatic Theory of Education to Character Development in Kenyan Schools

As earlier stated, this study adopted the pragmatic theory of education as its theoretical framework. One important tenet of that theory is that knowledge can only be acquired in the context of ordinary experience, as the individual interacts with the environment. It is also through such interaction that one's personality is formed. Thus from this perspective, children's character develops through experience, including interaction with their teachers.

According to Hicks (1991, 35), children learn well by exploring their environment. He further submits that in line with the pragmatic theory of education, the best method through which children's learning needs can be met is one that is child-centered. Given that the key concepts in the pragmatic theory of education are experience and growth, active inquiry and freedom, as well as creativity, teachers can rely on it for the learners' character development.

For Akinpelu (1980, 144), human beings are organisms that cannot exist without interacting with the environment. Furthermore, pragmatism describes the human person as

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a living organism which has desires, interests and needs. People are social animals whose interests are well promoted while living in harmony with other social beings. In the school environment, learners need to interact with one another for mutual benefit, hence the need for morally desirable character to regulate such interaction.

As pointed out in Chapter Three, the pragmatic theory of education puts emphasis on what is practical, efficient and fruitful. In line with this theory, we have selected Religious Education and Social Education and Ethics as important means to character development in school because of their content which revolves around the social environment of the learners. As Akinpelu (1980) writes of the human person, the world is in the making, and he/she wants to know how to make it better, that it may serve his/her interest.

There is a connection between the pragmatic concept of truth and its notion of goodness. Since truth is that which works or yields satisfactory results in terms of our experience, what is true in these terms turns out to be what is profitable for us to believe in, or what is good. The pragmatist's method of determining what is good, or bad, or right or wrong is the same as that of determining whether an idea is true or false. Thus given a problem in human behaviour, we ask "would performing certain actions be right in order to solve a given problem?" Such is the challenge for the teachers who must find ways through which the learners can manipulate their social environment (Akinpelu 1980, 148). This study holds the view that Religious Education and Social Education and Ethics can help learners in the manipulation of the environment for character development in schools in Kenya. Furthermore, the content of these subjects is drawn from generally recognized sources, among them religious books as well as time-honoured social values.

The pragmatic theory of education provides that an educational system should develop effective methods of solving problems (Popkin and Stroll 1986, 121). Moral decay, which is a major challenge in Kenya's educational system, requires constant attention. The learners should be prepared to make adequate adjustments to the environment, as this will help them solve problems in the social world. In line with the pragmatic theory of education, this study recommends that the teaching of Social Education and Ethics and Religious Education be given priority in Kenyan schools with the aim of enhancing efforts at character development. The reflections below suggest how the pragmatic theory of education can be employed in Kenyan schools to develop appropriate approaches to character development.

5.4. Enhancing the Pedagogy of the Social Education and Ethics Programme in Kenyan Schools

Tripathi (2009, 123) defines ethics as the evolution of the principles for making moral judgment. He further observes that the principles of deciding why an action is moral, the factors that influence the making of moral judgments, the constraints and limits to moral understanding are in the domain of ethics. Thus for him ethics is the science of morality. Tripathi goes on to point out that one of the most troublesome problems of contemporary life is the pervasive crisis of values occasioned by an outlook of life which is dominated by avarice, selfishness, and social insensitivity. In other words, the world is witnessing

intellectual and moral decay. As Tripathi correctly observes, ethical enquiries acquire greater significance against this backdrop.

Oruka (1990, 2) defines ethics as a philosophical inquiry into moral language. He observes that a study in ethics equips young learners with the ability to undertake a critical analysis of the rationale for moral values. Furthermore, according to Oruka ethics can be regarded as a philosophical study concerned with the principles that govern the conduct of moral agents (people) in the society. Learners who have been exposed to ethics will resolve dilemmas that confront them in the course of their interaction both in school and in the society.

Consequently, the present study views Social Education and Ethics as holding the key to the success of character development in Kenyan schools. The Social Education and Ethics programme was developed to have an interdisciplinary approach drawing insights mainly from philosophy, psychology and history (Oduor 2010, 105). Knowledge from these fields will enable the learners regulate their interpersonal relationship in addition to understanding how to adjust to new environments. New social, cultural or political environments often pose challenges to people, and the teaching of Social Education and Ethics in school can help them adapt appropriately.

