An Assessment of Family-School Collaboration toward Children's Moral Development in Tanzania: Do They Speak the Same Language?

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Abstract- The process of nurturing children's moral development in the contemporary social and globalized world calls for closer cooperation among various participants who often interact with children. The extent of stakeholders' collaboration on this aspect in the Tanzanian context is not well known. The objectives of this study were twofold: First, it sought to ascertain how parents and teachers' understanding of collaboration toward children's moral development influenced their efforts towards children's moral development. Second, it sought to assess the congruence of strategies employed to enhance children's moral development among parents and teachers. The study was conducted in two primary schools in Lushoto district, Tanga region in Tanzania, East Africa. It involved fifteen (15) participants including two head teachers, four teachers who were members of the schools' committee, four religion teachers, four parents and one coordinator of the Non-Government Organization (NGO) that supports education in primary schools.

Keywords: families, parents, teachers, schools, children, collaboration, moral development, school committee, teaching strategies, religion subjects.

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Keyterms: families, parents, teachers, schools, children, collaboration, moral development, school committee, teaching strategies, religion subjects.

I. Introduction

It is established that the moral development of children is a shared responsibility of key partners such as families, peers, schools, the media and religions rather than being the role of any institution in isolation (Lickona, 1988; Smetana, 1999; Zdenek & Schochor, 2007; Cowan, Pruett, Pruett & Wong, 2009; Ajayi, Haastrup & Arogundale, 2009; Oladipo, 2009; Adejobi, 2014). Although Oladipo's (2009) paper identifies roles that parents, educators and religions need to play in children's moral development, it does not provide a clue on efforts to form effective collaboration to ensure smooth children's moral development. In the context of the Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model of human development, the transition of a child from one microsystem to another involves interactions with significant people who play roles of socializing her/him to the aspects of the right and wrong behavior. This transition may only have positive results in the children's moral development when it is properly coordinated so as to produce an all rounded person in them. Lickona (1988 p. 36) maintains that even if schools can improve students' conduct during school hours, the likelihood of lasting on the character of a child is less when school values are not reinforced at home.

It is apparent that in some parts of the world, if not everywhere, the efforts of nurturing children's moral development have been slowed rather than propelled by the advances in Information and Communications Technology (ICT). These advances have tended to bring with them some disastrous consequences in the children's social lives and hamper their moral refinement. For instance, it is common that the media in the form of television, video games, and internet, as well as peer interest on movies have greater influence than parents and teachers when it comes to issues of familiarizing children with the issues of right and wrong. Consequently, the occasions of disrespect among children and adolescents in schools and in families, teenage pregnancies and adolescents' drug use and imprudence are on the increase. In the Tanzanian context, the parents-teachers conflicts related to children's unbecoming behaviors are common, while one could expect the two sides to address children's moral issues concordantly. Hence, doubts emerge as to whether parents, teachers and other partners responsible for nurturing children's moral development so as to produce holistic and responsible citizens work for the common goal.

II. Literature Review

The aspect of family-community-school partnership in the child development and learning has been termed crucial for children's growth (Lickona, 1988; Ooms& Hara, 1991; Wynne, 1991; Jordan, Orozco & Averett, 2001; Kiggins & Cambourne, 2007; Kutelu & Olowe, 2013; Odejobi, 2014; Kotirde & Yonus, 2014).Both families and schools influence children's learning and moral development in multiple ways. However, the link among these contexts and their roles

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is not well developed (Palencher, Vondra & Wilson, 2000; Epstein, 2005).In the developing countries, the school-family partnership is much weaker (Sathiapama, Wolhuter, Charl, Wyk & Noleen van, 2012; Okeke, 2014; Uwezo, 2010; Bougnen, Gumede & Gurgand, 2015) relative to the Western world. In Tanzania, for example, one of the occasions where collaboration between parents and schools has tended to improve recently, particularly in the 21st century includes issues of parent engagement and involvement in school administration (Seni, 2013; Maganda, 2016). The first decade of the 21st century witnessed Tanzanian government expanding enrolment in both primary and secondary education systems through the program called Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) (Ministry of Education and Culture [MoEC], 2001). It was after the introduction of the PEDP that new guidelines on formation of the school committees were made, which involved parents and teachers in running the affairs of the school (MOEC, 2001). However, the engagement and involvement does not seem to have broadened its scope to cover issues of children's moral development. Some literature depicts children's moral development as a shared responsibility (Lickona, 1988; Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Clarken, 2007; Oladipo, 2009; Rahiem, Abdullah & Rahim, 2012; McCormick, Capella, O'Connor & McGlowry, 2013). The view of collective responsibility among partners is supported by the correspondence theory which advocates that the social interactions in the schools should replicate those in the wider society as a school is a macrocosm of the wider society (Bowles & Gintis, 2001). It is obvious, however, that the moral aspects of education are largely sidelined in education (Arguelles, McCraty & Rees, 2003; Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Ball, 2008; LeBlanc & Gallavan, 2009; Alt & Reingold, 2012; Mngarah, 2008, 2016). In fact, there has been an outcry towards uplifting the status of moral education in school curriculum (Korthagen, 2001; Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Campbell, 2008; LeBlanc &Gallavan, 2009, Anangisye, 2006, 2010).

