

Assessment Strategies Adopted by Christian Religious Education teachers in Assessment of Learner Value Acquisition in Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

Schools endeavor to enhance values in the learners through their learning activities and extra-curricular programmes. Christian Religious Education (CRE) is geared towards learner value acquisition. Empirical evidence indicates that teaching and learning for valuing is challenging due to increased indiscipline by learners in secondary schools. Assessment of learner value acquisition demands teacher commitment and time. The purpose of the study was to investigate assessment methods CRE teachers embrace to assess learner value acquisition, a study of national secondary Schools in Kenya. The objective which guided the study was to establish the assessment methods CRE teachers use to assess learner value acquisition and to find out the challenges they face in the process. The study was based on the Theory of Development of values. The study adopted mixed methods under the convergent parallel design. The target population of the study was 95 national secondary schools in Kenya with a total of 224 CRE teachers. 30% of schools and teachers were sampled. The study sample size was 67 CRE teachers. The study employed stratified and simple random sampling to select the schools for study and purposive sampling technique to select CRE teachers to participate in the study. Data was collected through questionnaires, document analysis, and interview and observation schedules. The validity and reliability of data collection instruments was done through use of experts and piloting respectively. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics presented in frequencies and percentages while the qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that CRE teachers embraced to a varying extent the following methods to assess learner value acquisition: observation, 50 (100%); project work, 8 (16%); attitude and value scales, 4(8%); check lists, 5(10%); comprehension exercises, 47 (96%) and formal classroom tests, 5 (10%). The findings also revealed that assessing learner value acquisition was a challenging aspect in schools due to the schools' overconcentration on the cognitive domain, inadequate in-service training and an overloaded curriculum. It was concluded that CRE teachers were expected to emphasis use of assessment methods to evaluate learner value acquisition to a larger extent and determine ways to overcome any challenges. The study recommended that teachers, schools and the Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and Kenya National examination Council (KNEC) should provide an enabling environment for the teaching and assessing of value acquisition in schools. KICD subject panels for instance can develop measuring tools that teachers can use in schools to measure the affective domain in form of formative assessment.

Key Words: *Value Acquisition, Assessment Methods, Christian Religious Education*

1.0 Introduction

The youth of today seem to be portraying more deviant behavior than ever before which is evident from their involvement in drug abuse, violence, cheating in examinations, bullying, stealing, disobedience, dishonesty, and even laziness. Othoo and Aseu (2022) argue that the morals of the former secondary school students in colleges and in society do not reveal the acquisition and practice of values learnt through Christian Religious Education (CRE). This was an opportunity to interrogate the use of valuing pedagogy in the teaching of CRE for learner value acquisition and the assessment of the effectiveness of this pedagogy through finding out the reality of learner value acquisition. According to Sifuna (2020), missionaries used schools as means of recruiting people in the church, especially children. One fundamental aspect of the educational process is to obtain information through evaluation of learner's over-all progress towards predetermined objectives.

At any point in teaching and learning process, a conscientious attempt must be made to provide both quantitative and qualitative judgment on the learner's progress. Assessment is an integral part of the educational process which aims at fostering learning, improving teaching, and providing information about what has been done or achieved (Sifuna, 2020). It provides important feedback for student and teachers, and information on the education system or the society at large. This study suggests provision of awareness in regard on how secondary school CRE teachers perceive their classroom assessment practices, their skills and competencies in evaluating learner value acquisition. Assessment of learning is very critical because effective teaching decisions are based on the ability of teachers to understand their students and to match actions with accurate assessments (McMillan, 2008).

1.1 Background of the study

Religious education has reportedly played a vital role in educating pupils about what it means to live in a multi-faith society, according to Eric (2015). Religious studies are known to aid pupils in comprehending and respecting the activities and beliefs of others, and strengthening social organization. According to Mbiti (2018), Religious Education was tasked with fostering in each generation the kinds of knowledge, values, and attitudes that society requires in order to thrive. Mbiti (2018) re-affirms that religion offers moral standards for people to live by. As a result, since the first school was built in 1846 by early missionaries, the formal teaching of religious education has played a significant role in Kenya. Christian missionaries' efforts to convert Africans to Christianity served as the foundation for formal education (Barret, et.al, 2019). The current global scenario indicates declining levels of values amongst the school going age and the society at large print and televised media show various cases of disrespect in the society such as violence in schools, hate speech, ethnic violence, and robbery with violence, murder among others.

