Learning objectives in Moral Education and pupils' behavior

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Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating the relationship between learning objectives in moral education in and pupils' behaviour. The hypothesis which guided this study was the following: 'there is a relationship between learning objectives related to moral education and pupils' behaviour'. Through a survey design where 50 teachers randomly selected from 11 schools in Santa sub-division, the findings revealed that the correlation between this main variable (learning objectives and pupils' behaviour was significant. The study revealed also that if most pupils showed a disruptive behaviour, it was because most teachers lacked skills and did not involve children in activities that permitted them to develop life skills.

Key words: Teaching moral education, learning objectives, pupils' behavior

Introduction

The purpose of this piece of research is to investigate the relationship between Moral Education in general and specifically, the Moral Education teaching/learning process and pupils' behavior. There is a lot of misbehavior among children in the society as well as in school. The media has constantly reported the high rate of violence and juvenile crime amongst the youths. Many children behave very poorly in school as well as in the society. Immorality is spreading rapidly. The place given to moral in education nowadays is not equal to it recognized importance. It is admitted that the solution of those related problems are also linked to the teaching of Moral Education in our schools. The above stated situation cannot be apprehended without the presentation of some pertinent theoretical aspects in connection with the teaching/learning process of Moral Education such as the ones related to the Piaget's Theory of Moral development.

According to Ross Vasta (2004); Piaget underlines the following stages of moral development. The first one is the heteronomous morality stage which involves children aged from four to seven years. This stage is characterized by a strict adherence to rules and duties as well as obedience to authorities. According to Piaget, young children thinking at this stage is egocentric or self-centered. That is young children are unable to simultaneously take into account their own view of things with the perspectives of someone else. This egocentrism leads children to project their own thoughts and wishes onto others. Children take great pleasure in imitating the activities of their elders without understanding the importance as well as the reasons of doing so. This stage holds that children are innocence and empty and need to be inculcated with, the right moral standards.

Referring to Ross Vasta (2004), Piaget talks of the moral realism stage where children's reasoning is based on objectives and physical aspect of a situation. At this stage the concept of moral is measured in terms of the consequences of violating rules rather than in terms of the

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wrong-doer's intention. This is accomplished by a belief in "immanent justice", the notion which holds that wrong doing will be punished by some external force that will cause misfortune.

The next stage of moral development is the stage of autonomous morality or the morality of reciprocity. Here children gradually learn that rules are agreements created by people to help or protect one another and can be changed. And obeying these rules is viewed as an autonomous or personal decision to cooperate with others. Their cognitive abilities allow new factors to enter into their moral Evaluation.

Furthermore, Piaget believes that both cognitive factor and social experiences underlines the development of moral reasoning. Children become better able to evaluate the morality of a situation from multiple perspectives as they move away from the egocentrism of early childhood. During interaction with peers children learn that there can be several perspectives on an issue; that why Piaget also emphasized the importance of social experience in children's moral development, reported Ross Vasta (2004).

From the analysis of the same author, Piaget concluded that schools should emphasized cooperative decision making and problem solving, nurturing moral development by requiring students to work out common rules based on fairness. To sum up, rather than indoctrinating students with norms, teachers should provide students with opportunities for personal discovery and for problem solving.

Learning objectives related to moral education.

Learning objectives in a moral lesson are to be designed in such a way that it takes into consideration the intellectual abilities of the pupils. In this case pupil will acquire knowledge on the common ethical values before applying it to daily life (Ross Vasta, 2004, p.630).

For effective and efficient learning in moral education to take place, teachers and learners must take into consideration the different affective domains as started by Bloom when stating objectives. This calls on teachers in the teaching-learning process to state objectives that reflects pupils' cultural milieu and daily life in order to practically involve them in learning, which positively build up their behavior in school and in the society.

Well started learning objective will bring out life skills in the learner in which Santrock (2004) talks of life skill education as a type of education which aims at the development of attitudes, skills, insights and knowledge which facilitate effective engagement with life and life changes,

Some objectives of moral education

Below are some of the objectives of moral education as spelled out in the national syllabus for English speaking primary schools in Cameroon and connection with the law of orientation on education of 1998 (Ministry of National Education,1998). These objectives are " to develop in the pupils' good traits of personality; to assist children develop conscience of life issues; to guide children in the identification and development of values that will facilitate their harmonies integration in society; to instill in children the qualities of good personality and cultivation of good habit; to develop in pupils a positive attitude to citizenship and the desire in them to make a positive personal contribution to the development of the country; to develop children's appreciation for the dignity of human beings; to develop pupils' sense of respect for and

tolerance of the options of others (Arends, 2001); to arouse in pupils the spirit to access individual and collective roles in the world *(*Awa, 2000; Ross Vasta, 2004)".

