

Knowledge and Application of Values among Learners in Primary and Secondary Schools Kenya

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Abstract

Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF), emphasizes core values such as integrity, respect, and social justice. Despite this focus, there is a concern about the limited awareness and application of these values among learners, leading to a broader issue of inadequate value-based education. The objective of the study was to examine the knowledge and application of values among learners in primary and secondary schools in Kenya, focusing on the curriculum's role in nurturing ethical behavior and responsible citizenship. The study employed a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from schools across 24 counties, targeting school administrators, teachers, learners, and key informants. The sample included head teachers, teachers, learners, and stakeholders from various community sectors. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview schedules, and focus group discussions, with pre-testing to ensure reliability and validity. The main findings revealed that the majority of learners had limited awareness of core values, with integrity (39.9%) and respect (33.3%) being the most recognized. Despite this, learners identified several practical scenarios where they applied values, such as cleaning school compounds and respecting school rules. Teachers emerged as the most significant influencers of learners' values, followed by parents, while head teachers and relatives had a lesser impact. The study also noted that, while teachers and key informants generally agreed on the importance of nurturing values, there was uncertainty about the community's role in promoting them. In conclusion, the study indicates a need for a more integrated approach to value-based education. Recommendations include strengthening the curriculum to emphasize value-based learning, enhancing teacher training, fostering school-community partnerships, promoting consistent reinforcement of values, and implementing ongoing assessment and evaluation mechanisms.

Keywords: Value-based Education, Core Values, Character Development, Ethical Behavior, Primary and Secondary Schools, Curriculum Framework, Basic Education Curriculum, School-Community Partnerships, Influencers of Values, Integrity and Respect, Kenya Education System.

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INTRODUCTION

Values-based education is fundamental to developing responsible and ethical citizens, a key tenet of the Constitution of Kenya (2010), which outlines values such as responsibility, respect, honesty, and trustworthiness. These values are crucial for achieving a stable and progressive nation. To promote these values from an early age, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) embedded them in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) of 2017. This framework emphasizes character development and ethical citizenship, creating pathways that help learners identify their potential and develop skills in a variety of

fields (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017).

Given the rich history of sports in Kenya, which is renowned for its achievements in athletics, volleyball, rugby, and cricket, the importance of values-based education is clear. However, the success in sports has occasionally been marred by doping scandals, indicating a need for instilling core values at an early age. Doping, the use of prohibited substances to enhance performance, poses risks to athletes' health and undermines the integrity of sports. Despite various anti-doping programs, the problem persists, indicating a gap in

education and understanding of ethical conduct in sports (Murray, 2011).

The Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK) has taken measures to address these issues through education and awareness campaigns. However, these efforts are often short-lived, leading to a continued prevalence of doping among athletes. The partnership between ADAK and KICD aimed to introduce Values-Based Education (VBE) into both primary and secondary schools through a whole-school approach. This approach involves all stakeholders, including learners, educators, and the broader community, emphasizing the formal, non-formal, and informal dimensions of education (Onywera, 2015).

By integrating VBE into the curriculum, learners can be exposed to positive values early on, promoting ethical behavior and reducing the temptation to use performance-enhancing substances. This study on knowledge and application of values among learners in Kenyan schools aims to assess the effectiveness of current programs and identify areas for improvement. It will guide the implementation of VBE in schools and inform anti-doping policies to curb the growing number of doping cases in Kenyan sports (Kimathi *et al.*, 2017).

This research holds significance for various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, KICD, and ADAK. The findings offers insights into how values-based education can be implemented to address the underlying issues contributing to doping and unethical behavior in sports. It also guides policy decisions to ensure that learners develop strong moral foundations, leading to a more ethical society and fairer sports competitions (Kikuri *et al.*, 2019). By providing a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge and application of values among learners, this study will help create a foundation for nurturing responsible and ethical citizens, thereby reducing the instances of doping and fostering a culture of fairness and integrity in Kenyan sports.

METHODS

Study Design

The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. It utilized a cross-sectional survey design, allowing the

collection of data at a single point in time from a broad population sample. This approach enabled the capturing of a diverse range of perspectives from the target population concerning the importance of values in the educational system and the sports arena.

