Philosophical Reflections on Evaluation of Moral Education in Kenya

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Abstract
The study is about evaluation of moral goals of education in Kenya as a necessary condition of the process of education. It offers a philosophical reflection on how moral goals of education can be evaluated in an educational context. The study examines education as a process of acquisition of desirable behavior necessary for harmonious co-existence in a society. In teaching and habituating learners on desirable moral values, the evaluative process is imperative. Evaluation provides the opportunity for educators to know whether the set objectives have been met or not. This kind of feedback thus becomes an important tool in: providing reliable information to interested stakeholders on character development in schools, reflecting on best pedagogies of teaching moral education and seeking for remedial strategies in character education. This study relied on the Aristotelian concept of 'the golden mean' as a philosophical theory that could underpin evaluation of moral education. It was recommended that Aristotelian concept of the 'golden mean' could be applied in a mathematical sense to provide a necessary tool that could help schools in Kenya in evaluating moral goals of education.

Keywords: Virtue, Evaluation, Moral Education, Golden Mean, Teaching and Habituation

1.0 Introduction

Education as a process has been defined in terms of its intimate relationship with society and moral development. It has been seen as a pathway of transmission of societal habits, standards, beliefs, and morals values from the older generations to the younger ones. The aim of such a process is to ensure there is societal continuity brought about by harmonious co-existence. (Sifuna & Oanda, 2014; Sifuna & Otiende, 1994; Wainaina, 2006; Njoroge & Bennaars, 1986). Moreover, scholars do agree that a critical definition of the concept 'education' must include the moral development of the learner.

In a formal set-up, teachers play a pivotal role in the teaching, habituating and role modeling learners into morally acceptable adult members of society. Accordingly, as teachers engage in the process of teaching, they are intuitively aware that part of their responsibility is to habituate learners into socially acceptable moral standards. This implied responsibility is so significant that teachers take a lot of their time attempting shaping the behaviors of learners under their care. However, in most cases in Kenyan schools, how much is achieved in this important aspect of education is rarely evaluated.

Though teachers do employ a variety of methods such as discussion, role model approach, and teachings that occur in Religious Education; to inculcate desirable habits in learners, the concepts in moral education (ME) are given an intellectual approach. The level of attainment of these moral values is usually measured and evaluated by way of summative examinations at the end of a learning cycle. In reality, 'moral knowing' is not the same as 'moral action' and 'moral feeling'. Consequently, the evaluation of the affective domain of ME is not adequately measured thereby leaving a lacuna on understanding the extent to which moral development has in reality occurred among the leaner. To this end, moral evaluation becomes inevitable.

2.0 Purpose of Moral education

Education as a process ought to be manifested in one way or another in the behavior of people. In ancient Greece, acquisition of education or knowledge was seen as a *'virtue'* and ignorance was perceived as 'vice'. The term virtue is used in this context to imply excellence, whereas vice imply ineffectiveness of performing one's duties. That is to say, a knowledgeable person was capable of performing his/her duties efficiently (Ankipelu, 1981). Thus Plato saw education as a process of turning the 'eye' of the human soul from darkness to light in his famous allegory of the cave. In the moral sphere, Plato thought that education had a responsibility of bring up a person of good conduct (*kalokagathia*). The moral function of education is underscored by Aristotelian theory of *euadaimonia* (Aristotle, 1999/340 BCE). Aristotle postulated that the ultimate 'good' that persons aim for is living happily. The Greek term *eudaimonia* is translated to mean happiness or well-being. To achieve a *eudaimon* life, acquisition of moral virtues were deemed necessary conditions.

The process of moral education requires well organized educational instruction and moral habituation on such moral virtues as honest, temperance, justice, love, truthfulness and responsibility (Ankipelu, 1981). The moral function of education cannot be over-emphasized. Peters (1966) has useful suggestion on what education should do in order to produce an educated person. In the moral sphere, Peters (1966) observes the following in respect to an educated person: 'It would be a logical contradiction to say that a man had been educated but that he had in no way changed for better or that in educating his son a man was attempting nothing that was worthwhile' (p. 25)

In the above quotation, education is conceptualized as a process of moralizing children so that they acquire morally acceptable characters. Perhaps that is why Akinpelu (1981) makes the following remark with respect to the value of moral education:

> The educated man is to be discovered by his point of view, by the temper of his mind, by his attitude towards life and his fair way of thinking. He can see, he can discriminate, he can combine ideas and see whether [Sic…] they lead; he has insight and comprehension… (p. 179).