Below are some of the objectives of moral education as spelled out in the national syllabus for English speaking primary schools in Cameroon (Ministry of National Education Cameroon (2000). These objectives are discussed briefly.

- **To develop in the pupils' good traits of character:** According to Luma (1983) character training is the key to temperance, tolerance, mutual and empathic understanding , respect of the private and public property as well as the key to taking pride in doing an honest day's job and doing it well. He further explains that character must be given a prominent place in education because education without character is like making or riding a car without brakes. Thus good trait of character is one the determinant factors that regulate life. Santrock (2004) also explains that, teaching children attitudes, habits and values, help shape their character throughout life. Thus teachers should strive to help students develop good character. He believes that all young children can learn fundamental values like honesty and kindness.

- **To assist children develop conscience of life issues:** This involves the examination of conscience that is, reading the socially accepted code. Moral education gives clarity on what one has to do and on what he has to avoid.

- **To guide children in the identification and the development of values that will facilitate their harmonies integration in society:** The interaction between pupils of diverse background gives them the opportunity to learn, understand and accept people as they are, for what they are, and for who they are. Moral education has a big role to play in pupils education as it has to guide them develop values that will facilitate their harmonies integration in their society. Through the teacher as a facilitator children will develop more advanced notions of such concepts as cooperation, truth, responsibility.

- **To instill in children the qualities of good personality and cultivation of good habit:** Good personality involves emotional stability, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Teachers should help children cultivate good habits and personality through their interaction with them and their own way of life. Fonkeng (2006) holds that, teachers should encourage the flourishing of all those facets of a child's personality which could be right or suitable, worthwhile or desirable to society.

- **To develop in pupils a positive attitude to citizenship and the desire in them to make a positive personal contribution to the development of the country***:* According to Santrock (2004) children can contribute better to the development of their country through active participation. To this he talked of *service learning*. Service learning is a form of education that promotes social responsibility and service to the community. *In service learning, children might help the elderly, work in a hospital; assist at a day-care center, clean up a vacant lot to make a play area.*

- **To develop children's appreciation for the dignity of human beings***:* Moral conduct is one of the requirements of communal life, of life in the society. It reflects the manners, common ways of doing things and common ways of behaving that makes one proud of himself. Appreciation is also a wonderful moral value. *Children can learn to appreciate by simply*

saying thank you for every deed done. Appreciating human dignity will include the way human beings behave, dress, communicate.

- **To develop pupils' sense of respect for and tolerance of the options of others***:* As Children grow older they have to learn simple ethics that shows respect to themselves and to others through perspective taking**.** Arends (2001) holds that perspectives taking or *the ability to see things from someone else's point of view*, is one of the most critical. This makes sense, because so much of morality hinges on how actions affect other people. *One is kind so others will not be hurt, for example one is fair because injustice harms other people.*

- **To arouse in pupils the spirit to access individual and collective roles in the world***:* According to Awa (2000), education will be to acquire knowledge, skills, habits values or attitudes that will help people develop an appreciation of their cultural heritage and live more satisfying lives. It also enables them to become more productive members of society both as citizens and as workers in the economy. Ross Vasta (2004) believes that children must learn a set of roles for behavior. The child should be able to control her behavior on her own, without reminders from others. They should be able to develop or make sense of or about what is happening around them.

The effectiveness of the teaching-learning process of Moral Education
As observed, teachers hardly plan their lesson before going to class; some do not state clearly their lesson outcome. This is seen with Eni (2009) as she affirms that, some teachers often do not know how to set objectives that are attainable within a lesson. Lessons are better understood when reasons for teaching a particular issue is clearly stated and moral values are clearly distinguished from moral claims which can enhance pupils' behavior. To sum up, this piece of researcher on Teaching Moral Education in school and pupils' behavior deals with the problem of the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process of Moral Education.