Currently, there is a renewed interest towards collaboration for promoting the moral literacy (Tuana, 2007; Zdenek & Schochor, 2007;Clarke, 2010; Sagnak, 2012;Odejobi, 2014).The collaboration of families and schools towards moral development of children is associated with some gains in students' learning, such as social competence, emotional development, motivation to learn, positive student-teacher and peer relationships, academic attainment, and intrinsic motivation (Jordan, Orozco & Averett, 2001;Huitt & Dawson, 2011; CASEL, 2013). In their study, Durlak, Weissberg, Schellinger, Dymnicki & Taylor (2011) found that when the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) intervention includes policy makers, educators and the public, children demonstrate not only improved academic performance; they also improved in social-emotional skills, attitudes as well as behavior. The impact of the relationship between schools and families include lowering delinquency behaviors among children and adolescents (McCormick, Capella, O'Connor & McClowry, 2013).

The children's moral development has been widely theorized, but it is unfortunate that the main focus has been on development of children's moral reasoning powers where the cognitive moral development theory dominates (Kholberg, 1991; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma & Bebeau, 2000; Lind, 2000, 2006, 2013; Yűskel, 2005). This theory has been commonplace in the educational institutions but is less applicable in family contexts because families are not well versed with the stages involved in children's cognitive moral development (Mureithi, Nyaga & Kaaria, 2014). Parents may be able to determine their children's advancement in thinking and judging at different instances but that would not mean they are acquainted with the stages of the cognitive moral development theory.

The theories that are suitable for the parent-school collaboration in advancing children's moral development need to apply equally in both family and school contexts. For example, the tripartite theory of moral cognition, feeling and action is suitable as a holistic framework for moral education (Clarken, 2006, 2007). Since the theory attributes moral development to the aspect of cognition, feelings and action with regard to right and wrong in interactions and relationships, it tends to fit in the socialization roles in families as well as in teaching processes in schools. While schools seem to be proper settings for moral cognition, families tend to be appropriate scenario for feelings and actions, where imitation, role modeling, reward and punishment and authority approaches can be practiced (Ryan, 1985; Arthur, 2008). In the course of adult-children interactions at the family and school levels, therefore, the tripartite theory plays significant part. Further, moral feelings and actions may also be promoted when the school climate is set to foster social and emotional learning (Cohen, 2006; Hoffman, 2009). It is unfortunate, however, that contemporary schooling tends to be so academic-oriented that the moral feelings and actions, as well as social goals of education are not emphasized (Campbell, 2008; Vavrus, Thomas, & Bartlett, 2011; Awhen, Edinyang & Ipuole, 2014; Mngarah, 2008, 2016). In the discussion on collaboration of stakeholders towards children's moral development, Clarken (2006 p. 3) laments that society, parents and educators pay too little attention to moral education or character training; parents are occupied with material pursuits and pleasures, while school teachers concern themselves mainly with maintaining classroom order and providing intellectual training. This suggests that the accessibility of theories on moral development does not necessarily translate into children's moral development, as emphasis may be on other contesting issues. Strike (2008 p. 132), on the other hand, fears that the culture

created in schools dominated by a concern for tests based on accountability and an appeal to the importance of human capital are likely to be counter-productive so far as moral education is concerned. Further, the study by Mngarah (2008) established that the status of moral and humanistic values education is lowered by the concern for academic pursuits in Tanzania.

The socio-cultural theory of child development supports the tripartite theory in studying the family-school collaboration for uplifting children's moral development. The theory maintains that children are inseparable from their social contexts, and knowledge and meanings are seen as embedded within social cultural practices (Hamer, 2005, p. 70). Although the theory is basically on the role of language, the fact that it emphasizes social interactions and learners' participation in the real world as they construct meaning implies that the learning outcomes ensuing are not only language acquisition, but also social learning that includes moral development. Hence, the more families and schools provide collaborative and transformative learning opportunities in the context of the socio-cultural theory, the more they foster moral development in addition to the original goals of language literacy.

The attachment theory is yet another theory that supports children's moral development as a collaborative effort. When secure attachment is assured in both families and schools, children's development becomes more consistent than when attachment lacks in any of the parties responsible for the child development. Scholars have related secure attachment of both families and schools with children's higher academic attainment, better self-regulation, social competence, appropriate moral reasoning, feelings and behavior and reduced emotional and behavioral problems (Bowlby, 1982; Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004; Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Stevens, 2009; Riley, 2009). For the attachment theory to work effectively, however, the attachment from one ecological model has to be linked with the other. However, it is not well known in the Tanzanian context how attachment from families corresponds with that from schools for the purpose of nurturing children's moral development, which makes this study pertinent.

Overall, it may be argued that theories on children's moral development that link families with schools need to expose children to the Four Components Model that encompasses moral sensitivity, moral judgment, moral motivation and moral character aspects (Bebeau, Rest & Narvaez, 1999). While these components have varying degrees of application in families and schools, their effective use facilitates children's development of moral competences as they learn differently from those settings. In fact, families and schools have wide opportunities and space for interactions with children that involve the tripartite, social cultural and attachment theories, and the Four Components Model irrespective of how they are informed of these theories and the model.