CRE as a school subject has a unique responsibility in value instruction because its content and methodology is geared towards value acquisition and ultimately learner character development (Kowino, et al, 2012). It plays a significant role in enhancing value education especially in themes such as character and personality development, personal and social development and spiritual and moral development. This subject is mandated to facilitate the teaching of values

from a religious perspective (KICD, 2018). It had the advantage of inherent supernatural source of these values which gives them an upper hand over realistic principles (Satris, 2013).

One of the objectives of teaching CRE is for learners to gain insights into the unfolding of God's self-revelation to humankind through their personal experience, acquire social and moral insights to think critically and make appropriate moral decisions in life (KICD, 2018). The concept of Value Education is traditionally related to religion since the ultimate judge of what is right and wrong lies with God and that God is a God who expects good from His creation (Maiyo, 2015). Chemutai, (2013) rightly notes that CRE encourages students to do things the right way and according to biblical teachings. This study agrees with these authors considering the fact that CRE content majorly focuses on biblical content. This was echoed by Holmes, (2007), who argues that the Bible places greater importance on values and character as cited in the beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew chapter five. This is emphasized by Kowino *et al*, (2012) who assert that, Religious Education is the backbone of values. The question that the study focused on was that after teachers have taught the CRE content rich in values with the hope of learner value acquisition, how do they assess the extent of acquisition of these values?

1.2 Statement of the problem

The school has a significant role to play in the development of character where values play a significant part (Mbiti, 2018). In the school, school activities; subject areas or extra-curricular programmes are there for learner educational purposes. CRE is a crucial subject for instilling in students positive moral behavioral changes and character development. The goals of CRE instruction in secondary schools show this. According to the memorandum by Gichaga, Kerre, Mwaura, and Onoka, (2019) CRE is an effective behavior regulator for kids and serves as a conduit for moral expectations from society to reach kids. Therefore, CRE is an effective tool for teaching students discipline. The moral decadence in society is an indication of a hidden problem in the teaching of this subject because one of its objectives stipulates among others that the subject aims at helping learners use the acquired social, spiritual and moral insights to think critically and make appropriate moral decisions in a rapidly changing society (KICD, 2018).

Teachers adopt different classroom assessment practices to evaluate learners' learning outcomes, and they spend much of their classroom time engaged in learner assessment related activities (Mwaka *et. al*, 2014). Their instructional and classroom assessment practices are a means by which the education system is enhanced and defined (Nenty, Adedoyin, Odili & Major, 2007). However, past research has shown that there are many problems associated with teachers' classroom assessment practices especially in relation to the affective domain of learning (Stiggins, 2005). CRE teachers have a great role when it comes to the teaching and assessment of value acquisition in CRE achievement which is situated in the affective domain. This in turn is expected to have a bearing in the learners' moral and social behavior. The research problem addressed in this study was that despite efforts by CRE teachers to teach and evaluate, learners who demonstrate inappropriate behavior were becoming more prevalent.

1.3 The purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the assessment methods used to assess learner value acquisition in national secondary schools in Kenya. The objective of the study was to establish assessment methods CRE teachers use to assess learner value acquisition and to find out the challenges they face in the process.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This research was based on theory of value development. Rath's et al (1986) in their valuing theory argue that due to the increasing number of experiences and the inability to dictate the nature of these experiences due to the changing nature of society, it's wise when dealing with values among the youth to work towards their acquisition of valuing skills other than the values themselves. The theory emphasizes on the skills required to arrive at responsible value choice so as to eventually arrive at the values themselves. These valuing skills are acquired through the valuing process which is a systematic process that has seven steps which should be adhered to: guiding the learner to choose freely, choose from among alternatives, choose after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative, prize and cherish the choice, affirm the choice, act repetitively upon the choice and finally internalizing the chosen value.

