The Role of Teachers in Values Education in Pakistan: A Case of Early Childhood Education and Development from Pakistan.

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Abstract
The teachers in early childhood education and preschool have a significant influence on curriculum and daily practices in the class, therefore, have a dominant influence on the implementation of values education. Deeming values as a social construct, this small-scale qualitative case study was carried out to explore the priority values of early childhood education teachers and their ways of teaching values in a school in northern Pakistan. Interviews and classroom observations were conducted to gather in-depth data from the school leadership and the teachers. Teachers were found primarily focused on the inculcation of societal values, behaviors and life skills needed for children to successfully adjust to society. In this school, teachers are playing a dominant role in the values education of the young children through role modeling, daily practices and routines and interactions with the parents. School leadership is focused on values education. While doing so, they are aspiring for other stakeholders to accept the upper hand of the school values and expect them to facilitate the inculcation of these values in young children. The school and teachers are facing the problem of the reluctance of parents to take full responsibility for the values education of their children.

Introduction

Values are the commonly recognized and approved principles, convections, and standards of society that are transcending specific situations. Therefore, "values appear to be an all-embracing element of human life; that is, values are connected both to the human mind and action, and they emerge at the levels of individuals, cultural groups, and societies" (Johansson, Emilson, & Puroila, 2017, p.14). These principles are the foundation of the social structure (Dasari, 2017) to cultivate and ensure harmony, peace, and prosperity in the social order. Hence, values are the "determiners of how people will live in harmony and peace without hurting one another and become virtuous individuals within the community" (Khathi, Govender, & Ajani, 2021, p.404).

Human societies are steadily transferring these principles, convections, and standards to the next generations to ensure a constructive, peaceful, and prosperous society. This transformation of values to the young generation is taking place at multiple stages of the family, school, and broader society. School is considered a value-laden context where implicit and explicit values education is imparted to young children (Ulavere & Tammik (2017). The schools which are explicitly teaching values education have structured a concrete plan, and overtly included it into their school curriculum whereas, the schools which are following the implicit route, are embedding values education in their daily practices and ethos but it is not included in their formal curriculum (Thornberg, 2016). In

developing contexts like Pakistan, schools are exclusively held responsible for helping children to differentiate between "right" and "wrong" and help them to effectively face the challenges of life and become successful citizens of society (Bhatti, et.al 2021). Thus, values education in school can be referred to the explicit and implicit activities and culture, designed and implemented by the schools to inculcate skills, and dispositions in young children so that they can positively enact their roles as an individual and as a member of the larger society.

"Values are socially approved principles that are internalized mainly through the process of education" (Dasari, 2017, p. 1404). Therefore, teachers have a pivotal role in the values education of young children. The critical role of teachers in child development has been consistently reported in the academic milieu of teaching and learning. The teachers "are like signposts in the road, to tell you where the road leads to. The teacher should help the students achieve their full potential and bring out the best in them. Be able to lead them towards a better tomorrow. Most important of all must be loving and sincere!" (Radha, 2016, p. 56). The role of the teacher becomes even more critical for the values education of young children at early childhood education and pre-school levels. The daily routine of ECED like mealtime, activity time and playtime are critical opportunities for imparting important universal values in young children. The guidance and support by the teachers in this routine are critical for young children to adopt these values to their real-life experiences (Tofteland, 2018). The moral actions of young children are highly influenced by the role of the teachers in acquiring permanent changes in their thinking and actions (Durmus, 2019).

At the early childhood education and pre-school levels, the teachers have a significant influence on curriculum and daily practices in the class, therefore, have a dominant influence on the implementation of values education. Along with this dominant influence, teachers must possess the required knowledge and specialized skills for the implementation of values education for young children. "The importance of having competent teachers in values education cannot be underestimated; failure to make the right decision about instilling values in students will have fateful consequences" (Mohamad, et al., 2019, p. 889). Thus, teachers must improve their professional practice and their ability to include other stakeholders in developing value-based education in their classes (Odundo, Amollo & Lilian, 2017). In developing contexts like Pakistan, the ability of a teacher to communicate effectively and develop a consensus between parents and schools is a paramount skill for values education.