Target Population

The target population for the study included school administrators (principals and head teachers), teachers, and learners from both primary and secondary schools across Kenya. Additionally, the study targeted Ministry of Education field education officers, county administrators, religious leaders, agency representatives, parents, and guardians. This broad target population provided a comprehensive perspective on the role of values in education and sports.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used a multistage sampling procedure to select a representative sample. Gender balance was considered during sampling to ensure equal representation. The sampling process was stratified based on geographical and demographic characteristics, with counties with strong sports traditions receiving a higher proportion of the sample. A total of 24 counties were identified through stratified sampling, with each stratum containing counties with similar geographical and demographic features.

Within each stratum, a proportionate sampling approach was applied. In each county, three primary schools, three secondary schools, and one Special Needs Education (SNE) institution were purposively selected with assistance from County Directors of Education (CDEs). The schools were chosen based on their sporting achievements to ensure a diverse and relevant sample. In each school, the head teachers, along with two teachers involved in sports leadership, were included in the study. A random sample of 8-10 learners was selected using a table of random numbers. Additional key respondents, including Ministry of Education officers, county sports administrators, religious leaders, and parents/guardians, were also sampled at random.

Table 1 outlines the sampling frame, detailing the distribution of respondents across regions and zones, including the number of head teachers, teachers, learners, focus group discussions (FGDs), and other stakeholders involved in the study.

Table of sampling frame

Region/zone	Counties	Head Trs	Teachers	Learners	Learners FGDs	Other stakeholders
Rift valley	6	48	96	144	48	24
Eastern	4	24	48	72	24	14
Central	3	21	42	63	21	12
Western	4	24	48	72	24	14
Nyanza	4	24	48	72	24	14
Coast	4	24	48	72	24	14
NEP	1	3	6	9	3	4
Total	27	168	336	504	168	96

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection relied on several instruments. Questionnaires were administered to teachers, interview schedules were used for key informants (Field Education Officers, principals/head teachers, and opinion leaders), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with learners. These instruments were pre-tested in two primary and two secondary schools in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties to ensure reliability and validity.

The content validity of the instruments was confirmed through expert review by ADAK and KICD researchers, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives. The pre-testing process allowed for adjustments to improve the usability and clarity of the instruments.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection teams comprised officers from KICD and ADAK, assigned to different counties for data collection. The entry point to each county was through the Ministry of Education County Director's office for a courtesy call and orientation. The data collection teams

then covered the sub-counties within their assigned regions, with schools serving as the primary entry points for engaging with teachers and learners. Interviews with stakeholders outside schools were conducted based on prior appointments.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were coded and interpreted in relation to the study's objectives. This dual approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the data collected, providing insights into the current state of values among learners in primary and secondary schools in Kenya.

RESULTS

Response Rate

The response rate for the study was analyzed across different categories of respondents. Table 2 shows the expected and achieved response rates, along with the corresponding percentages.

Respondents	Expected	Achieved	Percentage (%)
Head Teachers	168	164	97.6
Teachers	336	334	99.4
Learners	504	475	94.2
Learners in FGDs	1,680	1,220	72.6
Key Informants	96	94	97.9
Total	2,779	2,289	92.3

The overall response rate of 92.3% is satisfactory and reflects the engagement level of the study's participants.

Application of Values among Learners in Schools

The Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) defines values as standards that guide individual behavior in various circumstances. Core values emphasized in the BECF include love, unity, peace, respect, integrity, patriotism, social justice, and responsibility. Additionally, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) identifies "spirit of sports" values, which include ethics, fair play, honesty, health, character, education, dedication, commitment, and teamwork. The study aimed to determine the extent to which learners were aware of these values and how they applied them in practical situations.

Awareness of Core Values

The study used a combination of questionnaires and focus group discussions to assess learners' awareness of core values and their practical applications. Figure 1 illustrates the levels of awareness among learners:

- Integrity (39.9%) and respect (33.3%) were the most mentioned values.
- The other core values, such as responsibility, social justice, and patriotism, were mentioned by very few learners.

Additionally, focus group discussions with learners revealed some additional values like obedience, discipline, hard work, humility, and patience. This indicates a general awareness of values among learners, but a noticeable gap in understanding specific values that promote the "spirit of sports."