Rath's theory of value development is connected to the purpose of this study as it includes encouragement and paying attention to the valuing process which suggests issues of methodology (Rath's et al, 1986). The teacher may assist the learners understand for themselves what their value is by encouraging active learner participation through interaction with the content rich in values using suggested methods such as the self-exploratory exercise (SEE), group enquiry, the value clarification response skill (VCRS), thought sheet & Diary, value sheet, project method, comprehension exercise and voluntary interview (Rath's et al, 1986). In using these methods, the teacher promotes valuation and assessment using the valuing process and avoids as much as possible direct inculcation of values. In promoting the formation of values, two aspects are emphasized: the choices and thought factors. If there is no fullness and free choice, anything other than appreciation is likely to occur at that time. The learners must be encouraged to ponder and select in order to build values.

2.0 Literature Review

Assessment is a process that helps focus attention towards what matters most in education, beyond just access and participation (EPPI, 2002, Harlen & Deakin 2002). It refers to processes in which evidence of learning is collected in a planned and systematic way in order to make a judgment about student learning (EPPI, 2002, Harlen & Deakin 2002). They reiterate that gathering information on where learners stand in their learning and the progress that they have made is important to designing strategies for further improvement of teaching and learning. At the same time sharing such information with stakeholders across the education system is essential to meet information needs and support decision making at the classroom, school and education system level (Mwaka et al, 2014). With effective assessment of learning it is argued that classroom teachers hold a wealth of information concerning each student. When presented in a systematic fashion it leads to greater understanding of individual and group learning needs and may lead to pre-emptive actions which would benefit learning trajectories (Mwaka et al, 2014). Teachers need to regularly find, out how well their learners are progressing or learning, how well the course objectives are being met, and the effectiveness of the specific lesson to help plan for the following day. This study focused on the following assessment methods:

2.1 Observation Method

Observation as an assessment method is defined as the systematic recording of observable events or behaviors in a natural setting (Gorman & Clayton, 2005) or as a nonjudgmental description of classroom events which can be analyzed and given interpretation. It is a method of

gathering data about the learners' learning development that can be interpreted by teachers to adjust their teaching in order to improve and promote learning and teaching (Bailey, 1998). Moreover, it captures some aspects of performance such as human skills and behaviors that are not collected through the conventional paper and pencil tests. In that way, it can improve teaching quality and learning effectiveness, especially for productive skills, which emphasize not only the product, but also the process of learning. Information collected through observation can be transformed into valuable feedback which facilitates the learners' progress and reflection on their learning and promotes their active involvement in assessing their own improvement, so that they finally possess ownership of their learning process (Chen, 2008). When observation method is objectively guided the educators are placed in a position of knowing the formed attitudes, value systems and interests in a learner. This study interrogated the use of this method by CRE teachers in gathering data related to learner value acquisition. Do CRE teachers consciously use this method to assess the effects of the CRE content they teach? What are the challenges they experience while using this method?

2.2 The Project Method

A project is a problematic act carried to completion in its natural setting- it is used in instruction to expose learners to learning activities that enable them to apply acquired knowledge and to create new knowledge (Mwaka et al, 2014). Mbiti (2018) adds that projects can be used for learning almost anything in any domain at any level. In the teaching of CRE, Kowino et al (2012) points out that project work fosters learners active participation in the learning process and if well designed is able to enhance and measure valuing skills such as identification of alternatives, identification of factors that prevent one from publicly favoring a value choice, identification of factors preventing one from acting regularly and consistently on a value choice and relating one value choice to other value choices. However, the major disadvantages related to the use of this method includes its time and resource dependence, requirement for competence in designing and the possibility of overlapping of subject matter (Mwaka et al, 2014)

2.3 Attitude and value scales

Were, (2006) posits that attitude and value scales are significant assessment tools in the teaching of CRE. These consist of a set of statements or questions which learners are asked to respond to, based on their personal preferences, feelings or beliefs (Onsongo, 2008). She continues to note that in these scales there are no correct or wrong answers to these questions but usually rating scales. The commonly used attitude and value scale used is the likert scale. In this scale, statements that reflect both positive and negative attitudes about a certain object or topic are stated. Learners are then asked to rate the statements in relation to their level of agreement. In the development of these scales, different researchers suggest similar steps in the process (DeVellis, 2017; Tezbaşaran, 1997). They suggest three main stages which include deciding the measure and purpose of the measurement, generating item pools and defining the format for the scale.