Whereas families, schools and religious institutions have from time immemorial attempted to foster children's moral development, the teaching and learning strategies for fostering children's moral development that link families and schools do not seem to be in place. While the traditional strategies such as exhortation, example, expectation and experience (Ryan, 1985; Arthur, 2008), and direct transmission of moral values (Wynne, 1991) and use of songs (Odejobi, (2014) had been effective in the past, the world has changed to render those strategies ineffective (Kohn, 2006; Campbell, 2008). There are contemporary strategies that scholars highlight as effective in children's moral development. These include, for example, observation (Spence, 2003), critical listening (English, 2011), and constructive controversy in discussions (Tichy, Johnson, Johnson & Roseth, 2010). Conversely, the extent to which these strategies apply in both family and school contexts for nurturing moral development among children is subject to study.

The learning outcomes in the area of moral development that stem from family-school collaboration have been articulated in the literature. Theories such as the attachment theory (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004; Bergin & Bergin, 2009; Stevens, 2009; Riley, 2009) have proved that the closer and positive relationships with children influence their social and particularly moral development. The care theorists equally associate caring with improved moral development among children (Noddings, 2002, 2008, 2010). However, since children's moral development, which results from collaboration work, is not well studied in the Tanzanian context the researcher felt it imperative to undertake a study on how the collaboration among the parents and teachers' in fostering children's moral development worked.

III. Problem Statement

While it is appreciated that parents, schools and religious institutions need to share the responsibility of nurturing children's moral development (Zdenek & Schochor, 2007; Oladipo, 2009), the extent to which parents and teachers collaborate for the purpose is not clearly known in the Tanzanian context. There are doubts as to whether those parties work in concert for the purpose of grooming an all-rounded person in children. It is also not well established whether there is congruence of the strategies these parties employ in enhancing children's moral development. The study was undertaken at a time when the moral development of the Tanzanian children, youth as well as the adult society does not seem to portray a good image of the society

that lived amicably up to the 1990s (Mlekwa, 1990). The Tanzanian society is nowadays prone to various moral decadences such as youth disrespect and rebellion, teenage pregnancies, corruption, family breakdown, disputes among agricultural and pastoral communities, political disputes, to mention a few. The Tanzanian society shares the global trends in the moral crisis and the outcry on need for moral literacy (Lickona, 2006; Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Tuana, 2007; Zdenek & Schochor, 2007; Campbell, 2008; Oladipo, 2009; Anangisye, 2006, 2010, Mngarah, 2008, 2016). While the need to engage and involve parents in children's moral development is well articulated (Lickona, 1988; Berkowitz & Grych, 1998; Huitt & Dawson, 2011), the Tanzanian situation regarding collaboration towards nurturing children's moral development has not been adequately studied.

IV. METHODS

a) Study Area

The study was undertaken in Lushoto district, Tanga region. The district is located in the Usambara Mountains where most of its inhabitants reside. People living in the district speak the 'Sambaa' language (Tanzania comprises as many as 120 ethnic groups- Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia, 2017) and its people used to live harmoniously. The researcher undertook the study while doing the clinical supervision of the University of Dodoma (UDOM) students who had been posted for the teaching field work in the district in August-September 2016. The researcher's stay in the field site enabled him to learn and interact with the study participants, hence obtaining the necessary data for the study.

b) Design

The study employed the multiple case study design (Miles & Huberman, 1994, Merriam, 1998) and was interpretive in nature as it focused on sociological aspects of education that hinge on meanings socially made by those involved in the phenomenon studied (Burrell & Morgan, 2005). The study cases included two primary schools each comprising Head teacher, teachers, and parents, while the coordinator of the NGO 'PamojaTuwalee' (literally meaning 'together we nurture them') formed a case of its own. Both the schools and study participants were sampled purposively: one school was located at the district headquarters thus representing the urban character, while the other was rural based and served by the NGO. The NGO works on women empowerment as well as serving girl students from underprivileged areas and schools in the district. The study participants were selected purposively on the basis of theirroles and positions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007).

c) Participants

The study involved fifteen (15) participants. These included two (2) primary school Head teachers, four (4) teachers, two from each school who represented other teachers in each school committee (it is mandatory that the school committees have two teachers as members from the teaching staff and the Head of the school who serves as secretary to the school committee (Agency for the Development of Educational Management [ADEM], 2016). Four religion teachers, two from each school were also included. It is worth noting that although Tanzania is a secular state, it boosts the teaching of religion in schools (see, United Republic of Tanzania, Parliament Records, 2010; Tanzania Institute of Education [TIE], 2010). The main religions in Tanzania are Islam and Christianity. Teachers for the Christian religion come from different denominations, and students from each denomination go to their respective classes, while Moslem students go to one classroom. While some religion teachers come from the nearby churches and mosques, some primary school teachers volunteer to teach the religion subject, thus cooperating with those from out of schools. There are specific syllabi authorized by the government which are used in schools. Four parents who were leaders of the school committee were involved, two from each school. Finally, one participant from the NGO was involved. The Head teachers made appointments with the study participants and made arrangements with the researcher for the sessions.