Studies have reported various ways employed by teachers to teach values at the early childhood education level in many contexts. Some preschool teachers have followed an indirect approach using Drama and Stories and Games to teach values (Kuloglu, Yasar, & Ozer, 2021). Some other teachers believe that values education is an effort to comply with societal values and norms focusing on how to treat others and self-responsibility. Therefore, they believe role modeling and the use of everyday language to explain values education are the most appropriate ways of teaching values (Thornberg & Oguz, 2013). Similarly, studies have reported different values deemed important in different contexts. Some of the teachers have grouped the values into five main categories "creating the foundation," "educational process," "behavior," "responsibility," and "rules" (Kılınc & Andas, 2022). Some teachers realize the importance of values of equality, peace, self-respect, and honesty (Dasari, 2017) and others believe that care, respect, and discipline are important values to be communicated to preschool children (Sigurdardottir, Williams, & Einarsdottir, 2019). The variation in the realization of values by the teachers and their ways of teaching values education reported by research is understandable. Values are

social constructs, shaping and reshaping in the minds of people as a result of their interaction in society. Akin to all other humans, teachers are living in smaller societies where the codes of desirability and social dynamics are somehow different from the others therefore, they have given importance to different values and have employed different ways of teaching values to the young children. Hence within the milieu of this academic thought, this small-scale study was carried out to explore the priority values of early childhood education teachers and their ways of teaching values in this mountainous part of northern Pakistan. The result of this study has the potential to inform the reader about the value dynamics of this mountain community and provide a feel of the state of values education in this part of the world.

Literature Review

The Values Education

The prevailing socio-economic and political environment of the world is demanding robust and wide-ranging values education for the younger generation to successfully adjust to the rapidly changing complex society (Cihan, 2014). "The world faces different challenges of anarchy, oppression, racial, religious, sectarian conflicts, corruption, violence, and war. Teachers… to realize the values of a higher order of freedom, equality, compassion, and sense of oneness to make the world a global, peaceful community" (Dasari, 2017, p. 1403). For the realization of high-order values, the values preferences of the teachers play an important role in the values education of young children and influence the entire value system of the schools.

In today's complex world, it is important to acknowledge and understand the pervasive and obtrusive nature of values for young children (Johansson, Emilson, & Puroila, 2017). Most of the value education at early childhood education revolves around the inculcation of obedience to rules and regulations. These young children "imply a position as a receiver and "doer" of the rules and values in school, rather than an active participant involved in reflecting and negotiating about different values and rules and the priorities and justifications they are based on" (Johansson, et al., 2014, p.15). Provision of an environment for the children to reflect, negotiate, and justify their values is taking values education beyond the narrow inculcation of "right" and "wrong." Young children will start thinking beyond the "control and discipline," what is "expected" and "normal" is rewarded, whereas what is "unexpected" and "uncommon" is punished. (Johansson, Emilson, & Puroila, 2017, p. 16). This line of values education in early childhood education opens the door for deeming values education as an issue of plurality and acknowledging multiple ways and approaches for values education. However, understanding the different levels and types of values is a prerequisite for addressing values education through multiple approaches.

Values have been classified and typified by various studies from different perspectives. In this regard, OECD, (2019) has classified values into personal, social, societal, and human domains which are more relevant to this study. According to OECD personal values are considered as the individual wishes and choices of a person adopted to live a meaningful life. Social values are defined as the principles of interpersonal relationships including the ways through which a person behaves with others and manages conflicts to facilitate the effective running of the community or society. Societal values have been defined as the priorities, principles and cultures of society which govern the social order and institutional life which are endorsed by public opinion. Finally, human values have been considered the fundamental values which are transcendent across national and cultural boundaries.

