

## **DEVELOPING MORAL VALUES IN CHILDREN: OBSERVATIONS FROM A PRESCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

Moral education typically refers to teaching pupils the difference between right and wrong. The study attempted to identify and understand how moral values of preschool children are developed. Four teachers (2males, 2 females) in 2 kindergarten classes in Bawku participated in the study. Each teacher was observed for 3 hours a day for three consecutive days resulting in 36 hours of videotaped data. The teachers were also interviewed. There were 284 incidents in which teachers engaged in some form of moral or deductive instructions. The study established that teachers perceived themselves as moral educators. In addition, moral values such as right and wrong as well as honesty were being transmitted to the children through methods such as individual education, group education, opportunity education and storytelling. Results indicated that the teachers transmitted moral values once in a while but more socialization skills were transmitted frequently. The implications of these findings were discussed.

### **Introduction**

Current global concerns point to the need for a renewed emphasis on developing in every individual an inner guide, an ethical vision or as Barcena, Gill and Jorer (1993) posit “a moral compass” (p.14). This will position the individual in a better frame of mind to make sound moral judgements and to withstand the storm of moral decadence which has engulfed the world. Increasing number of people across the ideological spectrum believes that society is in deep moral

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trouble. The disheartening signs are everywhere: the breakdown of the family, the deteriorating of civility in everyday life, rampant greed at a time when one in five children is poor, an omnipresent sexual culture that fills the television screen with sleaze, beckoning the youth toward sexual activity at earlier ages and enormous betrayal of children through sexual abuse. In addition, increased violent juvenile crime, teenage pregnancy and suicide have caused many to declare moral crisis in many nations (Lickona, 1993). Many a time, there are reports in the media of students having rioted, destroying school properties in the process, occultism in schools and some female students virtually running brothels in towns and cities, many parents and guardians have shuddered what these hold for nations and the world at large. To withstand the storm of moral debauchery which has engulfed the world, Hoge (1996) observes that the seed of morality should be sown in young people especially at the pre-school level because if moral foundation is not laid, subsequent moral development of young people would not be solid.

The justification for the development of moral values of children at the pre-school level is anchored on the following theories: To discuss the moral growth of children, two scholars are often referred to: Jean Piaget (1965) and Lawrence Kohlberg (1978). Indeed, both scholars have comprehensively studied moral development in relation to cognitive development.

By examining the thinking of Swiss children between the ages of 6 to 12 years in their reaction to stories with a moral dimension, Piaget (1965) identified two stages of moral reasoning. The first stage was Heteronomy, in which children were governed by what others regarded as right and wrong. The second stage was Autonomy, in which children made decisions about right and wrong based on their views (Morrison, 1991). In the stage of Heteronomy, Piaget believes children's concept of right and wrong was influenced by adults. This implies that children do not have the capacity to differentiate between right and wrong and their understanding of morality strictly relied on adults who are in positions of power. For example, when parents tell the child it is wrong to steal, the child just accepts this as a sign of respect or obedience to the parents. As children mature, they enter the second stage: Autonomy. Piaget observes that the level of moral development at this stage is not governed by adults. Rather, children have a strong sense of right and wrong and this is developed through their interactions with their peers.

Even though, Piaget's theory of moral development put emphasis on the sequence of development rather than age, this theory was not without criticisms. First, Graham (1972) argues that Piaget did not give sufficient attention to individuals or to sex, social class or cultural differences. Indeed, most of Piaget's experiments were only involved with middle class Swiss children instead of children from different cultures or social class. Furthermore, Piaget overemphasized that parents were harmful to children's moral development as they imposed their moral judgment on children. Bull (1969) on the other hand, observes that discipline imposed by parents is a necessary preparation for self-discipline or autonomy. Since Piaget focused mainly on children between ages of 6 to 12 years, most researchers agree with Bull that children's moral development needed to be guided by the authority of adults.

Similar to Piaget, Kohlberg also believes that children's moral thinking developed in stages. This could be seen in the three levels of development proposed by Kohlberg: Pre-conventional level, Conventional level and Post-conventional level. Kohlberg maintains that children's understanding of good and bad is based on punishments and rewards, which are administered by adults in the Pre-conventional level (Morrison, 1991). For example, Kofi knew it was bad to spit because of ever been scolded by the mother. It can be said that children at the Pre-conventional level are egocentric and incapable of recognizing the needs of others. As children enter the conventional level, they became more aware of the interests of others and the concept of "being good" (Hersh, 1983, p.59). This means the emphasis on being a good girl or boy, a child had conformed to the moral demands of society. According to Kohlberg (1978), the Post-conventional level applies to ages 13 and beyond, during which the individual has developed a moral system which is both personal and subjective. Moral reasoning at this level is usually achieved through consensus and in a democratic manner (Elias, 1989).