Parents involved in the study were members as well as leaders of the school committees who, by virtue of their roles, often interacted with the schools as well as authorities that oversee the educational matters in the study area. The guidelines require that both the chairperson and vice-chairperson of the school committees are learned people with the minimum qualification of the Ordinary Level of secondary education (Agency for the Development of Educational Management [ADEM], 2016).Hence, the selection of these leaders was based on being familiar with the schools as well as knowing the families under their jurisdiction.

d) Procedures

The study was carried out using the focus group discussion with the head teachers, religion teachers as well as school teachers who were members of the school committee, and parent leaders forming the school committees. It is interesting to note that the focus group discussion that involves participants from divergent groups becomes active as each part presents its subjective perspective to be shared in the discussion. The interview method was administered with the Head Teachers as well as the coordinator of the NGO. A review of documents focused at obtaining information

on the status of family-school collaboration in the directives, as well as in research.

e) Analysis

Data gathered from conversations and documentary evidence was analyzed thematically as gathered in the field. The researcher transcribed the interviews in group setting, an interview with the coordinator of the NGO, field notes and documentary evidence and developed codes out of the transcribed data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The process of data reduction occurred each day the data was gathered. At the end of data gathering, the reduced data was organized into four main themes namely, *perspectives on aspect of collaboration*; *cultural aspect*; *curricula issues*, and *teaching strategies*. The four themes developed were eventually interpreted and presented as findings of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The primary units of analysis were study participants namely the Head teachers, teachers, parents, the NGO coordinator, and written texts in form of teaching guidelines. Although the data applicable to this study was derived from one district within Tanzania, the conclusion drawn in the study can be generalized to the whole country owing to the fact that the curriculum in Tanzania is centralized. Besides, various cultural practices of the ethnic group studied are shared by other Tanzanian ethnic groups. Nevertheless, generalization in qualitative inquiries matters less because the approach looks more for unique aspects which cannot necessarily be generalized all over (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007, 2009).

The philosophical tool of analysis that informed the data was the interpretive paradigm, which provides room for understanding the world as it is. That is, social reality becomes 'little more than a network of assumptions and inter-subjectively shared meanings' (Burrell & Morgan, 2005 pp. 28-31). Hence, the analysis ended with the interpretation of the data gathered from the conversations and written text, basically focusing on the perspectives which were made by participants themselves.

V. Results

Findings resulting from the analysis of conversations and study of documents indicated varied feelings, outlooks and experiences regarding an understanding of collaboration for promoting children's moral development and strategies for fostering children's moral development. The findings are presented in the form of statements made by Head teachers, school teachers who were teachers' representatives on the school committees, teachers who taught religion subjects, parents' representatives, coordinator of the NGO, as well as the content of the documents scrutinized.

a) Views on the Understanding of Collaboration towards Children's Moral Development

The first objective of the study sought to identify how participants' understanding of collaboration for fostering children's moral development influenced their performance. The underlying assumption was that since school going children interact with their families as well as teachers in schools, both parents and teachers had a stake on their moral development. However, the understanding of presence of other partners who share the role of nurturing children's moral development does not necessarily lead to collaboration with them. Hence, it was imperative to obtain the views of the study participants regarding sharing of the responsibility of nurturing moral development of the children. Some statements made by the Head teachers, teachers, and parents through the interview and focus group discussion sessions revealed that the knowledge of presence of partners did not result in collaboration towards children's moral development, as will be pointed out shortly.

i. *Head teachers' Understanding of Collaboration for Children's Moral Development*

The two Head teachers provided their views and experiences of collaboration with families, particularly parents. Both Head teachers stated that while it was apparent that collaboration with families was vital towards achieving the goal of nurturing children's moral and other social behavior and conduct, families did not cooperate with schools. It was learnt that parents perceived school initiatives negatively no matter how appropriate the initiatives were. The view that schools belonged to the communities surrounding them, according to the Head teachers, was not strongly received by parents despite efforts to familiarize them with the need to be close to school teachers so as to enable their children to obtain relevant education.

In one of the focus group discussion sessions, one Head teacher provided an instance, where parents had accused the school for not allowing students to attend prayers on Friday, since the school day ends well after Friday prayers. The Head teacher claimed that majority of students in his school were Moslems, and, together with his staff, they thought it wise to allow students to go to the nearby village mosque for prayers every Friday. However, they realized that when students were released, they often misused the time for prayers and roamed around playing, while others' whereabouts could not be known. The headmaster and teachers decided to punish the students. He further narrated his story as follows:

On one Monday morning, we assembled all the students before commencement of classes and

punished all those students who had not gone for prayers the previous Friday. The list was large: out of 460 students, only seven had attended prayers in the mosque, while others had disappeared. Since the school was in the valley, it was easier for parents to see that their children were being punished, and in no time a large group of men entered the school compound, observing me offering two strokes to each student. When one elder member asked one of the teachers why I was punishing the students, and was given the answer, he told his colleagues '*Waume! Netihaukei! Avyeghoshoa n' sawa! (*Literally meaning: *Gentlemen! Let us leave! He is right!).*

The Head teacher further stated that after the incident, the village leaders bought facilities and expanded the mosque so as to accommodate the large numbers of students who were now used to go for prayers. However, apart from realizing that the school was concerned with the moral development of children to the extent of demanding them to attend prayers in the churches and mosques, parents could not see the school as an important partner in children's moral development. The Headmaster further narrated that the school purchased mattresses and donated them to the village mosque as a way to forge links with the community with regard to children's moral development but could not win the direct support of parents.