2.4 Comprehension exercises

The Comprehension exercise in the teaching and assessment of CRE is where a passage of text is used with a set of questions about its content. Usually the questions go well beyond mere comprehension, incorporating questions asking learners to be critical and occasionally creative (Onsongo, 2008). Onsongo points that this method is of particular importance for the study of biblical texts with a considerable depth of meaning. Kowino et al (2014), notes that the

Comprehension Exercise as a Valuing Method allows teachers to design comprehension exercises for several purposes including development of valuing skills, motivation, and other facilitating skills for work at several cognitive levels and to help learners practice self-exploration. For instance the tutor can give the students a story from a newspaper for them to read to help them explore aspects raised by the passage related to the topic under discussion. Abdelhalim (2017), adds that the effectiveness of this method is the learner's reading and comprehension abilities. This includes the learner being able to reflect on the availed information and thinking constructively, Similarly, engaging readers in shared inquiry on account of a discussion-based reading model results in effective stimulation of cognition among learners as they engage in reflecting and thinking about questions in texts. The context of engagement resides in keeping the readers cognitively and behaviorally active. Thus, it is essential to establish balance of interest for; - self-regulation, motivation, reading attitude and involvement with text should also be included in measuring readers' engagement (Roomy & Alhawsawi, 2019).

2.5 Use check lists

Novo-Corti (2015) argues that checklists, rating scales and rubrics are tools that state specific criteria and allow teachers and students to gather information and to make judgments about what students know and can do in relation to learning outcomes. They offer systematic ways of collecting data about specific behaviors, knowledge and skills. The quality of information acquired through the use of checklists, rating scales and rubrics is highly dependent on the quality of the descriptors chosen for assessment. Their benefit is also dependent on learners' direct involvement in the assessment and understanding of the feedback provided (Novo-Corti, 2015). The purpose of checklists, rating scales and rubrics is to provide tools for systematic recording of observations, provide tools for self-assessment, and provide samples of criteria for students prior to collecting. It also enables evaluating data on their work record the development of specific skills, strategies, attitudes and behaviors necessary for demonstrating learning and clarify students' instructional needs by presenting a record of current accomplishments.

2.6 Formal Classroom Tests

Formal classroom tests include paper and pencil tests and assignments designed for learners at intervals in their learning process (Mwaka *et al.*, 2014). If well designed they are instruments used to measure learning including interests and attitudes of learners. Teachers use these tests to measure the learners' performance and the extent to which learning objectives are being achieved. With this method both parents and teachers get insight into learners progress hence they are able to provide the necessary guidance and counseling. Onwuegbuzies (2004), points out that those students who are anxious lack the ability to complete assignments and tasks successfully.

3.0 Materials and Methods

This study employed the pragmatic research philosophy and adopted the concurrent triangulation mixed methods design which allows the researcher to merges qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. Collecting diverse data types best provides a complete understanding of the research problem than quantitative or qualitative data alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study was conducted in national secondary schools in Kenya. Kenya is a nation which is administratively subdivided in 47 counties. Within these counties are found national secondary schools. The researcher believes that these schools can provide a suitable environment for studying the use of assessment methods by CRE teachers to assess learner value acquisition considering the overall positive characteristics these schools are known for. This was because it provided the ideals of what is actually happening in schools that are endowed with teaching facilities, experienced teachers and highly performing students.

The data collection instruments for this study included the questionnaire, document analysis, interview and observation Schedules. All these instruments were designed to generate data from the CRE teachers and served well in triangulating the findings for an in-depth understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In determining the sample size, Creswell and Poth, (2018) suggest that a 30% sample of the total population was more representative. Stratified sampling was used to sample out the national schools for this study which had a target population of 95 schools at the time of the study. Schools in the counties were divided into 8 strata in terms of regions to enable the study capture a representative sample in terms of the total schools per region. After this, simple random choice of the schools was taken from each region. Simple random sampling was used because it gave a representation of relevant strata thus increasing the efficiency of the population represented in the sample in proportion to their number in the population in each stratum. With random selection, each population had an equal opportunity to be selected and the sample gave data that can be generalized to a larger population. Table 3.1 indicates the sample size of the study.