Despite all the positive feedback, Kohlberg's theory was not without criticisms. First, Kohlberg might have covered higher stages of moral development; but ended up not providing enough evidence to support the argument that was advanced. For this reason, Kohlberg's methodology has been criticized for its lack of sufficient validity and reliability. Second, Gilligan (1982) argues that Kohlberg's original sample included only men hence; it was a gender biased study. Last but not least, Kohlberg rejected the teaching of moral habits which was considered to be a "bag of virtues" (Winston, 1998, p.13). However, most early educators agree with Elias (1989) that children

could not grasp a principled morality; instead they learned good habits, especially virtues of self-control.

Given that both Piaget and Kohlberg had extensively researched moral development, their thoughts must be considered when working at preschool level. Piaget believes that children are egocentric and their judgment of right and wrong is based on what was observable and real to them. In order for children to understand moral values, children must be conscious of themselves in the course of experiencing the reactions of others to their actions (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Piaget argues that preschool children are capable of developing moral feelings in two ways. First, children had to be given the chance to interact with their peers. By interacting with their peers, children were capable of experiencing unexpected reactions, resistances and negative reactions on the part of others, and as a consequence they would become conscious of others as separate from themselves (Devries & Zan, 1994). Second, teachers should not use authority to impose rules on children. Rather, teachers should provide a constructive sociomoral atmosphere where children could exchange ideas and cooperate with each other. For example, the teacher should allocate space for the children to interact with each other by arranging furniture and other appropriate materials.

Similar to Piaget, Kohlberg advocated that moral education should start at the preschool level. Instead of focusing on cultivating moral habits, Kohlberg believes children should learn moral values through moral dilemmas. Dilemmas, both real-life and hypothetical, would provide children with opportunities to see things from the perspectives of others. Kohlberg (1978) believes teachers play crucial roles in moral education in two ways. First, teachers must be good models. Second, teachers must not force children to learn what is right and wrong, they must teach by creative methods. Kohlberg went further by emphasizing that in shaping children's moral development; teachers must avoid indoctrinating children:

An educator must be a socializer, teaching value content and behavior and in becoming a socializer and advocate, the teacher moved into "indoctrination" a step that I originally believed to be invalid (p.14-15).

A critical analysis of the theories of both Piaget and Kohlberg brings to the fore the believe that moral education is crucial at the preschool level and that teachers must not force children into learning what is right and wrong. Rather, teachers must provide a sociomoral environment for children to explore moral issues in a constructive manner.

In exercising social control, Ghanaian traditional societies stress that children comply with instructions unreservedly and deviations from cultural norms were sternly frowned upon. Emphasis was also placed on a strong sense of communal life, manifested in communal ownership of land and social control through family, age groups and elders. Individual actions were to be carried in congruence with nature, and the needs, concerns, aspirations and interest of the individual were to play second fiddle to those of the group. The import of this statement is that the child is expected to develop values that conform to the norms of the community (Young,2007). As Myers (1998) points out “if one would cultivate his person, then he could manage his household; if he could manage his household, then he could bring order to the entire society” (p.24). This means one’s obligation to family, state and above all one’s duty to maintain social harmony was for more important than individual happiness. In order to ensure that the future generations were moral beings and descent, Ghanaian societies placed emphasis on moral education prior to the introduction of oriental and western mores. Indigenous moral values such as respect for and obedience to elders, relative and peers were inculcated in young people. With the introduction of western education in Ghana, it dawn on well-meaning Ghanaians that the teaching of moral values to young people is important hence the content of the religious and moral education programme in basic schools is a synthesis between traditional values and democratic values.

Mencius (1997) maintains that there is the need to teach moral values at the pre-school. Mencius argues that man is different from an animal. The reason being that man’s impulse was to do well; hence the nature of man is good. To prove the innate goodness of man, Mencius said: All men have such feeling because on seeing a child about to fall into a well, everyone has a feeling of horror and distress... this feeling of distress is the first sign of humanity. This, feeling of shame and disgrace is the first sign of justice. This feeling of deference to others is the first sign of propriety. This sense of right and wrong is the first sign of wisdom. Men have these four innate feelings just as they have four limbs... since all have these four capacities within themselves, they should know how to develop and fulfilled them (p.30).