Another Head teacher made his views in the focus group discussion session, criticizing the parents' failures to collaborate with schools on issues that could be handled by teachers, instead going to the district offices to sue teachers. He was reporting an incident, when one of the parents had reported to the district authorities that his school charged parents money while the practice had been abolished. He said:

> When we were preparing for the national examinations last year, one parent went to the District Education Officer to accuse the school of charging students money so as to photocopy the past examination papers. Actually, the teacher was asked by some students to allow them to produce a copy of the paper whose questions she had solved, and she gave them the paper with good intentions. Unfortunately, one student seemed to take advantage of it, and to ask the parent to give him money so as to produce copies from colleagues. The parent reported to the district authorities; and probably pleased when we were harassed by authorities for the mistake we did not do.

In another focus group discussion session, the Head teacher and two female teachers who served as school committee members reported that collaboration between families and schools is hindered by the culture and traditions of the surrounding communities. It was established that the gender roles among the *Sambaa*

ethnic group where the study was undertaken largely involved mothers providing care to children while fathers assumed the role of bread-earner for the family. Hence, while fathers went out to work, mothers took care of the children, as well as producing crops in the nearby family farms; ensured that children went to school, and were healthy. In the event of any problem at school, children would send information to mothers, who would in turn inform the husbands upon their return. However, the fathers usually returned late, and had no time with the children owing to the nature of their activities. Yet, whenever the parents were summoned to school, it was the father who went to school to settle matters with teachers, particularly with the Head teacher.

The Head teacher and two teachers narrated an occasion involving an angry father who came to the Head teacher to demand explanations as to why some female teachers nagged his daughter to the extent of distressing her learning in the classroom. In the interrogation, the father informed the Head teacher that his class six daughter had been complaining to her mother several times that two teachers hated her, and made her life miserable in school. The complaints had heightened to such an extent that that the father decided to visit the Head teacher, so as to make sure that the Head teacher disciplined his subordinate teachers. The Head teacher asked the father to be patient and called for those teachers in order to resolve the matter amicably. When the two teachers came, and were informed of the parent's concern, they sent for the student, who came to the office. Teachers then sent for the student's bag before they started discussion. When the student's bag was emptied, it was found to contain clothes which the girl used to wear after classes, putting the school uniforms in the bag, and then going to her boyfriend, who had a small shop nearby, and whom the teachers knew well. Later on, it was realized that the girl was already pregnant.

The Head teacher and teachers maintained that parents need to perceive school, and teachers positively so that they can work in harmony to prepare young children to become responsible and effective citizens. They realized that some students used the miscommunication between their parents and teachers, which arose from the cultural lag, to engage in inappropriate behaviors. They further claimed that whenever a parent showed up in the school, there was either a conflict between a student and one of the teachers or some unusual event, and in such situations, the parent would usually go straightly to the Head teacher, rather than seek clarification from responsible teachers. Thus, the perspective regarding collaboration with families for fostering children's moral development from the school was defined by frustrations resulting from the families' failure to effectively cooperate with schools.

ii. *Teachers' Views on Collaboration for promoting Children's Moral Development*

Teachers who formed the school committee members had the same concerns with those of the Head teachers. They added another perspective namely ignorance in addition to cultural lag, maintaining that some parents were ignorant of their roles towards children's moral development. One of the teachers from the urban based school made her comments as follows:

I am both a school teacher as well as a parent. One of the challenges facing the collaboration efforts is in terms of ignorance. Many parents fail to realize the right things for children to do and what they should not do. Take an example of the television programs. Children hold the remote control and do not give it to adults when asked, and yet some parents feel that children have the right to watch every TV program with no restriction. It is the parents' ignorance which causes them to fail to set limits to children regarding right and wrong. In such a situation, collaboration becomes difficult because some parents fail to realize that children are not supreme powers in discerning right from wrong.

Teachers further asserted that collaboration with families for the purpose of promoting children's moral development was largely affected by parents' negative feelings towards the teachers. They cited financial contributions which parents were asked to make so as to improve educational delivery as one of the areas that faced severe resistance, and that does not match the amount requested. Teachers maintained that there were some instances when students needed to be assisted, such as producing copies of documents so that each student could have his/her own copy in order to learn effectively, but when such information reached the parents, it was perceived as the teachers' means of making money in an unacceptable manner. One of the teachers from an urban school intimated that many teachers had considered collaboration insignificant because, after all, there was pressure from the authorities focusing on academic performance, with little stress on the moral question. She said:

After all, I am employed to teach academic subjects in the classroom. That is exactly what I do. I think the best thing to do is to fulfill my obligations which are emphasized by my employer, that is, going to class and teaching my subject. In my opinion, there is no need for teachers to look for partnership with parents in order to promote the moral development of children, in a situation where parents are distrustful, and where we are under pressure from the authorities to deal with academics. Many of us (teachers) know what it means to be a teacher, but we need to follow what the employer wants us, to be on the safe side!

The other teacher from a rural school brought her experience of the outcome of poor collaboration on children's moral development. She had the following to say:

As a class teacher, it is my role to monitor students' attendance as well as participation in classroom activities. As time went on, I realized that some students missed school regularly, but one of them absented himself for a prolonged period. When I asked other students who lived in his neighborhood, they told me that they used to come to school with him but the boy left after roll call in the morning, and later on totally stopped coming. After my efforts to summon his parents failed, the school administration intervened but, by then, it was too late as the boy could not return to normal even after he continued with schooling.