Role of Teacher

Studies in the developing world are consistently emphasizing the role of teachers as the role model for their students. "Their actions convey more than their words. Students learn values from what the teachers are rather than from what they say" (Bilal & Gul 2017, p. 4). Teachers are expected to be role models of social, religious, and moral values and desirable behavior for young children and must play their due role in making them part of the classroom practices and the school culture (Bhatti, et al., 2021; Bhave, 2016). The role of schools is the inculcation of values in young children to grow positively and become contributing members of society therefore, teachers have the critical responsibility of "shaping child's thoughts which decide their behavior, and actions later in their life" (Dasari, 2017, p. 1403).

The knowledge, skill, and disposition of a teacher play a decisive role in the effectiveness of values education for young children (Mohamad, et al., 2019). "Hence, teacher education institutions should shoulder the responsibility of producing teachers with values of higher order to practice them at their schools" (Dasari, 2017, p. 1403). Therefore, professional development programs must encourage the teachers to be part of the workshops and seminars to reflect on the practices and sharpen their knowledge and skills for imparting values education to young children.

The Challenges for Values Education

The teaching of values is not an easy subject. The school administrators expect the teachers to teach value-based moral concepts through activities whereas teachers are facing difficulties explaining and practicing moral concepts in their classes. In addition, there is a high expectation for teachers to be role models for their students. Society believes that teachers must have high morality and behave well both in the classroom and in society. This is exerting high pressure on the teachers because they feel that they are continuously been watched by society (Gui, et al., 2020).

The role of parents is extremely important for the value formation of young children so that they are able to construct a personality that is desirable both for the family and society (Sneha & Shalini, 2018). Many studies have reported the role of parents as a problem for the values education of their young children. Parents are hesitant to take full responsibility for the values education and the moral development of their children (Mngarah, 2017; Guzelyurt, 2020). In the Pakistani context most of the parents are from the low to middle-income category therefore, the priority of these families is to ensure the bread and butter for the family, not the education of their children (Baig & Funer (2022). Another problem faced by the teachers is the difference between school values and family values. Sometimes young children face the challenge when the "good" of the school is considered "wrong" in the family and the "good" of the family is deemed "wrong" at the school. In these circumstances, teachers are feeling enormous pressure to find out a way between the two values and sort out the confusion for the students (Velea & Farca, 2013).

The professional development and training of teachers are considered vital for implementing the values education in the ECED settings. However, in most of developing contexts like Pakistan, the state of professional development of teachers is not encouraging. In the Pakistani context, the overall state of the professional development and training of ECED teachers is a historical problem in the country. This lack of professional knowledge and skills has also become a hurdle for the values education of young children (Baig & Funer, 2022). Therefore, the key stakeholders must understand the challenges faced by the teachers in implementing values education in the schools and

extend their support to the teachers to ensure the effectiveness of the values education of the young children.

Studying the Values Education

A plethora of studies have explored values and values education in early childhood education and have reported various values and approaches to teach these values in pre-school contexts. For example, Sahin (2019) collected the opinions of the pre-service teachers about the value concept and values education. The pre-service teachers believed that the goal of values education should be to raise good citizens. They also thought modeling, and cooperating with family would be effective in values education.

In a Turkish context, Kuloglu, Yasar, and Ozer (2021) have studied the views of preschool teachers on value education and explored that, teachers are following an indirect approach using Drama and Stories and Games to teach values. The cultural structure of the families of the preschool children and the large class size is making it difficult for the teachers to teach values education. The teachers have urged families to be role models for their children. Similarly, Kılınc, and Andas (2022) studied the values of preschool teachers. The teachers have grouped the values into five main categories of "creating the foundation," "educational process," "behavior," "responsibility," and "rules." They have suggested creating cooperation and alignments among families, teachers, and the school environment for imparting values education to pre-school children. Sigurdardottir, Williams, and Einarsdottir (2019) studied a Nordic early childhood education context and reported that the teachers of this context are prioritizing the values of care, respect, and discipline to be communicated to preschool children. They have also reported that these teachers are implicitly communicating the values education.