The import of this statement is that man has the innate tendency to do what is right but the foundation of righteousness has to be laid in childhood. If the moral foundation of young people is

weak they would take the wrong road in life and the rest of their journey through life tends to lead in the wrong direction. Hence, it is in the light of this that the Catholic Bishop Conference in 2007 strongly agitated for the reintroduction of religious and moral education in basic schools because it is concerned with children's future moral development. Indeed, the curriculum in preschools is less exam-oriented and teachers often have the autonomy to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of children. For example, teachers may incorporate more stories which relate to moral values into the standard curriculum. Moreover, the flexibility of the curriculum provides an ideal environment for children to develop moral judgment. Children usually come to learn and accept principles through their practical experience of situations which are interpreted for them into moral language (Straughan, 1982). For example, a child will grasp the principle of fairness, not by learning it first and then applying it, but by encountering instances of fair and unfair treatment, and then learning to translate these events into moral terms (Straughan, 1982).

In a nutshell, children pick up moral values through practical experiences such as role-play and drama. Other than the flexibility in the preschool curriculum, children's characteristics are another primary reason why moral education should be taught in the preschool sector. Children are not only impressionable but they also imitate the people they admire. This is highlighted in Montessori's (1965) philosophy:

Knowing all the time how strong is their instinct of imitation and how touching their faith in and admiration of us. They will imitate us in any case. Let us treat them, therefore, with all the kindness which we would wish to develop them (p.133).

The above statement sheds light on two important issues. First, children are innocent and they have not developed informed opinions, nor chosen guiding values or principles prior to the educator's intervention on character. Indeed, this is largely why young children are considered ideal candidates for both authoritative and paternalistic moral guidance (Haaften, 1999).

Second, without reservation, preschool teachers are not only passing moral values to children but they also play significant roles as moral agents in children's lives. For this reason, this research will explore the inner world of preschool teachers, trying to identify the

teachers' thoughts towards moral education and the methods they use to pass on moral values in the classroom context.

The role of a teacher therefore, is summed up by Wilson, (1969) and Yvonne (2006) who felt that the job of teachers is to bring up their pupils to be rational and form their own values: to instill respect for, and capable of applying principles relevant to morality. For this reason it is important to find out how preschool teachers view moral education and how they transmit moral values to their pupils

Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive moral education?
2. What types of moral values are being transmitted to children?
3. What methods do the teachers use to transmit moral values in the classroom?

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

The study population comprised 4 teachers of the kindergarten section of the Mother Theresa School in the Bawku Municipality of the Upper-East Region of Ghana. This school was chosen because it has one of the established kindergartens in the country. It is well equipped with facilities and all teachers are professionally trained. The entire 4 teachers in the Kindergarten were selected for the study. This is in line with the assertion by Nwana (1993) that every member of the population would be studied "when the population size of the whole population is small" (p.58).

### **Instrument**

Two main instruments were used for the study. These include semi-structured interviews and observations. The research explored the perceptions of teachers hence semi-structured interview was adopted. The reasons for this were that within the semi-structured interview, set of items were designed for participants to answer. The participants were expected to respond to questions but at the same time, they would not be stopped by the researcher if they go beyond the designed scope. The teachers were asked to respond to 10 items. Two items were related to the background characteristics and the rest of the items were designed to find out how the teachers perceived moral education and how they transmitted moral values to children. Observations are meant to find out what people "do". Observational

data for this study were considered authentic and valuable for two reasons: First, observational data were collected in the natural environment. Second, observational data were subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. For example, the researcher counted the number of aggressive incidents which would classify as quantitative. When the researcher observed a child at play, and wrote down a running description of it, this would be classified as qualitative. Non-participant observation was the observation mode employed for data collection. The researcher chose videotaping as the main method of collecting data for three reasons: First by using videotaping, trivial details such as facial expressions and gestures, which are considered to be valuable would be picked. Second, the researcher gets a less subjective view when different people are invited to view the video tapes. Finally, to ensure that the data is accurate, the video tapes can be viewed over many times. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of “how” and “when” teachers taught children moral values, the classes that were taught by the four teachers were video recorded. Each videotaped session lasted about 3 hours and a total of 36 hours of data were collected. The researcher watched the video tapes about 4 to 5 times and then the clips were selected on the basis of their relationships with moral education such as honesty, and right and wrong. These were placed in one category. Next, selected clips that displayed moral socialization values such as proper behaviour and respectfulness were placed in the other category.