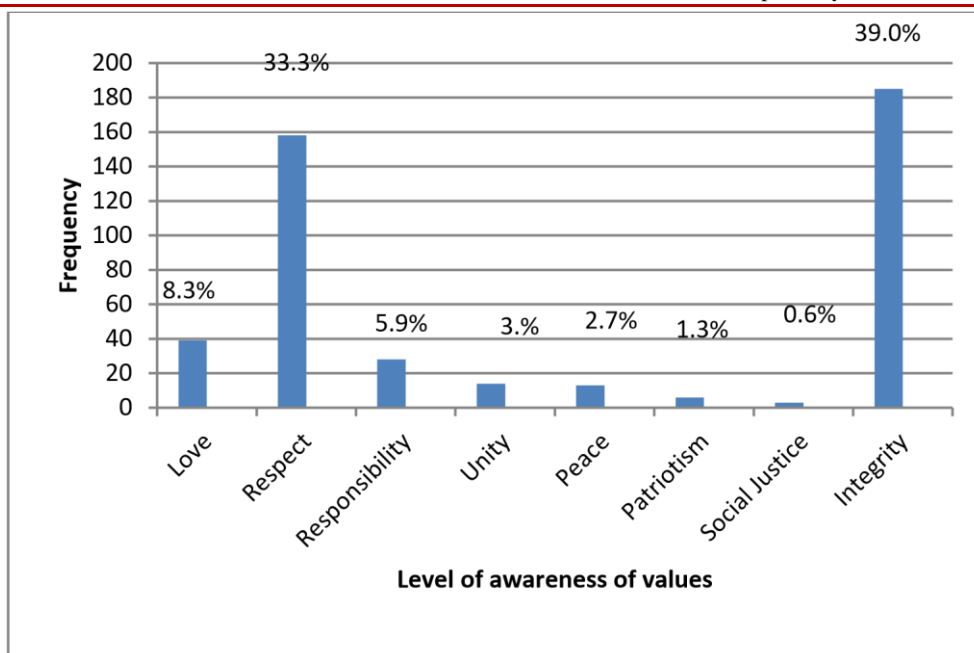


Figure 1: Learners Awareness of Values

Practicing of Values

The study sought to determine if learners applied these values in real-life scenarios at school and

at home. Table 3 outlines the areas where learners reported practicing different values:

Values	Equivalent Spirit of Sports Value	Areas of Application
Responsibility		- Cleaning school compound - Preparing boarding rooms - Following rules and regulations - Completing assignments on time - Taking care of textbooks and play materials
Respect		- Respecting school rules - Being courteous to others - Respecting parents and elders
Social Justice		- Sharing resources fairly - Showing justice and fairness to others - Helping the less fortunate
Integrity		- Avoiding cheating in exams - Honesty in competitive activities - Accepting defeat gracefully
Patriotism		- Singing the national anthem - Showing love for the country
Love		- Showing kindness and compassion - Settling disputes amicably - Forgiving others
Unity		- Teamwork during class and sports - Praying and eating together - Avoiding fights with others

Influences on Values Among Learners

The study explored the key influencers of values among learners within and outside the school environment. Head teachers and learners were asked who had the most significant impact on their values.

According to Figure 2, the head teachers reported that teachers (85.4%) had the most significant influence on learners' values, followed by parents (67.1%). Other staff members, such as non-teaching staff, also played a role (59.8%). The least influencers

were relatives (3.7%), guardians (11.6%), and head teachers themselves (18.9%).

Similarly, Figure 6 shows that learners identified teachers (81.1%) as their primary influencers, followed by parents (76.6%). Other influencers included peers, friends, and religious leaders. The data suggests that teachers and parents play a significant role in shaping the values of learners, with teachers having the most considerable influence during school hours.