Table 1: Sample Size

Schools				Teachers			
Region	No of Schools	%	Sample size	Region	No of teachers	%	Sample size
A	21	30%	6	A	45	30%	14
B	12	30%	4	B	26	30%	8
C	6	30%	2	C	18	30%	5
D	14	30%	4	D	31	30%	9
E	15	30%	5	E	35	30%	10
F	6	30%	2	F	22	30%	7
G	12	30%	4	G	24	30%	7
H	9	30%	3	H	23	30%	7
Total	95		30		224		67

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Assessment methods CRE teachers use to assess learner value acquisition

Assessment is the process undertaken by teachers to determine whether there has been a change in learner's behavior as a result of the process of teaching and learning (Mwaka et al, 2014). The objective of the study was to establish the assessment methods CRE teachers use to assess learner value acquisition. The data for the objective was collected using a questionnaire that expected CRE teacher to respond to statements given through use of three measures -Very Frequently (VF), Frequently (F) and Not Used (NU). This was triangulated using the interview schedule, observation and document analysis. Table 2.1 presents data from the questionnaire which is then followed by data from the other instruments.

Table 2: Assessment Methods CRE Teachers use to Assess Learner Value AcquisitionKey: *Very Frequently (VF)*, *Frequently (F)* and *Not Used (NU)*

	VF	F	NU
Use of Observation to detect behavior that reflects value acquisition	10(20%)	40(80%)	0
Designing project work that helps bring out the values of the learners during their working	2(4%)	6(12%)	42(84%)
Use of attitude and value scales which learners respond to according to their personal preferences which helps to reflect the values they hold	2(4%)	2(4%)	46(92%)
Use of comprehension exercises that point to the values the learners hold	45(90%)	3(6%)	2(4%)
Use check lists to follow up change of behaviors of learners	2(4%)	3(6%)	45(90%)
Use of the formal classroom tests recommended by the school	0	5(10%)	45(90%)

(N=50)

4.1.1 Use of observation method

Onsongo (2008) notes that a teacher is in an excellent position to observe learners in various learning situations and thus note their attitudes, feelings, interests, and changes in their behaviour pattern. However, Onsongo (2008) stresses that there is need for teachers to develop the skill of observation for objective data collection from this method. In this study, the researcher provided CRE teachers with a statement to rate their use of observation as an assessment method for learner value acquisition through classroom content learning. The study revealed that the observation method was frequently used by teachers at 40 (80%) and 10 (20%) stating that they use it very frequently. There was no teacher who indicated that the method was not used. The study interpreted this to mean that CRE teachers use observation as a method to assess learner value acquisition.

The observation scheduled supported this finding in that the researcher was able to note that during all the classroom lesson presentations the CRE teachers were keen in observing the reaction of students to what was being taught and also in keeping order and class control. However whether this was actually to gather data on value acquisition was not really tangible since most of the content presented was leaning towards the cognitive domain. Document analysis also revealed that out of the 15 (100%) schemes of work analyzed, only 2(13%) did not indicate observation as a method of assessment. The teacher interviews that were done after the classroom observation revealed a number of issues related to this method when specifically used to assess learner value acquisition as indicated from the following selected teacher exhort:

“Observation is a method of assessment every teacher uses while teaching since the teacher has to note from facial expression whether the content is being understood or not however more than that is a bit difficult in that the affective domain is a covert area and really not observable” (Interview, CRE teacher, 2).

“Observation is good as far as a teacher is seeking to enhance the aspects of the cognitive domain especially when this is incorporated with oral questions, but to assess learner value acquisition through instant observation during content delivery may not really be possible since this may

require more time than just a single lesson and even a practical situation where the learner is not even aware that they are under observation” (Interview, CRE teacher, 14).

“The problem is that many aspects of the affective domain are prone to dishonesty and manipulation. What the teacher may observe may not necessarily be the truth as portrayed by the learner. The learner may be aware of what the teacher is looking for and thus pretend in order to be assessed favorably” (Interview, CRE teacher, 9).

“Value acquisition to be assessed requires a practical environment where they can be displayed. Like for example, the values of hard work, diligence and cooperation, I frequently observe in the learners class work through the efforts they put” (Interview, CRE teacher, 1).

From teaching my class over time, I would say there are learners who actually appreciate the values that the content encourages and they put effort to work on acquiring them” (Interview, CRE teacher, 5).