### **Procedure**

The instruments were administered to the teachers in the case school in September, 2009. In order to ensure that the video tapes were strictly for research, the researcher promised to send copies of the transcripts to the head teacher. Given the constraint of time, the researcher hired an assistant to help video tape one class. The KD3 class was taught by two teachers and they were observed by the researcher. The KD2 class was taught by two teachers and they were observed by the assistant. The entire teachers were videotaped individually for three days, 3 hours per day. Though the teachers were a bit uncomfortable in the beginning, they became used to the camera by the end of the first day. The children, on the other hand, had continued their lively activities without much commotion. During the classroom observations, the researcher and the assistant agreed to videotape all incidents, two minutes on the whole class and a



minute on individuals' children. They also agreed to focus longer on incidents that involved teachers and children rather than the interactions between pupils. After three days of classroom observations, a total of 36 hours of data were collected.

Meanwhile, the interview items were designed to find out more about the teachers hence the items dealt with general issues as well as specific issues. Items 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10 were adapted from Fung's (1998) research. The items were adapted for two reasons. First the study was about moral education. Second, the items were relevant to this study because it was done within the Ghanaian context. With the permission of the head teacher, the interviews were tape recorded. The interview clips were transcribed, and the researcher read the transcriptions over and over again. Common themes mentioned by the teachers were identified and categorized. With respect to the observation data, the process of transcribing the observation data was divided into two stages. In stage one, the researcher watched all of the video tapes at least 4 to 5 times and recorded all the incidents that related to moral education and put them into categories such as honesty and right and wrong.

## **Results**

The presentation of the results is centered on the responses from the individual interviews and classroom observations. The nubs of this study include teachers' perception about moral education, types of moral values being transmitted to children and methods of teaching moral education at the preschool level. The sub-themes for types of moral values being transmitted to children are right and wrong as well as honesty. The sub-themes for the methods of teaching moral education include individual education, group education, opportunity education and storytelling.

Based on the data gathered from the interviews and observations, it appears teachers believed that they were moral educators. The teachers specifically acknowledged themselves as moral educators during the individual interviews. For example, one of the teachers said "it was the responsibility of teachers to supplement the values parents have been teaching at home." This measure ensures the reinforcement of the concept of right and wrong in the school setting. In addition, two of the teachers asserted that "teachers played important roles in passing on moral values as children spend 7 hours a day with teachers". The teachers'

perceptions of themselves as moral educators were apparent in the classroom observations. The teachers were frequently transmitting moral values and moral socialization skills to the children. Table I shows the number of times that KD2 and KD3 teachers have been involved in transmitting values.

Table 1: Number of incidents which relate to moral education

Number of days	KD2 class	KD3 class
Day 1	14	26
Day 2	16	22
Day 3	24	24
Total	64	72

As reported in Table 1 KD2 teachers engaged 64 times in transmitting values and KD3 teachers engaged in it 72 times. The teachers use both direct and indirect processes for passing on the values. Teachers either taught the whole class about an incident or a pupil had brought the moral incident to the attention of the teacher. At the same time teachers had made use of every opportunity to transmit values. They transmitted values during play time. Here is one example where one of the teachers engaged in teaching moral values during play time. One of the children picked a toy cow and hit another boy with it. The boy continued to do so until the teacher told the child in question to stop. Invariably, the teacher would be instilling values in the child.

Based on the results from the interviews and classroom observations all the teachers believed that children went through different stages of moral development. For example, all the four teachers agreed that children at KD1 were too egocentric to understand the need of others which is a crucial element in moral education. However, they agreed that KD1 teachers should nevertheless teach the children moral socialization skills such as politeness and respect for others. As children moved to KD2 and KD3, they matured and were capable of distinguishing between right and wrong.

For example, when one of the KD2 pupils noticed that the teacher was not in the classroom, the child put a piece of meat into the trash can. When the classmates saw that they all said it was wrong and decided to inform the teacher. Another example involved a KD3 child. The boy was asked to sit in a corner while other children played because of indiscipline. One of the classmates picked up the boy's toy and dared the latter to come into the playing field. The boy got up a few times in an attempt to go in, but in the end decided to ignore the classmate and sat down. Both incidents happened without the supervision of the teacher and yet the children were capable of regulating their actions and understood the concept of right and wrong. For this reason, all the teachers strongly believed that children were capable of picking up basic moral values before they entered the primary level.