Generally speaking, teachers expressed discontent regarding the collaboration effort which they believed to be among the appropriate ways to nurture an all rounded person in young children.

iii. *NGO Coordinator's Views on Collaboration*

Through the interview, the coordinator of the 'PamojaTuwalee'(together we foster them)stated that her organization was concerned by the ignorance and cultural aspects that disempowered women, hence affecting girls. She maintained that female parents in the area under study were so marginalized by the cultural practices that their contribution towards the moral and social development of their children was not significant. She maintained that the NGO was founded so as to help provide education to female parents and female students so as to emancipate them from practices which relegated their contribution as care givers. The NGO provided life skills education, issues of gender equality, women's rights and entrepreneurial education. Regarding collaboration, she asserted that the culture that confines women at home, thus limiting their ability to follow up on their children's progress at school, was common among the *Sambaa* communities. While some women in the study area were observed to fill the market places with different goods they sold, it was clearly the case that the local customs favored men to go to school to resolve children's matters.

iv. *Parents' Views on Collaboration for Children's Moral Development*

The parent representatives appreciated that despite their close link with the schools, the theme of collaboration with the schools for the sake of fostering children's moral development was new to them. They stated that their main focus had not been on what children learnt in schools to become moral people, but rather, that they focused on issues of resource allocation and management. Regarding collaboration, these leaders stated that there was a vacuum that

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needed to be filled between families and schools so that issues of children's moral, social, emotional and total development are clearly articulated. One of the school committee leaders admitted that while most parents were well aware of the role of advancing children's moral development at the family level, they tended to be ignorant of the aspect of sharing the caring for children with teachers. He presented the understanding of a common rural-based person on issues of children's moral development and gender roles in children's education as follows:

> For a typical *Sambaa* man, the role of child rearing falls to mothers, while we, men, struggle to ensure that our families have the basic needs. It is shameful for any *Sambaa* man to fail to feed his family, and fail to clothe them. For quite a long time now, we know that the government has made enrolment and attendance at school mandatory. In our case, we always expect that women have the obligation of ensuring that children go to school.

From the foregoing statements, it is evident that cultural and gender issues influence children's education. Hence, to some male parents, sending children to school is merely 'business as usual;' and so, visiting school occurs on specific occasions. This explains why some parents seem to be ignorant of what schooling has at stake for their children, which, further, puts collaboration efforts in jeopardy.

However, another parent-member of the school committee challenged the school system for providing education whose outcomes are knowledge-oriented, rather than competence-based, contending that students are not taught to be creative while in schools. It appears the parent was reacting to the earlier comments that indicated lack of communication with the schools. He raised the following remarks:

> Let me say two things. First, I agree that much needs to be done to bring parents closer to schools, so we can share ideas on how best we can raise our children in all spheres of life; and in fact, we are spending this much of our time to change parents' mindsets. There are many positive changes these days and the Head teacher may be a witness. On the other hand, however, I am concerned that those students who do not manage to go for secondary education do not come out with any skills that they may apply. I would have expected them to come back home and help their parents with ideas on social and economic activities. Instead, I sadly realize that they do not have any ideas, and just end up wandering around purposelessly. This is discouraging!

The foregoing views show parents' dissatisfaction with what goes on in school. It seems that there are multiple issues that could be addressed had the communication between families and schools been effective. It is worth noting, thus far, that the status of family-school collaboration in the research area was, on the average, low; but with respect to the moral development of the children, collaboration, it was largely missing.

b) Views on Congruence of Strategies to Enhance Children's Moral Development

The second objective of the study sought to assess the congruence of the strategies that families and schools employed, so as to foster children's moral development. The underlying assumption was that parents and teachers had conscious and deliberate measures meant to address the moral development of children. The researcher's interest was to determine whether the strategies used by families and schools to foster children's moral development were coordinated so that moral development at the family level was similarly operative in schools. Various views were presented by the study participants.

i. Head Teachers' Views on Congruence of Strategies for Children's Moral Development

Both schools' Head teachers provided their experience of strategies they employed to address student's moral development, maintaining that their main role in relation to moral development was setting the environment to be conducive for social and moral development to occur. They argued that the role of stimulating children's moral development was a shared responsibility in such a way that when every teacher entered the classrooms and taught his/her subject, he/she found him/herself already encouraging children, disciplining them and modifying the children's behavior. To them, when the school environment is made a safe place; and the rules are clearly known and followed; as such, the risk of contravening the arrangements is lowered, which is an essential stage for building in young students a disciplined mind. In one of the interviews, one of the Head teachers stated as follows:

> When you are heading a school with such a large population of students and teachers and you do not want to fail, the first thing to do is to strictly set your own principles so that each member, young and old is well aware of the roles and responsibilities expected of them. Then, you need to be strict and to ensure that there is order and discipline. When there is order, students learn to be accountable and responsible, to respect the social order, to be self-disciplined, and to acquire integrity. As for families, the strategies are diverse though most of them are alike: based on strict discipline, spearheaded by fathers in each household.