Research question

Given the fact that moral development should be the center of education according to Kant as cited by Kizito (2004); Luma (1983); there has been a decline in pupils' behavior in our schools and considering that teaching moral education may be responsible for this dilemma, the main question was raised: The main research question for this study reads thus: Is there a relationship between teaching moral education in school and pupils' behavior? To be precise, is there a relationship between learning objectives related to moral education and pupils' behavior?

The hypothesis of a significant influence of learning objectives on pupils' behavior

From these questions were stated the general hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between teaching moral education in school and pupils' behavior. The research hypothesis suggested the existence of a significant relationship between learning objectives related to moral education and pupils' behavior.

Objective and significance of the Study
The study intended to find out if there is a relationship between teaching moral education in school as far as learning objectives are concerned and pupils' behavior. Concerning the

significance, it was hoped that, this work would enable policy makers to identify the problems that teachers and pupils face in the teaching and learning of moral Education. The research would also enable them to adopt and improve on the techniques and strategies that teachers use on the field. Through this work, teachers will identify their weaknesses concerning teaching Moral Education and this would serve as a source of inspiration for them to enrich their pedagogic competence. It would also enable parents improve up on their contributions to the success of teaching moral education in schools.

A three part analysis
After introduction, the methodological aspect is presented, then results and finally tracks for an efficient teaching/learning process of Moral education to improve the quality of pupils' behaviour.

A verification method of the hypothesis of the influence of learning objectives on pupils' behavior

Subjects of the study. The research design used was a survey design. The subjects were selected from a population made up of all the public primary school teachers of Awing using 61 teachers. A sample of fifty teachers was drawn from this population. The simple random technique was used. The area of study was chosen for many reasons: the problem of disruptive behavior that was noticed there, the insufficient number of teachers per school and also teachers' laxity in handling the pupils.

Instrument for data collection. The instrument used for this study was the questionnaire. To determine its validity and its reliability, the questionnaires mentioned above were constructed respecting the congruence between the objective and the content. Next specialists in construction of instrument and in measurement also appreciated them. In addition, a pilot test was conducted on two small groups of teachers from GBPPS Group II who were not among the sample but have the same characteristic as those included in the sample. The instrument addressed to pupils was also successfully tested on two occasions on a reduced sample of learners. The different results have been correlated.

Data Analysis. The collected data was analysed using percentages and the Pearson product correlation was used to measure the degree of relationship between the two variables**.** The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the information contained in the questionnaires. The degree of relationship was described in terms of small correlation, moderate correlation and strong correlation.

Main variables. As far as the main variables are concerned, the independent variable was "teaching moral education". From it, the working variable derived was the learning objectives that include objectives in terms of Knowledge, objectives in terms of know-how and objectives in terms of aattitude to be acquired. The dependent variable was "pupils' behavior".

Table 1: Recapitulative table of hypothesis, variables, indicators and modalities

Research	Variables	Indicators	Modalities

Hypothesis			
There is a significant relationship between learning objectives related to moral education and pupils' behaviour.	IV : Learning objectives	-Knowledge -know-how -Attitude.	- Very often - often - scarcely
	DV : pupils' behaviour	-School attendance -Personal hygiene/cleaning of school compound -Pupils' conducts during examinations -Pupils' handling of school properties -Pupils' conducts during lessons -Pupils' manner of talking to staff and administration -Pupils' punctuality	- Very satisfactory - Satisfactory - Unsatisfactory

IV: Independent variable   DV: dependent variable

Results of the study

The set of data collected is presented in a descriptive manner. This first step is followed by the second one that consists of verifying the research hypothesis.

Presentation of the results related to teaching moral education and pupils' behavior

The results presented are related firstly to teaching moral education as far as learning objectives are concerned that include knowledge, know-how and attitude. Secondly, they are related to pupil's behavior that includes school attendance, personal hygiene/cleaning of school compound, pupils' conducts during examinations, pupils' handling of school properties, pupils' conducts during lessons, pupils' manner of talking to staff and administration, pupils' interaction with friends and school mates, pupils' punctuality.