Buconyori (1993, 132), writing on the teaching of Social Education and Ethics for character development through education, recommends the use of Benjamin Bloom's pedagogical approach. According to Buconyori, the importance of Bloom's theory lies in its ability to help break down the subject content into smaller segments that address

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themselves to both the cognitive and affective domains of the learners. Bloom (1976, 101) identifies six levels of understanding, namely, knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This study recommends that Bloom's levels of understanding be deployed as a basis of teaching for character development in Kenyan schools.

This study is of the view that the first step in the process of developing desirable character traits is the acquisition of the mental ability (cognitive skill) to distinguish right from wrong. Yet it is from the realm of the affective domain that the influence on the learner to "love" to do the right thing operates. The interplay between the cognitive and affective domains must be borne in mind in any Social Education and Ethics class. The development of both the cognitive and affective skills by learners will be the result of a systematic arrangement of the learning experiences.

Following the recommendation of Buconyori (1993), below we present an illustration of the way in which Bloom's levels of understanding can be employed in a Social Education and Ethics (S.E.E) class to facilitate character development.

(a) Knowledge

At this level learners in a Social Education and Ethics (S.E.E) class are expected to recall specific facts. They have reached this level of understanding if they can remember the facts which were presented to them in class. For example, the learners should be able to name

the commonly abused drugs such as opium, cocaine and heroine to show that they are aware of the relevant information.

(b) Comprehension

Learners have reached this level of understanding if they can interpret or explain things. For example, using texture, colour or smell, they should be able to differentiate harmful drugs from those that have healing properties.

(c) Application

Learners correctly remember and put into practice abstractions in appropriate situations. For example, they can detect the destructive elements in the drugs meant to cure.

(d) Analysis

At this level, emphasis is laid on the breaking down of the learnt material into constituent parts. The learners also understand the relationship among the constituent parts. They recognize the unstated assumptions and distinguish facts from hypothesis. For example, learners who relate symptoms to the drug that has been abused have reached this level.

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(e) Synthesis

At this level, the learners are able to draw upon elements from many sources and to put them together into a structure or pattern which did not exist before. They are able to associate drug abuse in an urban area with the fact of illicit trade in drugs. They understand that drug traffickers find cities and towns to be lucrative markets, and that consumers look for drugs in the urban areas.

(f) Evaluation

At this level, learners are able to make judgments about the value of materials and ideas for given purposes using standards for appraising the extent to which such materials and ideas are effective. The learners have reached this level if they can isolate useful drugs from harmful drugs and avoid contact with the harmful ones. They are also able to get involved in campaigns against drug abuse.

As already stated in section 5.2 above, this study finds the Social Education and Ethics programme together with Religious Education to be important contributors to character development. The following section discusses how the latter subject can be employed in schools in Kenya for this purpose.

5.5. Enhancing the Pedagogy of Religious Education for Character Development in Kenyan Schools

Patrick (2001, 37) posits that religion is based on a deep, instinctive feeling of higher values, and involves being drawn to ultimate values by sympathy and recognition. Religious ideas and feelings focus on an ideal existence. Therefore the names, symbols, and persons of any religion are sacred or holy, because they are supreme values transcending common phenomena. Religious Education can make a special contribution to character development in schools by reinforcing the "do's" and "don'ts" in the society. It is also important to appreciate that Religious messages regarding standards for human behaviour are not different from those which depend on philosophical and humanistic sources (Hennessey 2007).

According to Tripathi (2009, 127), religious belief plays a significant role in the development of the individual. For him, religion has been the greatest force propelling civilization. Almost all world religions teach love, brotherhood and unity, and claim to be established for the promotion of justice and human welfare. Indeed, many Religions started as reform movements aimed at the moral and spiritual welfare of humankind. Many religions require individuals to rise above their biological and economic needs to pursue transcendental goals. Their belief systems and rituals have wide divergences, but their ethical teachings have a large measure of commonality. They have inspired generations to seek higher levels of ethical life, and have produced some of the finest gems of human

beings as Seers and Holy people, full of love and compassion for all living beings (Tripathi 2009, 127).