Through the interviews and focus group sessions, the head teachers consistently linked

children's moral development with the overall school activities, maintaining that the teaching and learning processes in the classrooms, the extra-curricular activities, and the student social welfare, all hinged on the kind of school administration. Head teachers admitted that the congruence of strategies for promoting children's moral development was difficult to determine with clarity because the contemporary socio-economic development exposed children to alien values. While families had been the main socializing agencies, the coming of television, video shows, movies and widespread movements, made possible by means of enhanced transportation, have made children susceptible to different values systems.

ii. *Teachers' Views on Congruence of Strategies for Uplifting Moral Development*

The researcher's interest to establish the congruence of school and family strategies for fostering children's moral development elicited responses from both school subject teachers and religion teachers' views. It is worth noting that fortunately, all the teachers involved in the study had families; so they had the experience of parenting, besides their practice of teaching. The religion teachers asserted that the teaching of religion had a direct relationship with fostering students' moral development. They maintained the teaching of the word of God through the Holy books enabled children to develop fear of God and therefore, lead the lives of respecting others, hardworking, truthfulness, perseverance, reconciliation and other virtues. One of those teachers summed up the position of religion teachers as follows:

We are all aware that the world is full of temptations, and our children are vulnerable to different enticements. Many young people have dreams of earning millions of money and leading luxurious lives, without working for it. Realizing that they are easily enticed, we teach them that God likes upright people. For instance, I once used the example of the sale of Joseph into Egypt in the Bible to teach students that good life does not come by easily. So the use of different stories helps our students to learn to become good and responsible people.

In general, religion subject teachers were agreed that the strategy of teaching the word of God through various verses and making a point to students regarding their moral lives was among the best strategies to enable students develop their moral behaviors. Regarding the teaching of religion in families, religion teachers stated that even where families were religious, it would not be possible to determine the extent to which children were taught religion at the family level, as families had different levels of commitment to religion. However, religion teachers appreciated that the students' understanding of different aspects they had taught them also reflected the fact that there were other teachings from the religious institutions, which the students attended after school time.

The other teachers who taught secular subjects had varied views regarding congruence of strategies to stimulate children's moral development. They stated that the student's moral development was dealt with incidentally as events calling for actions occurred, such as taking disciplinary action, because there were fixed schedules which would not provide room for addressing moral issues. In such a situation, teachers listed down strategies that they resorted to, including emphasizing discipline among the students, reminding students about their obligations, and rewards to students with outstanding character. Regarding congruence of the strategies that teachers and families used to influence children's moral development, teachers maintained that they were not comparable because the schools themselves did not have clearly articulated strategies that could be found from one school to another. One of the urban school teachers who was outspoken in one of the focus group discussion sessions expressed her feelings as follows:

The topic of children's moral development is very fascinating, in my opinion. It is fascinating because we are discussing something which every one of us here agrees to be a school role which is disregarded. As for the question of whether the strategies we use to uplift students' moral growth match with those used in families, the answer is simply that there is no sign of any link! Neither teachers nor parents have clear and consistent strategies for that purpose, frankly speaking.

Teachers further admitted that, compared to guidelines from the authorities on raising academic performance in the schools, there had not been equivalent directives to address students' moral development. Hence, the status of moral development seemed to have been lowered by curriculum decision-making authorities in Tanzania.

iii. *Parents' Views on Congruence of Strategies for Children's Moral Development*

Leaders of the school committees representing parents provided their experience of their roles of linking families with schools but they also admitted to being ignorant of the role of linking families and schools in the aspect of moral development of the children. One of those parents' representatives made his position clear:

I want to be clear on this aspect. The parents' representatives have so many issues to address with respect to school organization. We are determined to end truancy and to see all children attending school; we want to see parents meeting their obligations pertaining to the education of their children, including making schools responsible to

our communities. I have to state openly though that we have not reached the stage of keeping abreast of issues of children's moral development. I only expect that both parents and schools share the same thinking on the kind of a person we all need.

Through the focus group discussion and interviews, particularly with the Head teachers, the researcher realized that on the one hand, the aspect of nurturing children's moral development was taken for granted by both families and schools. The study participants were actually agreed that children's moral growth was a central undertaking for both parents and teachers. On the other hand, however, both parties did not seem to have specific strategies that could link them as partners so as to build a strong personality in young children. They relied on the traditional strategies such as story-telling, as religion teachers attested; used disciplinary actions in the school environment, as well as incidental teaching of morals based on occurrence of misconducts among students. Within the family circles, the strategies for advancing moral development of the children tended to remain the roles of mothers as they reared children, guided by the culture and traditions, and mores of the communities to which families belonged. With the exposure of children to new developments brought about by ICT and other social and economic amenities, the strategies and the link available for nurturing children's moral development seem to be grossly inadequate.

iv. *Documentary Evidence on Strategies for Promoting Children's Moral Development*

The teaching of religion subjects is perceived by the Tanzanian government as a strategy to uplift students' moral development. The Moslems and Christian denominations such as the Catholics, and the Protestants (which comprise various church groupings under the Christian Council of Tanzania, CCT) had their syllabi reviewed and approved by the Tanzania Institute of Education, which is the government body responsible with the curriculum development (TIE, 2010). A critical review of the Catholic syllabus namely 'Catholic Education and Morality' (Tanzania Episcopal Conference-TEC [2011]) showed that it was prepared to emphasize the knowledge aspect, which is in line with the other subject syllabi in Tanzania. However, some studies have challenged the syllabi which are knowledge-oriented, since they do not cater for the affective and psychomotor aspects thus failing to produce a holistic person (Anangisye, 2010; Mngarah, 2008, 2016). This implies that the teaching of religion guided by the syllabi may not help uplifting students' moral righteousness because the strategies in place are meant to provide mere moral cognition rather than moral behavior.