Table 2: Aspects of teaching moral education and of pupils' behavior

N°	Teaching moral education	Very often		Often		Scarcely	
		Frequency	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*
	Learning objectives						
1	Focus on notion and knowledge to be acquired by pupils	18	36.0	27	54,0	5	10
2	Objectives in conformity with the official syllabus	19	38.0	23	46,0	8	16.0
3	Focus on attitudes to be acquired by pupils	9	18,0	13	26,0	28	56.0
Pupils' behavior		*Very satisfactory*		*Satisfactory*		*Unsatisfactory*	
		Frequency	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*	*Frequency*	*%*

			y		*y*		*y*	
1	School attendance	11	22,0	29	58,0	10	20,0	
2	Personal hygiene/cleaning of school compound	7	14,0	19	38,0	24	48,0	
3	Pupils' conducts during examinations	6	12,0	26	52,0	18	36,0	
4	Pupils' handling of school properties	7	14,0	20	40,0	23	46,0	
5	Pupils' conducts during lessons	5	10,0	24	48,0	21	42,0	
6	Pupils' manner of talking to staff and administration	6	12,0	40	80,0	4	8,0	
7	Pupils' interaction with friends and school mates	15	30,0	33	66,0	2	4,0	
8	Pupils' punctuality	1	2,0	23	46,0	26	52,0	

Learning objectives

The notion of knowledge to be acquired by pupils is taken into consideration when stating objectives. Table 2 above reveals that 18 teachers (36%) very often consider the knowledge to be acquired by pupils when stating objective, 27 teachers (54%) agree they often consider while 5 teachers (10%) say they scarcely consider the knowledge to be acquired by pupils. .

Taking into account the distribution by opinions, the context of morality is in conformity with official syllabus. According to table 2, out of 50 respondents, 19(38%) agree that they very often state objectives which are in conformity with official syllabus, 23(48%) say they often do while 8(16%) agree they scarcely do. this finding show that most teachers abide with objectives stated in the official syllabus.

In addition, pupil's attitudes to be developed are taken into consideration. The table above indicates that in the sample, 9 teachers (18%) very often consider pupils' attitudes to be developed by the end of the lesson when stating learning objectives, 13 teachers (26%) often consider pupils' attitude, while 28 teachers (56 %) scarcely consider pupils attitudes to be developed. This finding reveals that many teachers hardly think of what pupils' attitudes will be by the end of the lesson when stating objectives.

Pupils' behavior

On the topic of school attendance, table 2 gives the opinion of teachers regarding their pupils school attendance, out of the sample ,11(22.0%) of the teachers appreciate the behavior of their pupil as very satisfactory, 29 (58.0%) were satisfactory with their pupils' school attendance and 10(20.0%) were unsatisfactory with pupils' school attendance.

Table 2 shows the distribution of teacher's opinion concerning pupil's personal hygiene/cleaning of the school compound, it indicates that, 7 (14.0%) of the teachers were very satisfied with pupils hygienic condition, 19(38.0%) are satisfactory while 24(48.0%) are satisfactory. This tells us that most of the pupils appear dirty in school and do not use their initiatives in cleaning the school compound.

Relating to the distribution of pupils' conduct during examinations, table 2   indicates that 7(14.0%) of the teachers were very satisfied with pupils' conduct during examination, 20(40.0%) were satisfied with pupils' conduct during examination and 23(46.0%) were unsatisfied with pupils' conduct during examinations. This reveals that, despite rules that govern examinations, many pupils still cheat during examinations.

The table above shows also the distribution of teachers' opinions in the way pupils handle school properties. It tells us that 6(12.0%) of the teachers were very satisfactory with pupils manner of handling school properties, 26(52.0%) report satisfactory while 18(36.0%) report unsatisfactory. we therefore conclude that many teachers in the sample are satisfied with the way pupils handle school properties.

Furthermore, the table shows the distribution of teachers opinions concerning pupils conducts during lesson. It indicates that 5(10.0%) of the teachers were very satisfied with pupils conduct during lessons, 24(48.0%) were satisfied while 21(42.0%) were unsatisfied with the way pupils conduct during lessons. This reviews that most teachers are satisfied with the way pupils behave during lessons thought a hand full of the pupils still display poor behavior.

Regarding pupils manner of talking to staff and administration, table 2 reviews that, out of the total sample of 50 teachers, 4(8.0%) reported that were very satisfactory with pupils' manner of talking to staff members, 40(80.0%) reported satisfactory while 6(12.0%) reported unsatisfactory. The findings show that many teachers were satisfied with the way pupils talk to staff members.