Such is the importance of religion, that serious study of it can contribute significantly to character development in Kenyan schools. Instruction in relevant aspects of religious history is important because both the negative and positive aspects of that history provide learners with guidance in values for harmonious existence in the society. The Biblical story of Ananias and Sapphira is a lasting lesson in honesty (Acts.5). But the irony of the Bible manifests in the story of the way Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers to Egyptian merchants. As if to prove that the end justifies the means, God uses this dishonest act by Joseph's brothers to show His mighty power by providing a safe haven in Egypt to the Israelites (Genesis 37-46). These two Biblical stories provide Religious Education teachers with the basis for evaluating meanings contained in what is read from the Holy Book. The objectives of Religious Education should revolve around values contained in such stories.

For Sifuna and Otiende (2006), God is the epitome of the highest morality in most religions, and therefore the moral ideal for human beings. Most religions uphold basic moral values such as truthfulness and kindness. The teaching of Religious Education in Kenyan schools has been in practice for many years. The Christian missionaries who established schools in Kenya at the close of the 19th century marked them out as places where religious belief could be propagated together with the teaching of basic skills in agriculture and hygiene. The Christian Missionaries encouraged Bible study in schools for evangelization. These lessons were conducted through preaching, songs, recital of liturgies

and prayer. The learners were allowed limited inquiry, debate or reflection. The goal of Religious Education then was the spread of the Christian faith. The teachers were authoritarian: they considered the learners to be a clean slate - a *tabula rasa* - on which they were supposed to "write" (Sifuna and Otiende 2006, 178-179).

This study is in agreement with Buconyori (1993, 30), who espoused the importance of Religious Education in school, and encouraged the integration of faith and learning. He emphasized that the Christian faith should be communicated in such a way that it influences the learner's total life. He argued that effective Christian education is redemptive, in the sense of liberating people from ignorance and destructive ways into knowledge and transformation. In line with the pragmatic theory of education, this study holds that learners can benefit from the teachings of the Bible, the Koran and other religious beliefs in their day to day activities in school. This theory looks at the ultimate benefit any activity has on individuals. If the learners will end up being honest, humble and considerate because of Religious Education in school, then this condition of the pragmatic theory of education would have been met. The learners should be encouraged to question the religious teachings: authoritarianism in the teaching of Religious Education ought to be avoided, as it discourages the development of critical thinking in learners.

Mugambi (1996, 12) observes that religion provides solutions that are relevant to real life situations. In particular, religion provides solutions to moral problems. Honesty, humility and faithfulness are the pillars of most religions, and these character traits should feature in Religious Education in school. These are also character traits that are universally admired.

Consequently, Religious Education should be viewed as an important subject in Kenyan schools which can be offered to all learners, their religious persuasions notwithstanding.

The teaching of Religious Education should be handled in such a manner that the learners' character is influenced at every level. It should be based on the pragmatic theory of education, and learners should be encouraged to evaluate and apply the knowledge.

Most Religious Education teachers prefer conducting their teaching through methods which are teacher centered. They insist on memorization by the learners (Hennessey 2007). It is the position of this study that Religious Education teachers in Kenya should embrace the methods of teaching well known to modern professionals such as field study, use of visual materials and the Socratic method (questions and answers), thus enabling the learners to participate effectively in the learning process.

According to Hennessey (2007, 212), the use of visual materials as a teaching methodology is greatly assisted by modern technological advancement. Computers allow for reproduction of art masterpieces. Film strips and educational video recordings are available for the illustration of important religious concepts and artifacts. Visual material on the Sacrament, religious shrines, missionary activities, religions of various people and religious art can have a lasting effect on learners. Consideration of the age and academic level of the learners, as well as the correctness of the printed and electronic content is crucial.