VI. Discussion

This study intended to establish the extent to which families (or parents, to be specific) 'spoke the same language' with the schools, particularly teachers, with respect to the promotion of the children's moral development as well as assessing the congruence of strategies for promoting children's moral development. The results were contrary to the widely shared view that families and schools need to work in harmony so as to uplift children's moral development. Instead, the results revealed that collaboration between teachers and parents in the study area was not guaranteed, nor were there congruent and consistent strategies linking families and schools so as to foster children's moral development. Hence, it is imperative to show clearly why the collaboration among stakeholders in Tanzania was pathetic contrary to the widely shared belief on children's moral development as a shared role.

One of the factors affecting collaboration among stakeholders towards fostering children's moral development has to do, it seems, with belief in the traditional education philosophies namely perennialism and essentialism. These philosophies differ from the contemporary ones namely progressivism and reconstruction as they believe that formal education begins with school, thus placing schools as the main institution for the children's education (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). The contemporary philosophies, on the contrary, attach the education of the children to the parents as influential partners such that correspondence with the school teachers is common. Therefore, the results of the study reveal that the weak collaboration between schools and families is caused by the fact that the traditional philosophies do not tie schools and families together so as to foster children's moral development, as they emphasize cognitive processes. These philosophical concerns of education suggest that by virtue of emphasizing academic and cognitive processes, the Tanzanian curriculum relegates students' moral development, as some Tanzanian scholars maintain (Anangisye, 2006, 2010; Mngarah, 2008, 2016).

The culture and traditions of the people in the study area was found to adversely affect the collaboration among partners with regard to nurturing the moral development of children, particularly due to the gender roles, where the fathers were an absent factor. The study findings revealed that the fathers left their homesteads to go for various entrepreneurial businesses, and did not have time with children as they usually came back late. This explains why the role of child rearing and care was mainly left to the mothers, such that the levels of children's moral development can be defined as the function of mothers' socialization and, to some extent, of teachers in schools. These findings

are neither peculiar nor specific to the study area; as several studies have established that fathers are absent from home, hence affecting emotional, social and moral development of their children at different intervals (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006; Allen & Daly, (2007), Kimani & Kombo, 2010; Kyando, 2012, Han & Jun, 2013).

The study findings showed that the strategies for promoting children's moral development did not link parents and teachers, since these stakeholders had separate and inconsistent strategies. In fact, it was difficult to identify clearly the strategies that families employed, perhaps because the study participants representing parents were all men. Hence it was only assumed that those strategies were related to the mainstream traditions of the society which the *Sambaa* ethnic group subscribed to. As for the schools, the study realized that the strategies varied from the use of disciplinary actions, setting the school environment to be a moral climate, as well as teaching through the use of stories from the Holy books. Nevertheless, it was not made clear how each of the strategies produced moral young people. The strategies such as use of stories in teaching religion through the cognitive processes in the classroom have been challenged in the literature. For example, Narvaez (2002) contends that reading of stories may not transform students because not only is reading passive; but, readers may not understand the same way as they have different moral schema. Further, the use of the cognitive approaches in teaching morally-charged content such as religion is criticized as it is confined to enhancing the reasoning abilities, leaving aside feeling and action competences (Griffith & Nguyen, 2006; Clarken, 2007; Gallavan & LeBlanc, 2009; LeBlanc & Gallavan, 2009).

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this research, it is concluded that in spite of participants understanding that fostering children's moral development calls for various stakeholders, families and schools in Tanzania operate separately and incompatibly. As such, they do not 'speak the same language'. The researcher makes a case that the role of nurturing young children's moral development is increasingly becoming powerful now more than at any other time before. With this view in mind, the researcher makes the following recommendations: First, there is need to introduce moral education as a discipline of study at all levels of education, so that moral aspects are addressed fully. This might amount to overhauling school and college curricula so as to employ teaching and learning strategies which have the potential of transforming individuals rather than providing knowledge devoid of affective and behavioral competences. This view has been expressed before in Tanzania (see, for example, Anangisye, 2006; 2010, Mngarah, 2008; 2016).

Secondly, the aspect of collaboration with the view to addressing the moral crisis in Tanzania is now a topical issue that calls for the engagement and involvement of partners who were hitherto not thought of. It might be surprising, but as the moral crisis waxes greater, the inclusion of the police, the media, students, as well as strengthening the existing partnership is becoming inevitable.

Thirdly, the researcher is of the opinion that the government of Tanzania (as well as other African governments and beyond) need to rethink the curriculum orientations they adopt so as to come up with holistic learning for the children. African countries generally and Tanzania in particular have curricula that do not jibe with the local realities (Babaci-Wilhite & Geo-Jaja, 2011), thus failing to meet the local educational needs.

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