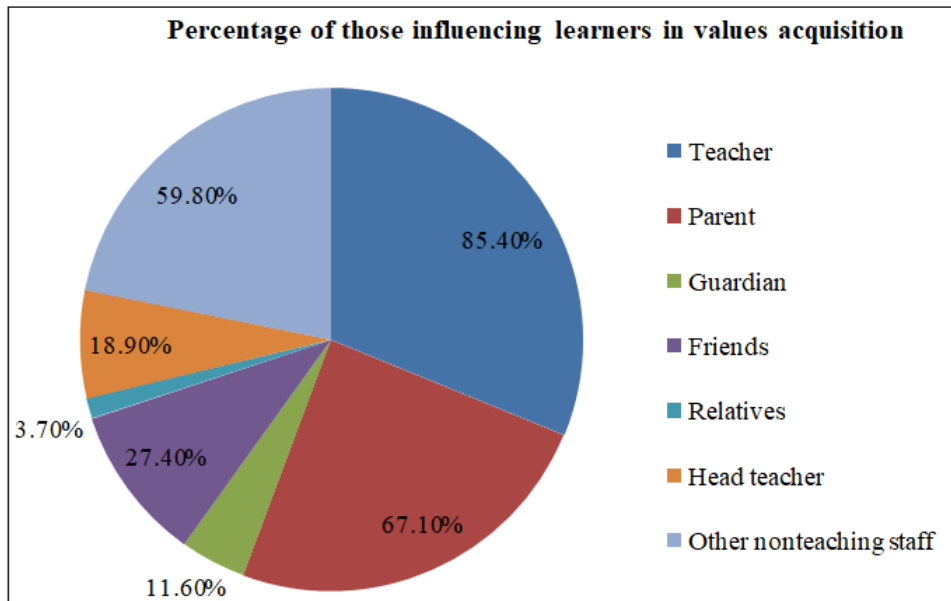


Figure 2: Head Teachers Responses who Influences Values acquired by Learners, N= 164

Teachers' Opinions on Nurturing Values

Teachers were asked about their opinions on nurturing values among learners. Table 4 summarizes their responses:

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
Aware about values in the Constitution	41.3	53.3	4.5	0.6	0.3
Understands role in nurturing values	71.9	27.2	0.0	0.6	0.3
Curriculum lays emphasis on values	41.3	45.2	9.9	3.0	0.6
School community members uphold value culture	19.9	50.6	23.5	4.8	1.2
Able to identify values among learners	43.2	52.6	3.6	0.6	0.0
Value-based learning will enhance character	69.7	27.3	1.5	0.6	0.9

The results show that most teachers strongly agreed or agreed with statements regarding nurturing values among learners. The highest level of agreement was that teachers understood their role in nurturing

values (71.9%), and that value-based learning enhances character (69.7%).

Similarly, key informants were asked to give their level of agreement on the same statements. Table 5 summarizes their responses:

Statements	N	D
Aware about values in the Constitution	37.2	34.0
Understands role in nurturing values	47.9	29.8
Society portrays values to the younger generation	26.6	22.3
Community members around me promote values	19.1	36.2
Able to identify values among learners	35.1	39.4
Good character can be developed through value-based education	62.8	13.8

Most key informants agreed or strongly agreed with the given statements regarding nurturing values. The lowest agreement was with the statement that society portrays values to the younger generation (48.9%), suggesting a need for more role models and mentors who can guide learners in acquiring and practicing values.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to assess the knowledge and application of values among learners in primary and secondary schools in Kenya. The findings reveal a

complex landscape, indicating both the awareness and practical application of core values, as well as identifying key influencers and gaps in nurturing values. This discussion explores these findings in the context of existing academic research and highlights consistencies and inconsistencies with broader educational and sociocultural trends.

Awareness of Core Values

The limited awareness of core values among learners, with only 39.9% recognizing integrity and

33.3% recognizing respect, is concerning. This is inconsistent with the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF), which emphasizes a range of values, including social justice and responsibility. The limited awareness could be attributed to insufficient emphasis on value-based education within the curriculum, as noted by the key informants' uncertainty about whether the community promotes values.

Comparable research indicates that effective values-based education requires consistent reinforcement in educational settings and at home. A study by Hart & Thompson (2016) suggests that schools with a strong culture of values often have dedicated programs and activities to promote these values. However, if values are merely mentioned without active integration into daily practices, their impact on learners' awareness and behavior may be limited. This finding aligns with the current study's observation that, while schools may display values on walls and gates, actual practice might not be emphasized.

Practice of Values

Despite limited awareness, learners reported applying values in several practical scenarios, such as responsibility in cleaning school compounds and respect for school rules. This finding is consistent with studies indicating that children often learn by observation and imitation (Bandura, 1986). When given practical examples and role models, learners are more likely to internalize and practice values.

However, the inconsistencies between awareness and application suggest a gap between theory and practice. A lack of comprehensive education on values might lead to a situation where learners understand the concept but fail to fully embrace it in their behavior. This echoes the work of Walker & Telford (2017), who found that value-based education needs to be experiential, allowing learners to actively engage with and understand the importance of these values.

Influencers of Values

The study identified teachers as the most significant influencers of learners' values, followed by parents. This finding aligns with the role of teachers as mentors and guides, as indicated by Cohen & Waite (2017), who noted that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping learners' moral development. Parents also play a crucial role, as they are primary role models during early childhood.