Some of the studies have attempted to compare values and values education approaches in different countries. Thornberg and Oguz (2013) have studied the perspectives of teachers on values education in Turkey and Sweden. The teachers believed that values education is mostly an effort to comply with societal values and norms focusing on how to treat others and self-responsibility. Teachers have given high importance to role modeling and use everyday language to explain values education with a lack of relevant professional knowledge. Likewise, Yenen, and Ulucan (2021) have studied the national and universal values tried to be taught in Turkey and Ohio of United States. They have noted that "there are significant differences in value perception as well as differences in practice in both countries" (p.385). They also found that Turkish teachers are experiencing more problem as compared to the teachers from United States therefore, the Turkish teachers are more solution-oriented in their values education practices.

Larysa, et al. (2020) carried out an interesting study in Ukraine and observed the preschool children giving high attention to the values of happiness, peace, cooperativeness, honesty beauty, kindness, friendship, and purity. However, they paid the least attention to the values of humility, tolerance, hospitality, respect, and patriotism. This study gives a new direction to understanding the inner world of young preschool children.

The above-mentioned studies carried out in different parts of the world have reported values as a social construct, shaping and reshaping the minds as a result of their interaction with society. Most of the values and approaches of values education favored by the teachers are influenced by contextual realities. Therefore, deeming values and values education as a social construct this small-scale study was carried out to explore the priority values of early childhood education teachers and their ways of teaching values in this mountainous eastern culture of northern Pakistan.

Methodology

This small-scale study was designed to explore how the school leadership and teachers in a Pakistani context may influence the value formation in young children at early childhood education. The study has chosen a constructivist approach, believing that the values and value formation are somewhat specific to the contexts and are ambiguous social realities and products of the human mind which may change with the change in knowledge and experience (Branson, Baig, & Begum, 2014). Within the constructivist paradigm, interpretivism is accepted to understand the subjective, multiple, and socially constructed views and perspectives of our research participants (Cohen et al., 2000). In addition, the study recognizes symbolic interactionism for the interpretation and meanings of values by our participants which they have developed through their interactions in society.

Hence, this qualitative case study is an attempt to find linkages between the phenomena of school values and the value formation process of young children within the bonded system of the school (Yin, 2017; Stake, 2005), employing interviews and classroom observations to collect rich and in-depth data from the research participants (Creswell, 2007). Specifically designed interview protocol and classroom observation format were used to collect data from the teachers. Separate interview protocols were employed in the cases of the Section Head and Principal of the school. No classroom observations were carried out as neither of them was practically involved in classroom teaching at the ECED level.

This small-scale study has employed a purposeful method for selecting the school and the 06 research participants for three major reasons. First, the school principal and the teachers at the school voluntarily showed their willingness to be part of the study. Secondly, the school is enjoying an elite status and is famous in the city for its high-quality Early Childhood Education. Finally, the researchers were working in the vicinity of the school, therefore, it was easier for data collection.

The data was recorded in Pakistani language Urdu which was transcribed and translated into English. The data presented is not meant for quantitative analysis, rather it is purely for the awareness of the reader. Moreover, the data presented does not claim for representativeness or generalization, rather it presents the reality of the participants which may not be same for other schools and participants.

This study followed Creswell's six steps model of qualitative data analysis of organizing and preparing the data, reading through the data, coding the data, developing themes and descriptions, and interpreting the meaning of the themes. The recorded data from interviews and observations were organized. This raw written data was read through all to get the overall sense of the information and reflected upon the responses (Creswell, 2009). After transcription and thorough reading, the data was coded using color schemes keeping in view the focus of the study. These emerging themes were interpreted from the participants perspectives and a general sense and meaning making of the data was developed.

Data Presentation

The data presented in this paper is collected from the ECED section of the selected school which has four teachers with a section head under the leadership of the school principal. Therefore, the data presented here is based on the classroom observations of 04 teachers and interview responses of the Section Head, Principal and the 04 teachers at the school.