With a total of 279 incidents that were videotaped, only a few incidents were related to moral education. The following themes were extracted from the classroom observations: right and wrong as well as honesty.

Among the values, teachers spent a considerable amount of time in teaching children the concept of right and wrong. It was either transmitted to the whole class or to an individual. For example, when one of the children (as stated above) noticed the teacher was not in the classroom, the former put a piece of meat into the trash can. The classmates informed the teacher and the latter talked to the child one on one. The teacher explained to the child that it was wrong to throw food away. Furthermore, when two pupils were shooting at each other while they were lining up, the teacher went over and told them that it was not right to point guns at others. Teachers often picked one incident which had happened between two individuals and used this opportunity to teach the whole class. For example one of the teachers was about to teach children a rhyme entitled "A Lion", when all of a sudden the teacher noticed a child pushing a classmate. The teacher stopped teaching and asked why the child had done that, the latter said that the one being pushed was in a wrong spot. The teacher then asked the class whether that was good or not, the class said that it was not right. The teacher then explained to the class that it was wrong to push someone without asking.

Among all the moral values honesty is perhaps the most challenging concept to explain to children. The moral debauchery

among young people being reported across the globe calls for teachers to teach children to be honest at all times. For this reason, teachers at the preschool are always engaged in teaching children to be honest. For example, children were asked to read two poems at home. The parents were expected to tick off the assigned pages to indicate that their child had read these assigned pages. When the teacher inspected the book of a boy, the former noticed something funny and asked the child some questions. The child admitted ticking the pages instead of the parent. The teacher told the child that it was good to be honest but should make sure that the parents tick the pages next time and the child agreed. Another example happened in the KD2 classroom where a girl accused a boy of taking the blue crayon without asking. The teacher walked over and tried to find out what happened. The boy denied taken it. A boy sitting next to the boy who has been accused admitted to have taken it. The teacher commended the boy for being honest but reiterated need to ask before taking anything away from classmates.

Teachers were constantly transmitting values to the children; especially moral socialization values such as respect for the class rules and they usually did it in several ways: individual education, group education, opportunity education and storytelling. Individual education implies one on one interaction, the exchange of dialogue between teachers and children. Throughout the classroom observations it was found out that some of the incidents that related to moral education did not involved the whole class. Instead, it involved only the teacher and a child. For example when one of the children rushed to play with toys in the play area and forgot to take off the shoes. The teacher went over to the child and told the latter that it was not right to wear shoes when one is in the play area. Furthermore when another child was playing with soup, with a spoon, the teacher went over and told former that it was not proper. The preceding examples illustrate that individual education is one decisive way of transmitting values to children.

Group association is one of the survival techniques in society hence it is not astounding that group education is one of the key methods of passing values to children. Both KD2 and KD3 teachers spent a lot of time educating the whole class about certain values. For example when a KD2 teacher was teaching the children certain rhymes, a girl was being pushed. The teacher stopped the lesson and asked why the boy did that, the latter said the girl was not sitting at

the right spot. The teacher then asked the class whether it was right for the boy to push someone and they all said no. Another example is from KD3 class where a girl accidentally hit a boy's hand and the latter got angry. Instead of talking to the girl the boy shouted at the former. The teacher stopped the lesson and explained that the boy could have asked the girl to apologise hence there was no need to shout. The above examples indicate that teachers often pass on values through group education. Indeed, children pick up values quicker in a group situation whenever they are singled out of the class for wrongdoing and they often feel ashamed when they are being judged by their classmates.

Opportunity education is not a new concept among early childhood educators. This idea is stressed extensively by Fung (2001), who argues that caregivers do not teach children through topics, rather they use every opportunity to teach children new concepts. Likewise, moral education is not a subject to be taught to children at the preschool, teachers usually do not start a topic that relates to morals with children instead they transmit the values through opportunity education. This means teachers see an incident that needs to be addressed; then they use it as an opportunity to talk to the individual or group about certain values. For example a girl went to toilet and did not wash the hands. The classmates wanted to find out whether the girl's hands have been washed but the latter refused. The teacher saw this incident and used the opportunity to teach how the girls' hands should be washed prior to lining up. Another example, took place in the KD3 class where a child was touching the books of the teacher while the children were lining up. The teacher saw that and used this opportunity to teach the child that it was wrong to touch other people's things without asking. The above examples show that teachers do not formally teach a topic that relates with moral education; rather they use incidents that happen in the classroom to teach the children about moral values.