The lesser influence of head teachers and relatives indicates a potential disconnect between school administration and the broader community. This might reflect a lack of cohesion in promoting values throughout the school environment. As observed by Brown et al. (2018), a holistic approach is required, where all stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, and

parents, work together to create a consistent value-based culture.

The influence of various stakeholders, including peers, friends, religious leaders, and community members, highlights the complex network of influences shaping learners' values. This aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, suggesting that learners are affected by multiple systems, from immediate family and school environments to broader societal contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The presence of values displayed in school settings, such as on walls and gates, suggests awareness but may not necessarily translate into practice. This reinforces the importance of consistent reinforcement and experiential learning, as recommended by Kohn (1999). Without active engagement and practical examples, values may remain abstract concepts rather than integral parts of learners' behavior.

Opinions on Nurturing Values

Teachers and key informants largely agreed on the importance of nurturing values, with 71.9% of teachers understanding their role in this process. The agreement on the benefits of value-based learning for character development is encouraging and aligns with the work of Lickona (1991), who emphasized that character education is vital for fostering responsible and ethical citizens.

However, the uncertainty expressed by some key informants about the community's role in promoting values suggests a need for stronger partnerships between schools and communities. This inconsistency might be due to a lack of communication or collaboration, as noted by Gregory & Evans (2015), who recommended integrated approaches to value-based education that involve both schools and communities.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings reveal a complex interplay of awareness, application, and influence in value-based education. While there are encouraging signs of learners practicing values in specific scenarios, the limited awareness and inconsistencies in promoting values indicate a need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach. Teachers play a crucial role in this process, but greater collaboration with parents, communities, and school administration is essential to ensure that values are not only recognized but also practiced in meaningful ways.

These insights suggest that future research should focus on exploring effective strategies for value-based education and identifying best practices for engaging all stakeholders in promoting core values among learners in primary and secondary schools in Kenya.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the study's conclusions examining knowledge and application of values among learners in primary and secondary schools in Kenya, several key recommendations can help strengthen value-based education and promote ethical behavior among students.

To address the limited awareness of core values among learners, the curriculum should place greater emphasis on value-based education. This could involve integrating specific activities and programs that encourage experiential learning, allowing students to engage in classroom discussions, role-playing scenarios, and community projects that focus on core values. Such hands-on approaches can help bridge the gap between theory and practice, reinforcing the importance of values in everyday life. Given that teachers play a significant role in influencing learners' values, comprehensive training for educators is crucial. This training should equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to guide students in their moral and ethical development. Teachers should be encouraged to foster a classroom environment that emphasizes values like integrity, respect, and responsibility, serving as role models for their students.

To build a stronger connection between schools and local communities, schools should foster partnerships with parents, religious leaders, and other stakeholders. Engaging the community through regular meetings, workshops, and collaborative events can create a supportive network that reinforces the importance of values in education. This community involvement can also help address the uncertainty among key informants about whether the broader community promotes core values. Consistency is key to reinforcing values within a school setting. While many schools display values on walls and gates, their actual practice needs consistent reinforcement. Schools should create a culture that rewards value-based behavior through regular recognition of students and staff who exemplify these values. This consistency can also be achieved by incorporating core values into school policies and codes of conduct, ensuring that they are reflected in all aspects of the school environment.

Mentorship programs can further support value-based education by providing learners with role models and mentors who demonstrate core values in their behavior and interactions. Schools can encourage teachers, parents, and community leaders to participate in mentorship programs, guiding learners through personal examples of ethical behavior. This approach can be extended to include alumni and successful individuals from the community, offering a broader range of role models. To ensure that value-based education remains effective, schools should implement ongoing assessment and evaluation mechanisms. Regular surveys of learners, teachers, and parents can help gauge the level of awareness and application of core values, allowing for

adjustments and improvements where necessary. These assessments can guide schools in adapting their curriculum and teaching practices to better meet the needs of their students. Lastly, given the focus on sports in Kenyan schools, it's important to address values related to sportsmanship and fair play. Schools should implement programs that target these "spirit of sports" values, emphasizing integrity, teamwork, and respect in sports activities. This can help reduce instances of cheating and promote ethical behavior in competitive environments.

Declarations

Competing interest

The author declare that they have no competing interests.

Authors & contributions

Martin Sisa Yauma conceived the paper, designed and performed the study. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions presented in this manuscript are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of Anti doping agency of Kenya.

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