Table 1: **Demographic Information of the Study Participants**

Gender	Male	00
	Female	06
Education	Postgraduate in Education	02
	Bachelor's degree	03
Professional Education	M.Ed.	01
	B.Ed.	01
	Diploma in ECED	04
Professional Experiences	20+ years	02
	15+ years	03
	10+years	01

Early Childhood Education and Value Formation

The study participants defined ECED as a comprehensive learning approach focusing the holistic development including the behavioral, emotional, physical, intellectual, and academic growth of the children. According to Teacher 4 and Teacher 3:

> *The aim of ECED is to train them for their entire life by taking small steps like placing buttons and tying shoelaces. Our job is to help them prepare for how to talk, how to respect elders and younger ones and how to wait for their turns in society* (Interview, Teacher 4. 07/03/2023).

> *ECED is an effort to enhance mental and emotional growth of children and is to learn manners, social skills, and developing a sense of right and wrong which will reflect throughout their life* (Interview, Teacher 3. 07/03/2023).

The comments of these teachers refer to the values and life skills needed for children to successfully adjust into society. If the prime focus of early childhood education is helping young children to successfully accommodate in society, then societal values seem to have a dominating role over all other values.

The school leadership tried to distinguish their ECED approach from the rest of the schools in the city. The school principal and the section head emphasized the uniqueness of their ECED approach. According to the principal "The school is focusing on ethics and morality, and we are trying to regularly practice it in the school so that it becomes part of the personality of the young children" (Interview, Principal, 08/03/2023).

> *Most of the schools are focusing on reading and writing. We are different you know because our attention is on food, health and how to behave and follow the rules and regulations in society* (Interview, Section Head, 08/03/2023).

Similar views were shared by Teacher 2 highlighting the practical steps which are being taken by the teachers for the values education of the children. According to her:

> *We are very careful about the child's behavior. Once we notice misbehavior, we teach them good behaviors and patience through moral stories and help them to learn how to follow the values and culture and how to adjust in the society* (Interview, Teacher 2, 06/03/2023).

The perspectives of the participants reveal that the school is more focused on behavior management and following the rules and regulations which are rooted into societal values and their ECED approach believes in a deliberate inculcation of societal values in young children.

The Articulated Values in ECED

In their interviews, the school principal, section head and the teachers articulated a variety of values that they believe to be part of an effective ECED education. In their interviews they mentioned values like morality, trust, following the rules, good behavior, taking turns, respect, patience, gratitude, role modeling, a sense of responsibility, helping others and sharing and caring. It is important to note that except for trust, respect, sense of responsibility, sharing and caring, all other values mentioned are rooted in societal values and are an effort to help the children to learn these values so that they can comfortably adjust to the social environment.

Table 2: Values Articulated by the Teachers in their Interview

Values Demonstrated	Frequency	Values Demonstrated	Frequency
Morality	1+1+1+1+1	Gratitude	1+1
Trust	1+	Role modeling	1+1
Follow the rules	1+1+1	Sense of responsibility	1
Good behavior	1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1	Respect for Religion	1+1
Taking turns	1+1+1+1	Helping others	1
Respect	1+1+1	Caring	1+1
Patience	1+1	Sharing with others	1+1+1

Among the articulated values, morality and good behavior emerged as the most emphasized and frequently mentioned values that the teachers believe to be a learning goal at ECED. The school leadership believes that the children at ECED "must learn how to greet the elders and say thanks, and welcome" (Interview, Principal, 08/03/2023). "They should also learn the difference between right and wrong" (Interview, Section Head, 08/03/2023).

The school leadership seems to be successful in transmitting their worldviews about child nurturing to their teachers. Similar views were emanating from the interviews of the teachers who were emphasizing good behavior and morality as the cornerstone of their ECED approach. For example, teacher 4 emphasized that in ECED "children must learn the art of how to behave with elders and younger ones, how to talk with others and wait for their turns (Interview, Teacher 4, 07/03/2023). Similarly, for Teacher 3 the children at ECED "should learn social, moral and religious values" (Interview, Teacher 3, 07/03/2023).

The school seems to believe in helping young children to be role models of societal values. They expect their "teachers to be role models and practically demonstrate positive behavior in front of the young learners. Young children will imitate their teachers and become role models in society" (Interview, Teacher 3, 07/03/2023). Similar views were shared by Teacher 2 saying "I must be a role model of good behavior for my students so that they learn from my behavior" (Interview, Teacher 2, 06/03/2023).