The interview schedule brought out challenges CRE teachers encounter when using observation method to assess learner value acquisition as listed: The interaction with learners in a single lesson does not give sufficient time to provide learners with mentorship in values from the content taught. The aspects of the affective domain are covert and not easily observable, also that they are prone to dishonesty and manipulation. The classroom environment may be a bit restrictive and may not allow learners to portray most of the values taught through the CRE content.

In support of this study findings, a study by Graham (2011), revealed that observation is accepted as a legitimate source of recording and reporting students demonstrations of learning outcomes in early childhood education, however as the student progresses to later years of schooling less and less attention is given to use of observation and more attention is given to formal assessment procedures. However, he continues to note that teacher observation is capable of providing substantial information on student demonstration of learning outcomes at all levels of education if well designed and purposefully used.

4.1.2 Designing project work

A project is a problem oriented assignment designed for learners with the aim of the achievement of set learning outcomes (Mwaka et al, 2014). Mwaka et al, (2014) continue to point out that project work is used in instruction to expose learners to learning activities that enable them to apply knowledge acquired and create new knowledge. The study respondents were asked if they designed projects to assess learner value acquisition and the responses were 6 (12%) of the teachers said they used it frequently with 2(4%) saying they used it very frequently. There were 42 (84%) teachers who stated that they did not use the method. This shows that majority of the CRE teachers did not design project work that helped to bring out the values of the learners during their working. Through the classroom observations there was no lesson that give learners a project to undertake and the document analysis of the observed teacher's schemes of work did not also indicate any planned project work. The study interpreted this to mean that the CRE teachers knew that projects were significant in assessing the affective domain attributes but they usually are time consuming and not easy to design. They also require input in terms of resources depending on the type of project.

This was confirmed from teacher interviews as portrayed from the following selected exhort:

“Designing projects is a time consuming undertaking and I’m not good at it especially those that relate to the topics that I teach” (Interview, CRE teacher, 2).

“Due to the fact that project work takes up time and resources, I prefer to have my learners do their project work during the school holidays. Like last holiday on the topic of leisure and work I asked them to read on the various forms of leisure and work activities and using pictures select those that they engaged in during the holiday giving their experiences including advantages and disadvantages (Interview, CRE teacher, 4).

“With the pressure to cover the syllabus content in time for revision, designing projects that focus on limited content is according to me a waste of time”. (Interview, CRE teacher, 2).

“I’m aware that project work if well designed is able to give learners opportunities to practice the values they have acquired apart from the application of knowledge and skills, the only problem is that if a teacher concentrates here the syllabus coverage is at risk of incompleteness and the learners may fail to do well in their final examination” (Interview, CRE teacher, 3).

The study noted that CRE teachers would prefer to use the project method to not only assess learner value acquisition but to also enhance learning frequently constrained by aspects such as the wide scope of the syllabus, time projects take to complete, resources required and the summative evaluations which tend to be cognitive oriented. These findings are in agreement with observations made in a previous study conducted by Bergmann & Sams, (2012) who found that much as project work help learners in mastering knowledge, skills and attitudes, they are not frequently used due to their time consuming nature.

4.1.3 Use of attitude and value scales

The use of attitude and value scales aims specifically at learners establishing what they are inclined to hold in terms of aspects of the affective domain (Onsongo, 2008). Onsongo (2014) explains that they consist of short sets of questions asking for what learners are inclined to hold on a specific topic or issue, or questions the answers to which can be given by self-rating on a scale. This can be done by filling in the scales in groups or by individual learners for personal involvement. The Study sought to establish if teachers use attitude and value scales in assessing learner value acquisition and the results indicated that 46(92%) of teachers do not use this method while only 2(4%) use it frequently and 2(4%) use it very frequently.

The study interpreted this to mean that CRE teachers are not keen at assessing their learners values and attitudes on aspects they teach because use of such a method has advantages like tracking changes in learners attitudes at the beginning of a lesson before the content is taught and at the end after the content has been covered (Onsongo, 2008). From lesson observation, the researcher noted that the teachers asked questions to gauge the learner’s perception towards attitudes held but there were no actual attitude and value scales used. Document analysis was also not able to identify anywhere where a teacher was to use this method in the assessment column in the scheme of work. From the CRE teacher interviews the study was able to gather data on the possible reasons way this method was rarely used as is reflected in the following selected exhort:

“What are attitude and value scales....I don't think I really know what they are later on using them in my class. I may have learnt them way back in my pre-service training but due to their underuse, I may have forgotten about them” (Interview, CRE teacher, 11).