There is no doubt from the above exposition that moral education is an important aspect of the process of education. Accordingly, moral education is fundamental in the provision of values and human behavior necessary for peaceful co-existence, law and order and integrity needed in innovation, and above all, living worthwhile lives.

The value of the learner's' moral development cannot be overemphasized. Chukwu (2002) points out four important values of moral education, namely; (i) it perpetuates peaceful association, mutual respect and co-operation, (ii) it perpetuates the spiritual values of tolerance, patience, molarity, kindness and honesty which are a source of contentment, (iii) moral education is essential for harmonious and proper maintenance of social order (iv) it encourages good governance and eliminates social evils such as corruption and immorality. Whereas Chukwu's points are by no means exhaustive, they provide a good compendium of the need for moral education in schools.

3.0 Logic of evaluation

Evaluation has been defined as a process of finding the value of something (Webster Dictionary, 2007). Other definitions include: the process of assigning symbols to a phenomenon so that the value of that phenomenon is characterized (Bradfied,). In education, evaluation is seen as the judgment of pupils' progress (Santrock, 2009) and the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data on the level of achievement of pupil's instructional objectives.

From the above definitions, it is clear that evaluation is a purposeful activity. It determines the worthwhileness or significance of a process. In an education set up, evaluation is important in a number of respects, including: (i) helping in preparation of instructional objectives, (ii) assessing learner's needs (iii) preparing a programme's resource materials (iv) in guidance and counseling (v) reporting pupil's progress to parents (vi) as a tool for decision making in educational administration (vii) as an important instrument in educational research (Weir & Roberts, 1994; Howard & Danoghue, 2015)

From the foregoing, it is obvious that a reflection on how evaluation of ME is done in schools is imperative. Such a reflection provides the means of assessing the learners' needs in terms of morality, provides relevant reports to school administrators and parents in terms of what needs to be done in order to improve and rectify any behavioral challenges among learners. The reflection suggested in this paper is in terms of how evaluation of ME occurs in Kenyan school and what ought to be done to improve on any inconsistencies

3.01 Evaluation Through the Arithmetic Mean

Mathematicians, geographers and statisticians have always sought out the best methods of arranging observable data to make meaningful inferences. For example Asthana & Bhusan (2007) view statistics as a means of collection and summarization of data so that meaningful inferences could be

made from it. The term statistics has its origin from the Latin word *status* or Italian term *statista* which meant the census of the political state, in which data pertaining to the wealth of a polis was kept, under the heading *statista* Asthana & Bhusan (2007). However, the meaning of these terms has changed over time, and today, the term may mean the quantitative data aspects of a population that are analyzed to provide useful information in respect to such a population. In practice, usually mathematicians and statisticians are interested in finding out the general behavior of a population. This is represented graphically using a normal curve, or numerically using various measures of central tendency. One such measure of central tendency is the arithmetic mean, usually known as the mean. The others are the median and the mode Asthana & Bhusan (2007).

It is a common practice in Kenya, and many other countries, to evaluate attainment of educational goals by using the arithmetic mean. It is argued that the mean is an important tool since: (i) it is easy to compute and comprehend (ii) it is amenable to further mathematical treatment (iii) it is least affected by any fluctuations of sampling (iv) it is based on all observations (Asthana & Bhusan, 2007). In the Kenya context, a learner's performance in KCPE and KCSE is always obtained through this approach. The mean performance of a student is thus the total score of individual subjects divided by the number of subjects, expressed mathematically as:

$$\ddot{y} = \frac{x_1 + x_2 + x_3 + x_4 + \ldots x_n}{n} = \frac{£x}{n}$$

Where ÿ= the mean

x=the variable under observation, e.g. Individual subject scores

n=the number of times a variable occurs

X_n= the definitive value of the variable x under consideration

£x= the sum of the Variable x

Such is the notion of the arithmetic mean applied in measuring performance in Kenya's formal learning institutions. However, as already pointed out, the grades awarded usually designated by letters A, B, C, D and E or marks in terms of percentages (0-100%) rarely depict the true picture of moral development aspects of education. Usually, the grades are an indicator of the cognitive skills of the learning process. For this reason, this paper opines that the arithmetic mean can be applied in more useful ways to measure the neglected moral developmental aspects of education as envisioned in the curriculum. In that respect, the Aristotelian mean is handy.