Universal values like respect, trust, gratitude, and a sense of responsibility were occasionally mentioned by some of the teachers however, they were not as frequent as good behavior and morality. Times and again, the school leadership and the teachers were emphasizing good behavior and morality. The views of the Principal and the Section Head were consistently reflected in the perspectives of the teachers.

Demonstrated Values in ECED

In classroom observations, the teachers were found practicing a variety of values in their respective classrooms. The values of caring, respect, taking turns, gratitude, following

rules, helping others, sharing with others, supporting others, honesty, peace-loving, cleanliness and equality were observed in the classes.

Table 3: *Values Demonstrated by the Teachers in their Classrooms*

Values Demonstrated	Frequency	Values Demonstrated	Frequency
Caring	1+1+1+1+1	Sharing with others	1+1+1+1
Respect for others	1+1	Supporting others	1+1+1+1+1
Taking turns	1+1+1+1+1	Honesty	1
Gratitude	1+1+1	Peace loving	1+1
Following rules	1+1+1+1+1	Cleanliness	1
Helping others	1+1+1	Equality	1+1

The classroom observations revealed some dominant values deliberately practiced by the teachers. The values of care, taking turns, sharing things with others, supporting others, and following the rules were more frequently practiced than the other values.

> *Teacher 1 was particularly focused on the seating arrangements of the children. Three times, she went to the children and helped them to sit in an organized way and ensure that they were following her seating arrangement. A child was struggling to work because he did not have a pencil. The teacher noticed this and instead of providing a pencil from her stock, she asked the students to share a pencil with this child. One child shared a pencil, and the teacher praised him for his generosity and asked the class to clap for this child* (Classroom Observation Teacher 1, 15/03/2023).

During lunchtime, it was ensured that the children were performing cultural prayers and sharing things with others.

> *The teacher sat in a circle with the children and asked them to collectively pray before lunch. She gave a short lecture on sharing lunch with others and encouraged the children to share their lunches. Children shared their lunches and created a loving relationship in the class. She helped the children to follow the rules of praying after lunch and closing and cleaning* (Observation Teacher 2, 15/03/2023).

While working with the materials, the teacher frequently went to every child and encouraged them to work together. Students were found encouraging each other and supporting each other.

> *Three children were very active in supporting the others which was noticed by the teachers and made a clapping for them. The teacher was trying to ensure that each child is getting an opportunity to share her work and ask a question however, while doing so she was strictly following the rules of raising their hands and waiting for their turn* (Observation Teacher 3, 16/03/2023).

At the start of the playtime, the teacher developed rules with the help of the children. During the play, they were frequently reminded to follow the rules. "Five times she reminded the children to follow the rules. She also switched the play materials among them to ensure that children are happily sharing the materials" (Observation Teacher 4, 20/03/2023).

The observation of these values in the classroom are providing important inklings for the definition of good behavior frequently articulated by the teachers and school leadership in their interviews. The teachers were found more focused on the values of care, taking turns, sharing things with others, supporting others, and following the rules and tried to ensure that the children are practicing it in their daily routine. Therefore, it can be concluded that for this school, good behavior means caring, taking turns, sharing things with others, supporting others, and following the rules.

During the concept time, "the teacher gave the concept of Allah and religious teaching of living peacefully and respecting each other" (Observation Teacher 1, 15/03/2023). Another teacher was found keen to ensure that children are supporting each other during the activity time. "In this regard, she gave a short lecture to the children on how they can spread respect, honesty, and peace in society, neighborhood, and relatives through supporting each other" (Observation Teacher 2, 16/03/2023). She also tried to practice the value of equality by taking special care of the children who were comparatively quiet and do not want to speak. "She went to each of them and asked to share their views with the class" (Observation Teacher 2, 16/03/2023).