Every effort must be made to add flavor to the teaching environment, especially where religious education is concerned, through the use of drama. Dramatizing incidents in the

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lives of exemplary figures in the history of religion can be inspiring. Along this line of thought, Oduor (1990, 225) recommends that a study of the biographies of known moral ideals as Jesus, Mohammad, Socrates and Mahatma Gandhi be included in the Social Education and Ethics syllabus. In addition, there are many heroic religious figures today whose stories can be incorporated into religious education programmes. The lives of such religious figures as Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King, Jr. are as appropriate as are the stories of figures in the Holy Scriptures. In doing this, the religious education teachers should choose illustrations with which young people can identify.

Whether the teacher uses the lecture method or a video tape in class, it is important that such a lesson be concluded with a question and answer or discussion session. This will allow the teacher to respond to any intellectual challenges and to clarify any obscure facts, thus encouraging the internalization of the religious education messages. Such discussions can be conducted through small class groups. The group leaders then conclude the sessions with a summary of view points and any new knowledge attained. In these discussions, the teacher can also explain his or her personal understanding of the topic and its significance in his or her life, thereby becoming a role model to the learners.

Fieldwork is by far the best example of a teaching method modeled along the provisions of the pragmatic theory of education. The learners are able to "live" the learning in the field, while applying the skills learnt in class. Thus Religious Education programmes should incorporate a segment of fieldwork, which can be employed to involve the learners in real life experiences, and to test their cognitive skills as they relate to character development.

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For example, supervised fieldwork programmes could be organized to facilitate the learning of the virtue of service to others.

5.6. Threats to Character Development in Kenyan Schools

Although both the Social Education and Ethics programme and Religious Education have the great potential to facilitate character development in Kenyan schools, the endeavor to help Kenyan children to grow morally faces at least three threats.

First, the current system of education in Kenya is exam oriented, and also aims at securing the best grades in science and technology subjects. One of the main objectives of education in Kenya is the preparation of the youth for employment. Parents today demand of teachers good grades and high chances of advancement to higher levels of education. They are not interested in subjects that do not count in job placement in the   fields of science and technology. Consequently, the Social Education and Ethics programme and Religious Education are not given the prominence they   deserve.

Second, according to Injendi (2009), globalization and scientific discoveries have continued to undermine Religious beliefs. Interest in Religion has waned among the youth, who demand for a pragmatic approach to the emerging social and economic challenges. Consequently,   Religious Education and the Social Education and Ethics programme, both key areas for character development, are not given much attention.

Third, Christianity is a dominant Religious group in Kenya and has a high number of denominations, sects and cults. These fragments all claim to represent the truth of the gospel, but most of them are intolerant of the interpretation of the others. For Hennessey (2007, 216), the major schism in the history of Christianity occurred because the dominant Christian groups were not willing to concede that the gospel was subject to many interpretations. In the past Roman Catholics persecuted Protestants, Christians mistreated Jews, Moslems and Christians assaulted each other, and various Moslem sects warred against each other. Today the picture is not different, as there are squabbles within and among denominations and sects all professing to be Christian.

Furthermore, there are many cases of the regular church-going person who is a corrupting force in politics, or whose decisions are influenced by bribery. Furthermore, the many cases of professing believers who demonstrate racial or other prejudice, obtain a divorce and remarry, seek abortions, or cheat in schoolwork usually lead to the conclusion that there is no feature that distinguishes believers from unbelievers. This raises doubts as to whether religion and religious education can be a sound basis for character development in Kenyan schools.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter has offered a rationale for the deployment of the pragmatic theory of education as a basis for the development of an effective method for character development in Kenyan schools. It has examined the role of the school as an agent of character

development, with focus on the central role of the Social Education and Ethics programme and Religious Education in this endeavour. It has illustrated the application of Benjamin Bloom's theory of Levels of Understanding to the teaching of Social Education and Ethics. Furthermore, it has presented the teaching of Religious Education by use of fieldwork and discussion methods as options to the lecture method. Finally, it has highlighted several threats to character development in Kenyan schools. In conclusion, the pragmatic theory of education is a sound basis for developing an effective pedagogical strategy for character development in schools.

Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, we present a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

6.2. Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which the pragmatic theory of education can be applied to the process of character development in Kenyan schools. We note that the teaching of the Social Education and Ethics programme and Religious Education, both of which are important subjects for character development in schools, has failed to impact positively on the learners' character. This failure is evident in rampant immoral behavior and attitudes of learners in Kenyan schools such as strikes, drug abuse and lack of respect for teachers. The failure is attributable to the methods employed for character development in schools, thus the need for a new approach to this important endeavor.

Consequently, the study had two objectives:

    (a) To critically examine the impact of the strategies adopted in the Kenyan education system in the effort to develop students' character.

    (b) To assess the extent to which the pragmatic theory of education can contribute to character development among students in Kenyan schools.

Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study. It presents the background to the study, research problem, scope of the study, research objectives, research questions, justification of the study, and structure of the study.

Chapter 2 examines the literature related to the objectives of the study, and notes that there has been some research done on the problem of character development in Kenyan schools. However, it concludes that no comprehensive research has been carried out on a suitable method for character development in these schools.

Chapter 3 provides a rationale for the choice of the pragmatic theory of education as a theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 4 explains the way in which the study employs the critical, phenomenological and historical   methods of philosophic inquiry to gather and analyze relevant information.

Chapter 5 assesses the suitability of the pragmatic theory of education as a philosophical basis for an effective method of character development in Kenyan schools. In the light of the tenets of the pragmatic theory of education, we observe, in Chapter Five, that workable pedagogical strategies should be employed to help learners acquire relevant moral traits of

character. In particular, we suggest the application of Benjamin Bloom's levels of understanding to the teaching of the content of the Social Education and Ethics programme. On the other hand, we recommend the use of fieldwork and visual aids as teaching methods for Religious Education.

Furthermore, in Chapter 5, we propose the employment of the pragmatic theory of education in the process of character development in Kenyan schools. This would be a response to the need for adopting a pedagogical strategy appropriate for the teaching of the content of the Social Education and Ethics programme and that of Religious Education. One major advantage of the pragmatic theory of education is its potential to direct the practice of education away from an authoritative instructional approach towards a learner-centered method which proceeds from the children's unique experiences. The tenets of the pragmatic theory of education reject a pedagogy in which knowledge is removed from experience, and instead advocates one in which facts are fused with experience, thereby equipping learners with skills to overcome the challenges they face in the social environment.

6.3. Conclusions

This study found no notable success in the government of Kenya's initiatives to employ an effective method for character development through education. As was highlighted in chapter one, this failure is manifested by the prevalence of immoral activities such as strikes and substance abuse by learners in schools.

We noted that the Social Education and Ethics programme and Religious Education, both of which are important subjects for character development, are not given the prominence they deserve in the school time-table. One of the reasons for this is the high premium put on the science and technology subjects at the expense of the socially-oriented subjects in Kenyan schools. Furthermore, the teaching method employed in the Social Education and Ethics programme as well as in Religious Education is authoritarian, allowing little room for inquiry and debate by learners.

6.4. Recommendations

Based on its findings, this study arrived at the following recommendations:

(a) Morally undesirable character traits have a negative effect on the society. This is reflected in the high number of schools that are closed due to student riots in Kenyan schools. The high number of students who engage in immoral activities is an indication that uncontrolled character has a negative impact on the society's moral fabric. Consequently, there is need for the development of character through an effective pedagogical strategy, thereby promoting social harmony in the country.

(b) Practicable methods are applied to the teaching of the Social Education and Ethics programme and Religious Education. We recommend pedagogical strategies designed in line with the tenets of the pragmatic theory of education, as these will help in the realization of this goal.

6.5. Areas for further research

Based on the objectives, scope and limitation of this study, we suggest further research in the following areas:

(i)   In line with the tenets of the pragmatic theory of education, this study has reflected on a pedagogical strategy that employs a student-centered approach to character development in Kenyan schools. There is need for further research to enhance this strategy through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in the learning process.

(ii)   This study has relied on the critical, phenomenological and historical methods of philosophic inquiry. There is need for further research into the pedagogy of character development in Kenyan schools using other approaches to philosophic inquiry such as the analytic and hermeneutical methods.

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