3.02 The Aristotelian '*Golden Mean*' in Respect to Character Development

The philosophical meaning alluded in this paper in respect to the concept of the 'golden mean' is a presentation by Aristotle in his book II of *Nichomachean ethics* (1999) where he explains how virtue is obtained. This 'golden mean' in respect to character becomes an important tool in discerning the kind of moral characters that teachers impart in learners in schools. In essence, it provides a rational formula for determining whether the moral virtues being taught meet the basic requirement of '*meanness'* to avoid extremism in behavioral development.

Aristotle was of the opinion that good character is a quality that is nourished in human beings through training and habitation. His argument rested on the assumption that if good character (virtues) is a natural endowment, then habituation is practically impossible (Aristotle, 1999).

Aristotle defined a virtue as an excellence or a good quality in an individual. This is supported by Mautner (2005) who defines virtue as:

> a settled disposition of the mind which determines choice and essentially consists in observing the mean relative to us, a mean rationally determined, that is, as a man of practical wisdom would determine it (p. 647).

In respect to character development, a virtue is a 'mean' between two extremes. For instance, self-control is the mean between profligacy and insensitivity. To further illustrate the notion of virtue, Mautner (2005) provides a list of possible virtues through the application of the mean as shown in the table below:

Vice (Excess)	**Virtue (Mean)**	**Vice (Defect)**
Rashness; *thrasytes*	Bravery, valor, courage *Andreia*	Cowardice; *deilia*
Profligacy; *akolasia*	Self-Control; temperance; *sophrosyne*	Insensitivity; *anaisthesia*
Prodigality; *asotia*	Generosity, Liberality; *eleutheriotes*	Illiberality; *aneleuheria*
Vulgarity; *banausia*/*dapaneria*/ *Apeirikolia*	Magnificence; *megaloprepeia*	Meanness; *mikroprepeia*
Irascibility; *orgilotes*	Gentleness/good-tempered; *Praotes*	Unirascibility; *aorgesia*
Boastfulness; alazoneia	truthfulness; aletheia	Self-depreciation; *eironia*
Bashfulness; *kataplexis*	Respect/shame; *aidos*	Shamelessness; *anaischytia*
Envy; *phthonos*	Just indignation; nemesis	Malevolence; *schadenfreude*
Injustice; *adikia*	Justice; *dikaiosyne*	Injustice; *adikia*

Table: 1. (Mautner: 2005:647), an extract showing Virtue (the mean) of some of the common virtues taught in Kenyan schools.

The virtues identified in Table1 above by no means form an exhaustive list. Besides, they may not fit in a jig-saw manner in the educational context in Kenya. However, the table provides a good demonstration of how virtue may be understood when Aristotle's concept of the '*golden mean'* is applied. The purpose of the Aristotelian mean in respect to virtue is theoretical postulation that is capable of making meaning in the real world by demonstrating the importance and meaning of virtue as opposed to vice.

In the Kenyan educational context, a number of virtues for inculcation have been identified such as love, respect, friendliness, justice, honesty and truthtfulness (GoK, 2010; 1976).

4.0 Proposed Evaluation of Moral education: The Continuous Moral Education (CME) Model

There is no doubt that evaluation is an important aspect of implementing moral education. The notion of evaluation, as applied in Kenya examination system (KCPE and KCSE) merely tests the cognitive domain of moral content. Accordingly, a student who scores highly in such religious subjects as CRE, HRE, IRE is assumed to have acquired the moral values, though this does not necessarily designate moral uprightness and good character. Evaluating ME demands that for effective implementation ME in Kenya, moral attributes should be tested using test items that actually measure such learning outcomes. Thus the study suggests a plausible method of evaluating ME referred to us continuous moral evaluation (CME).