Hence, most of the values articulated by the teachers and school leadership in their interviews were reflected in their classroom practices. However, the frequency and intensity of the values were found inconsistent across the articulation of values and classroom practices. Some of the values were found to be leading in their interviews and some other values emerged more dominant in their classroom practices.

Role of Parents in Values Education

The school leadership seems to expect the parents to uphold the values of the school and facilitate the teachers for engraining certain values in the young children. According to the principal, "Parents must know that modernity does not mean boundaryless independence. Parents need to help their children to learn social and moral values and make them part of their habits" (Interview, Principal, 08/03/2023). The section head of the school refers to the policy of orienting the parents about the value formation process of young children in the school and expecting them to strengthen these values at home. She said, "In our parent-teacher meetings we give an orientation to the parents at the start of the academic year about the expectation of the school from the students about how to behave and how to talk" (Interview, Section Head, 08/03/2023).

The teachers are at the forefront of facing the parents and convince them to facilitate and inculcate the school values in their children. In this regard, teachers shared mixed experiences that they are having with the parents. According to Teacher 4:

> *The school is arranging parent-teacher meetings in which we are individually suggesting to the parents to take care of the behavior of their children. We are telling them not to fulfill their unnecessary demands and give them moral boundaries to interact* (Interview, Teacher 4, 07/03/2023).

Similarly, Teacher 3 said "They are emphasizing parents to change their attitude and give time to their kids to help them to learn the manners needed for society" (Interview, Teacher 3, 10/03/2023). The school is expecting the parents to facilitate the school for the inculcation of certain values that the school believes to be helpful for the children to successfully adjust in the local society.

Challenges for the School

The school is facing certain challenges in the value formation process of the children in the school. The sensitivity of some children and their resistance was identified as a major challenge. In this regard Teacher 1 said,

> *Some of the children are over-sensitive and have acceptance issues. In these cases, we are facing problems. You know when we are trying to help them to learn these values they react and sometimes refuse to obey. Sometimes it becomes very difficult for us* (Interview, Teacher 3, 07/03/2023).

Cooperation by the parents was mentioned as the second problem which is being faced by the school. According to the school principal, "Some parents are not supportive. They are having high expectations from teachers, but they are not supporting us for the overall development of their children" (Interview, Teacher 3, 07/03/2023). According to the Section Head, "Parents are forcing the teachers to focus on teaching ABC and teach numbers. Their mindset is different. They are not focusing on the values and behavior development of the children" (Interview, Section Head, 08/03/2023).

Teachers also shared their challenges of working with the parents at the classroom level. Lack of cooperation and behavior issues by the parents are identified as the main problems faced by the teachers. Teacher 2 shared her problems in the following words:

Some parents do not attend the meetings. Some parents are very sensitive. In meetings, they complain and ask the teachers to be responsible for everything. They feel parents have no responsibility for the social and moral development of the kids (Interview, Teacher 2, 06/03/2023).

Similarly, Teacher 3 mentioned a value formation conflict between the school and the parents. According to her,

Teachers are facing behavior and acceptance issues with some parents. When we give them feedback about the behavior and social and moral development of their children, they say that their children are very good at home. They simply disagree with us (Interview, Teacher 3, 07/03/2023).

The large size classes and inclusiveness of the school were also identified as a major challenge for the school for the values education of the school. According to Teacher 4, "You know we have large classes with 33-34 students. Above all, we are an inclusive school, so we have some children with mild and moderate disabilities. In this situation values education becomes challenging" (Interview, Teacher 4, 07/03/2023).

Discussion and Findings

Teachers were found focused on the inculcation of values, behaviors, and life skills needed for children to successfully adjust to society. The perspectives of the participants reveal that the school is more focused on behavior management and following the rules and regulations which are rooted in societal values. If the prime focus of early childhood education is helping young children to successfully accommodate in society, then societal values seem to have a dominating role over all other values. This finding is consistent with the previous studies (e.g., Sahin, 2019; Thornberg & Oguz, 2013; Bhatti, et al., 2021) which reported that the prime focus of values education had been helping the children to comply with societal values, differentiating between "right" and "wrong" and raise good citizens. Johansson, et al., (2014) and Johansson, Emilson, and Puroila, (2017) have added a new scholastic dimension to this aim of values education claiming that in such situations, children are expected to be the "doer" only and get the least opportunity to involve in reflecting and negotiating about different values and rules with justifications. This can lead to the indoctrination of certain values in young children by teachers and other adults without giving them enough opportunity to reflect and negotiate the worth of the values on offer. If school aims to prepare children for society, then a balance must be sorted between mere inculcation of societal values and the provision of the opportunity for the children to reflect, negotiate, and justify the values.