The table indicates concerning   pupils interaction with friends and school mates that out of the sample of respondents 15(30%) of the teachers were very satisfied with pupils interaction with friends and school mates, 33(66.0%) were satisfactory while 2(4.0%) were unsatisfactory with the pupils interact with their class mates and friends. This finding reveals that most teachers are satisfied with the way pupils interact with friends. This also indicates that pupils-pupils relationship is cordial.

Finally, *t*he table above shows the distribution teachers opinions concerning pupils' punctuality in school. It reveals that 1(2.0%) of the teachers was very satisfied with pupils' punctuality in school, 23(46%) were satisfactory while 26(52%) were unsatisfied with pupils punctuality in school. This findings most of the teachers were unsatisfied with pupils punctuality to school. Many children are always late to school because they move and play on their way to school and also because of laziness.

The hypothesis of a significant influence of learning objectives on pupils' behavior

The Pearson correlations were used to test the research hypothesis. The statistical processing of the data was done through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software as shown in the tables below.

After verification, the following results were obtained.

Learning objectives related to moral education is significantly related to pupils' behavior. r (50) = .288, (p < .05) two tailed. The coefficient of determination value is .083, showing that the

proportion of common variance between learning objectives and pupil's behavior is 8.3%, which is small.

This study was designed to investigate into the relationship that exists between *learning objectives in* teaching moral education process in schools and pupils 'behavior. The research hypothesis formulated was confirmed, implying that effectively, teaching moral education highly influences pupils' behavior.

Discussion of the results of the study on learning objectives and pupils' behavior

The main assumption was that learning objectives related to teaching moral education in school are significantly related to pupils' behavior. This hypothesis was stated in both the Null and alternative form. After the verification, it was realized that the test value (.288) was greater, the critical value (.2732). The Null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This implies that the stating of clear and precise learning objectives related to moral education will significantly influence pupils' behavior. A review of the problem of this study shows that teachers hardly state clearly their learning outcomes which make work easier for them and learning difficult for the pupils.

This hypothesis ties with what Luma (1983) holds that good behavior can only be achieved if learning objectives are clearly stated from the beginning. Kapfer (1971) also agree that teachers who state objectives which are attainable by instruction and capable of being measured promote pupils' behavior positively. He further explained that objectives should be realistic and fit the grade level for which they are written. When objectives are clearly stated, they become an effective guide in the teaching – learning process and at the end of the lesson the objectives will help the teacher in determining the extent to which the lesson has been successful. In this case the type of objectives should be behavior-centered which emphasizes on the change expected in pupils' behavior as they experience a teaching/learning interaction. Learning objectives statements in moral education should highly take into consideration the affective domain whose outcomes are defined in terms of students' attitudes towards specific subject areas (Clark Power, Ronald Nuzzi, Darcia Narvaez, Daniel Lapsley and Thomas Hunt, 2008). They should also be centered on competence-based approach [Roegiers, 2006; Roegiers (coord.), 2010]. Additionally, the realization of learning objectives related to education requires from parents an efficient collaboration with teachers in school in order to promote pupils' behavior, being aware of the determinant impact of their behavior on the pupils' behavior (Bart Engelen, Alan Thomas, Alfred Archer & Niels Van de Ven, 2018; Tsafack, 2003).

Conclusion

Moral education content and values are diverse and take into consideration the multicultural and multiethnic societies. This calls for moral educators to create real-life situations within the four walls of the classroom. This is because pupils need to be part of the process in order to enhance behavior positively. This piece of research was aimed at investigating the relationship between teaching moral education in school and pupils behavior. The research hypothesis was formulated to determine if there is a relationship between learning objectives in connection with moral education and pupils' behavior. The results of the study confirmed this hypothesis, meaning that the effective teaching of moral education in school through clear learning objectives is likely to

have a positive incidence on pupils' behavior. These learning objectives should be stated in terms of behavior, attitudes, and competences to be developed and to be used in real-life situations and in harmony with behavioral principles which characterize the human being.

To construct a moral, humanistic society, schools and teachers should cultivate in their program and practices a kind of conscience or superego at the heart of every child and equip it with relevant and truly applicable sanction that reinforce the different values to be developed. For it is presumably impossible to teach anything without also teaching attitudes to things (Fonkeng, 2006). In addition, parents and the other members of the school community should be involved in the definition and the realization process of learning objectives related to moral Education.

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