Continuous Moral Evaluation (CME) as a model of evaluation would rely mainly on observation of student's behavior. This could be completed by introspection in which, a learner is given an opportunity to engage in self-evaluation; let's call it metacognition. This evaluation tool should have well worked out matrixes for observations and reports. Meaningful observations could then be made from such metacognition as demonstrated in the table below:

Table 2. Continuous Moral Evaluation Guide

Character Evaluated	**Honesty**		
	Observation Parameters		
	Cases of Cheating in examination Reported	**Cases Reported in Regard to dishonesty in the school**	**General Observations in Regard to Honest About the Student**
Honesty	None	None	**Njogu Robert , A .(Adm. No. 2811, Form 1N)** The student is always truthful. He has never had any case of Dishonesty this term His behavior is in tandem with this virtue

The data collected from such a table could be elaborated to accommodate as many of the morals values taught in schools as possible. From such observations, an extract could be made in regard to the general moral character of the learner as shown below:

Table 3. Cumulative Quarterly Continuous Moral Evaluation Report

Name of Student …….School..... Class/Form ……ADM. No. ……..

Quarter ……..Name of Teacher Grading ……

Moral Character Under Evaluation	**Possible Grading System**	**Grade Awarded**	**General Remarks**
Honesty	**16-20;A-Excellent**	Score-**17** Grade award-**A**	This student is honest in her work and responsibilities
	11-15; B- Good		
	6-10; C- Average		
	1-5;D-RequiresMore Practise		
Love	**16-20;A-Excellent**	Score-**12** Grade award-**B**	A very loving and caring
	11-15; B- Good		
	6-10; C- Average		
	1-5;D-RequiresMore Practise		
Grand Total(Mean)	**100**	Score=29 Mean Grade: A	**General Remarks:** The students is overly well behaved and morally developing

5.0 Synthesis of CME Evaluation Model in light of the Arithmetic mean in the Kenyan Context

The overall measure of success (performance) at the end of any learning cycle is thus the mean achievement of both non-moral and moral aspects of education as illustrated below:

$$\textit{General Success Measure} = \frac{\textit{mean score of Cognitive domain + mean score of affective domain}}{2}$$

$$\textit{Mean Grade} = \frac{\textit{Mean Grade in Summative Evaluation + Mean Grade in CME}}{2}$$

The term cognitive as used in the above formula refers to the academic aspects of education, while the term affective refers to the moral aspects of education. From the above illustration, the general attainment in education (success measure) denoted as μ of implemented Goals of Edu. is thus the Arithmetic mean of the sum of mean score of non-moral aspects of education and that of moral aspects divided by two. For instance, assume a student scored an **A** plain in KCSE in summative evaluation at the end of a four year course. However, the same student scored a **C** (Plain) in CME evaluation after four years; the mean grade of such a student will be calculated thus:

$$\textit{Mean Grade} = \frac{12+5}{2} = 8.5;\ \textit{B (plain)}$$

The measure of educational achievements of learners is thus an all inclusive process, which takes into account the non-moral aspects of education especially intellectual abilities and the morals aspects. Accordingly, using this suggested CME criterion, learners are awarded a mean score (grade) at the end of the learning cycle that reflects their true educational achievement. In essence, the end of learning cycle certificates (result slips and leaving certificates) should have clearly defined roles. The result slip should reflect on academic performance while the leaving certificate should reflect the CME.

6.0 Conclusion

Moral education is an important aspect of education. Education would be incomplete if the concerns for moral education, manifested in character development of learners, are not addressed. The plausible method of knowing whether moral issues are addressed by teachers is by way of evaluation. The method used in evaluation in the Kenyan system is usually the arithmetic mean. However, what is usually evaluated in most cases is the acquisition of cognitive skill leaving out the normative aspects of education. There is thus a vacuum in respect to evaluation of moral values. A suggestion has been offered on what could probably abridge this gap. The plausible model is referred to as Continuous Moral Evaluation (CME). The method borrows the principles of the arithmetic mean, in evaluating moral education by way of observation.

7.0 Recommendation

The success of moral education depends on how effectively the methods employed in evaluation are. The main purpose of evaluating moral education is to provide feedback for improvement. It is not to condemn students in respect to their unacceptable behaviors but rather an opportunity for teachers to device suitable mechanisms to tame any unacceptable behaviors in learners. The study makes the following recommendations:

- There is need to sensitize other socialization agents on their role in the moralizing process, especially the church, mass media and politics. These three socialization agents have tremendous influence on character formation
- The Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should carry out studies on the best evaluative methods that may be used to effectively measure the level in which morality has occurred. This way, remedial strategies are sought beforehand.
- There is need to develop a programme for ME in Kenyan learning institutions. In this programme, the moral values expected to be acquired are clearly spelt out, the method of instruction provided, and ways of measuring outcomes outlined.

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