The school principal, section head, and teachers have articulated a variety of values like, morality, trust, following the rules, good behavior, taking turns, respect, caring, patience,

thankfulness, role modeling, sense of responsibility, helping others, and sharing with others. These mentioned values and others like gratitude, supporting others, honesty, peace-loving, cleanliness, and equality were found in their classroom practices. Many of the research studies have reported peace, cooperativeness, honesty, role modeling, care, respect, and discipline as the perceived values of the teachers in different contexts (Thornberg & Oguz, 2013; Sahin, 2019; Larysa, et al., 2020; Sigurdardottir, Williams, & Einarsdottir, (2019). However, it is important to note that the values reported across different context are somehow similar and consistent, but less information is available on the actual meaning that are attached to each value in different contexts. For example, role modeling is consistently reported as a value but less has been stated about the specific benchmarks, qualities, and ingredients of a role model in different contexts. Future studies can focus on the benchmarks, qualities, and ingredients of constantly reported values in different contexts. Studying this aspect of values can provide critical inklings for the realization of high-order international values across the world.

The school leadership and the teachers are explicitly emphasizing the values education and aspire to transform the school into a value-laden environment for young children. This is in line with the views of Ulavere and Tammik (2017) and Thornberg, (2016), who considered schools as a dominant value formation place where values education is explicitly and implicitly imparted to young children. The school seems to be ready to shoulder the responsibility of helping children to differentiate between "right" and "wrong" (Bhatti, et.al 2021). While doing so the school aspires other stakeholders to accept the upper hand of the school values and expects them to facilitate the inculcation of these values in young children.

The teachers were found more focused on the values of care, taking turns, sharing things with others, supporting others, and following the rules and tried to ensure that the children are practicing it in their daily routine. Therefore, it can be concluded that for this school, good behavior means caring, taking turns, sharing things with others, supporting others, and following the rules. The views and perspectives of the teachers at this school are aligned with Thornberg, (2008) who noted that the efforts of the teachers are mostly focused on helping the children to learn and demonstrate desirable behavior as an integral part of values education.

The school leadership and the teachers appear to be unsatisfied with the existing role of parents in values education. They have highlighted the reluctance of parents for taking full responsibility for the values education of their children which coincides with the results of Mngarah, (2017) and Guzelyurt, (2020) who explored that parents are hesitant to take full responsibility for the values education and the moral development of their children. Similarly, some teachers pointed out the problem of values conflict between school and the family which affirms the views of Velea and Farca, (2013) who reported that sometimes young children face the challenge when the "good" of the school is considered "wrong" in the family and the "good" of the family is deemed "wrong" at the school. This kind of situation has critical implications for the teachers in values education and home-school relationships.

In this school, teachers are playing a dominant role in the values education of the young children through role modeling, daily practices and routines and interactions with the parents. It was found that the "Value preferences and value system of teachers determine their thought, speech, and actions which influence not only the students but also the whole school system" (Dasari, 2017, p. 1403). The teachers are at the forefront of values education and sorting out values-related discourses with parents, acting as a bridge between the school and the parent community.

Conclusion

Values are pervasive and obtrusive shaping and reshaping in the mind of an individual as a result of the interactions in society. This small-scale scale study reports the role of the school leadership and the teachers in values education. It also explored the perceived values and practiced values of the teachers in their classroom context. The finding is mostly consistent with the studies elsewhere in the world however, a need was felt for studying the actual meaning, benchmarks, qualities, and ingredients attached to each value in different contexts and cultures.

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