When it comes to teaching moral values, schools employ dramas, plays and role plays. This preschool however, engages frequently in storytelling as a main method of transmitting values. Indeed children are fascinated with storytelling as it involves interesting characters. Whenever a teacher uses characters in storybooks to teach the children moral values the latter often feel safer expressing their views. Take red light and green light as an illustration. When the teacher explained to the children that it was wrong for the red car to drive pass the red light, the children agreed.

They all said that the driver should obey traffic regulations. In this incident the teacher did not single out any individual in the class and point out the wrong doing of that individual. Rather by focusing on the character in the story the children learn what is acceptable or not acceptable in society. Through focusing on the characters of the story, children would feel that they are not being judged hence it becomes easier for them to pick up moral values.

### **Discussion**

According to the results from the classroom observations and individual interviews, all the four teachers put great emphasis on moral discipline. The four teachers believed that before children understood moral obligations, they had to understand that rules were set by society. As one of the teachers said “value system is not what children are born with they have to acquire it”. This means that self-discipline of children is engendered and once this is done they would behave accordingly when they interact with others. This concept is illustrated during one of the group interviews. The KD2 teachers watched a video concerning a KD3 child who knocked all the toys of the classmate down. They all agreed that the child should learn to respect the class rules before being allowed to join the classmates. Moreover, the KD2 teachers believed that in order to have a disciplined class, the child’s teacher must serve as a model and set up guidelines for children to follow. This is supported by Durkheim (1961) who argues that moral discipline is not only part of moral life but also performs an important function in forming character and personality in general.

Moreover, it is evident from the study that in the process of teaching, teachers were not promoting individualism among the children. Rather, teachers were training children to become part of the group and part of society. This is corroborated by one of the teachers who stated that “children must learn to interact with different people in different group settings. Another teacher substantiated this concept by emphasizing that “children must learn not to disturb others while the class was in session.” The children must learn to respect the group and the teacher believed it was the responsibility of the teacher to teach students to understand this concept.” Though, teachers used individual education as a method to pass on moral values, they often focused on the individual’s behavior and try to mould and match it to the needs of the group. For

example, when one of the children rushed into the play area without removing the shoes, the teacher told the child that it was wrong and explained to the later that it is important to follow the rules that were being accepted by the majority of the class.

Another novel method that all the four teachers used was shame. For example, when a boy was whispering to a classmate while the teacher was talking, the teacher stopped teaching and asked the boy to stand up. While the boy was standing, the classmates were staring at the boy. The teacher explained to the child that it was wrong to talk while the class was in session. The child acknowledged the mistake and quickly sat down. By being singled out in the class, the child felt ashamed and was forced to change the behavior to match the needs of the group. This finding confirms a study conducted by Fung (2001) which concluded that in the process of acquiring moral values children do not have the capacity to rebel or do anything to jeopardize the absolute power of the group. Rather children learn to conform and be part or a member of a group and society in general.

### **Conclusion**

The intent of the present study was to determine how moral values of children at the preschool level are developed. Based on the reported results which was obtain through individual interviews and classroom observations, the study brought to the fore four significant factors. First, the preschool teachers observed collectively, agreed that it was their obligation to transmit values to the children. Second, teachers were not only engaged in transmitting moral values but they also use a great amount of effort in instilling moral socialization skills and discipline in the children. Third in the process of passing on moral values to the children, the teachers did not promote individualism rather; they emphasized conformity to rules while training children to be part of a group. Last but not least, in comparing the KD2 children with those in KD3, the study revealed that children under 5 years of age were mature enough in terms of cognitive development to pick up moral values. These four factors give an indication that moral education is an integral part of preschool education hence all the stake holders in education should pay attention to it because as Roosevelt, (as cited in Howe & Straus 2002) puts it “To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (p.45).

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that colleges of education should emphasize the importance of moral education in two ways. First applicants should be accepted not only based on their academic results but also their moral dispositions. Second, the colleges of education should offer a course on how to teach moral education in preschools. In addition, in order to highlight the importance of moral education in the preschool sector, each preschool must take an active role in teaching moral education. This could be achieved in two ways. First, when designing the curriculum, room should be left for teachers to incorporate their own innovative methods of teaching moral education. Second, teachers could discuss with parents the type of values being transmitted to children because it is only with the support of parents and other stakeholders that the awareness of moral education in the preschool sector will thrive.



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