“In the final exam, attitudes or values that touch on the learners directly are rarely asked. So I put more effort on what I feel matters more considering the time constraints and pressure in mean grades” (Interview, CRE teacher, 15).

“My wish is that we would have these scales designed for us so that all we do is use them. Otherwise for now, I have too much work and using these scales will really not bring in any added advantage to my end of year examinations results”.

“I'm aware of this method but I don't use it because it's not easy to construct the scales and with the huge number of students I teach, I prefer to concentrate on other aspects related to boosting the subjects mean grade” (Interview, CRE teacher, 10).

“I try my best to use this scales whenever I'm able to design them because it makes me feel I'm a good CRE teacher. Once I design one for a topic, I can use it over some time by simply modifying them slightly (Interview, CRE teacher, 8).

The interview schedule brought out the reasons why CRE teachers rarely use the attitude and value scales method to assess learner value acquisition: Insufficient knowledge and skill on the design and use of attitude and value scales; Final examinations do not question much about learner attitudes and values; Pressure to attain high mean scores in the final exams which are usually cognitive oriented; and Overloaded curriculum which has to be completed in time to allow revision.

4.1.4 Use of comprehension exercises

Comprehension exercise is a method of teaching where the teacher provides learners with a passage of text with a set of questions about its content (Onsongo, 2008). Usually the questions go well beyond mere comprehension incorporating questions asking learners to be critical and occasionally creative. In the teaching of CRE this method is of particular importance for the study of biblical texts with a considerable depth of meaning (Were, 2006).

The Study sought to establish if CRE teachers used comprehension exercises to assess learner value acquisition. The results indicated that 45(90%) of teachers used it very frequently and 3(6%) indicating they used it frequently. Those who did not use it were only 2(4%) and the study interpreted this to mean that these teachers did not relate this method with text reading of the bible which every CRE teacher must use. The finding was deduced to mean that CRE teachers make use of comprehension exercises to teach and assess learner value acquisition. Contrary to this however, the document analysis was not able to locate this method in the scheme of work but through the interview schedule realized that this method was the text reading method used by CRE teachers in the biblical stage of the life approach.

From interviews teachers supported this approach more for teaching and less for assessment as is indicated in the selected exhort:

“In the teaching of CRE the use of comprehension exercises is frequently used because the bible has to be understood and therefore readings from it are analyzed” (Interview, CRE teacher, 2).

“I use text reading in the biblical section of the life approach which I believe is a form of a comprehension exercise, however, I may not be very sure if this is a method I can use to assess learner value acquisition” (Interview, CRE teacher, 15).

“Through comprehension of biblical texts, learners internalize messages and I’m sure this speaks to them and shapes their character over time. However, as for using this method to assess acquisition of values themselves, this may not be easy because this may require a more practical approach (Interview, CRE teacher, 5).

“Asking questions after reading a biblical passage helps to enhance learner comprehension of the intended bible teachings. The section of application in the life approach moves this further in guiding learners on how to apply the teachings to their everyday experiences” (Interview, CRE teacher, 4).

In a study conducted by Jingblad & Johansson (2017) on the use of comprehension exercises for teaching and assessment, they discovered that students lacked intrinsic motivation to enable them develop autonomous and engaging reading habits and recommended that teachers need to work on helping students improve reading comprehension skills. Similarly, Protacio (2017) has suggested that reading engagement accounts for students’ motivation to read, participate in social activities that promote reading, use learning strategies while reading and developing meaning from texts. To enhance the comprehension exercise as both a teaching and assessment method, this study concurs with the above authors and proposes to concerned stakeholders to enable teachers to have them use the method more in assessing for value acquisition.

4.1.5 Use check lists

Burke (2014) describes a checklist as a strategy to monitor specific skills, behavior or dispositions of individual learners in class. He says that it’s a simple technique used to determine the behavior of a learner during the lesson and usually contains a list of attributes of behavior which the teacher is required to observe and tick whenever the behavior is displayed by the learner. As one of the methods used to assess learner acquisition of values the study sought to find out if CRE teachers made use of this method. The findings revealed that majority of the teachers did not use the method 45(90%) with only 3(6%) noting that they used it frequently and 2(4%) saying they used it very frequently. The study interpreted this to mean that CRE teachers rarely use the checklist as a method of assessing learner value acquisition. This was confirmed by document analysis and observation where it was noted that no teacher had indicated in the scheme of work this method on the column of assessment nor used it during teaching. The teacher interviews reveal some reasons why teachers do not make use of this method from the following selected exhort:

“For me I feel this method is ineffective because of the short time I’m in class and what we do with learners at that time....it’s mainly interaction through syllabus content which is most of the time on the cognitive level” (Interview, CRE teacher, 4).

“The use of a checklist to monitor learner affective characteristics at this level may not work because all that the learners do in my class is sit on their desks, listen and participate in the lesson could be through discussions, questions or any other method used. What would I really be checking in relation to behavior touching on values here? May be this would work better at early childhood level (Interview, CRE teacher, 11).

“Designing and implementing checklists for evaluating the affective domain requires time and skill which I must confess is difficult to have especially in the face of an overloaded curriculum and pressure on mean grades” (Interview, CRE teacher, 9).

“If only these checklists would be designed for us or even made available in bookshops, I would be willing to try and use them” (Interview, CRE teacher, 8).

The teacher exhortations revealed that they found it difficult to use checklists to assess value acquisition mainly because value acquisition was not an instantaneous aspect, it requires time and a real environment to be portrayed. They recommended that specialists in the ministry may be used to design checklists for particular topics that teachers can use to make this assessment easier for them.

4.1.6 Use of formal classroom tests

Classroom tests are predetermined collection of questions or tasks to which predetermined types of responses are to be sought (Mwaka et al, 2014). They are meant to measure the performance and capabilities of a learner in class in relation to the learning previously undertaken. When asked if the CRE teachers used formal classroom tests to assess learner acquisition of values, it was revealed that majority of the teachers do not at 45(90%). Only 5(10%) indicated that they frequently use this method. The study interpreted this to mean that much as formal classroom tests are the main mode of assessment in schools, they may not be effective for measuring the affective domain aspects. This was confirmed from document analysis where the test papers that were examined all indicated 95% cognitive questions with only 5% affective domain questions. The teacher interviews revealed teacher frustrations in relation to the use of this method to assess learner acquisition of values as can be witnessed from the following teacher's exhort:

“The examinations rarely question aspects related to value acquisition by students, so spending too much time in it can be counterproductive because learners may acquire values but fail in their exams which is basically cognitive oriented and the blame can come back to me as the teacher”. (Interview, CRE teacher, 10).

The study revealed that CRE teachers mainly concentrate on teaching and assessing for high mean grades which frequently test the cognitive domain. This according to the teachers is the main reason why the affective domain which is the backbone of the subject is neglected.

5.0 Conclusions

In light of the study findings, the following conclusions were made; it was observed that the use of assessment methods to assess learner value acquisition are in use to a varied extent: observation, 50 (100%); project work, 8 (16%); attitude and value scales, 4 (8%); check lists, 5 (10%); comprehension exercises, 47 (96%) and formal classroom tests, 5 (10%) and are facing challenges in their implementation. These challenges include the schools' overconcentration on the cognitive domain, inadequate in-service training and an overloaded curriculum. There was also a lack of appropriate commitment by the teachers and an environment that does not favor the use of these methods to a large extent.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the researcher made the following recommendations.

First, frequent in-servicing of teachers teaching subjects rich in values to ensure their continued competencies in teaching and assessment for learner value acquisition.

Second, the ministry of Education through KICD and KNEC to provide an enabling environment for the teaching and testing of value acquisition in schools. KICD subject panels for instance can develop measuring tools that teachers can use in schools to measure the affective domain in form of formative assessments and the KNEC to include more aspects of the affective domain in their final certification examinations to reduce the teachers over reliance on the cognitive domain.

Third, the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in teacher education should ensure that teachers of CRE are adequately prepared during their pre-service training to enable them be able to cope with the expertise required for the implementation of teaching and assessment for learner value acquisition.

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