THE EFFICACY OF MORAL EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER FORMATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy of Education of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

November, 2024

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work prepared with no other than the indicated sources and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

Signature ……Date …….

John Kibwage Nyangaresi

EEP/H/01-70133/2021

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned approve that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a research thesis entitled **"The Efficacy of Moral Education for Character Formation in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya:A phenomenological approach".**

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DEDICATION

This research thesis is dedicated to my family and academic friends for their moral support and encouragement during the thesis writing period.

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I thank the Almighty God for His provision, protection, and guidance throughout the thesis writing period. He provided me with strength, knowledge, and understanding that helped me make this thesis a reality. If it were not for His abundant grace, this thesis would never have been accomplished.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIE:	African Indigenous Education
CBC:	Competence-based curriculum
CCEA:	Christian Churches Education Association
CRE:	Christian Religious Education
CU:	Christian union.
GoK:	Government of Kenya
HRE:	Hindu Religious Education
IEBC:	Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission
IRE:	Islamic Religious Education
KCSE:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.
KIE:	Kenya Institute of Education
LSE:	Life Skills Education.
MOE:	Ministry of Education
RE:	Religious Education
ROK:	Republic of Kenya.
SEE:	Social Ethics Education.

TIQET:	Total Integrated Quality Education and Training
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
VBE:	Value-Based Education
YCU:	Young Catholic Society

ABSTRACT

Historically, education has been responsible for transmitting social values, norms, customs, and expectations. As a normative enterprise, it has inherent normative goals that entrust it with the responsibility of imparting societal expectations, morals, beliefs, opinions, standards, cultures, norms, and customs to learners, with the primary goal of societal well-being and continuity. Philosophers and educators contend that education plays a crucial role in instilling moral values in learners. Moral values form the basis for a happy society with social and economic progress, peace, and harmonious coexistence. However, there are many obstacles to realising the moral ideal of character formation. The obstacles are related to curriculum content and teaching approaches. Curriculum contents such as Christian religious education, Hindu religious education, and Islamic religious education, primarily intended to promote moral education for character formation, are mainly approached from a cognitive and examination-oriented perspective. This is evident in the observable and undesirable behaviours of students in schools, such as arson in school, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, public indecency and misuse of school and public resources. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya: A phenomenological approach. The study was guided by three main objectives, namely, to investigate the value of the aims of moral education for character education in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya, to investigate teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character education in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya and to establish effective approaches on moral education for character education in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia and phenomenological theory guided the study. Phenomenological hermeneutic and critical methods were also used in this study. Purposive sampling was used to recruit four deputy principals and eleven Christian religious education teachers from seven public secondary schools, while unstructured interviews were conducted to collect primary data. Secondary data was collected by analyzing documents. The data collected was analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six steps. The study revealed that moral character education is crucial in addressing the perennial problems faced by the education sector and the country. Further, the study also established that the approaches or strategies of moral education for character formation are not well implemented to serve the moral goals of education. With this in mind, the study identified seven approaches to moral education for character formation: dialogic learning, practical learning, holistic learning, experiential learning, integrated curriculum approach, virtue-based approach, and reflective approach. The study recommends that moral education should be embedded in all subjects rather than confined to specific courses or discussions, experiential learning methods should be implemented, and schools should provide professional development opportunities that focus on moral education approaches.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE ..... **i**

DECLARATION ..... **ii**

COPYRIGHT ..... **iii**

DEDICATION ..... **iv**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **v**

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **vi**

ABSTRACT ..... **viii**

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..... **ix**

LIST OF TABLES ..... **xvii**

LIST OF APPENDICES ..... **xviii**

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS ..... **xix**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1 Background of the study 1

1.2 Statement of the problem 14

1.3 Purpose of the study 15

1.4 Research objectives 15

1.5 Research questions 15

1.6 Justification of the study 16

1.7 Significance of the Study 16

1.8 Assumption of the study 17

1.9 Limitations of the study 18

1.10 Delimitation..... 18

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....19

2.1 The value of the aims of moral education for character formation.....19

2.1.1 Review of Policy publications that prioritize the aims of moral education for character formation in Kenya since independence.....26

2.1.2 Ominde Report - Education Commission Report 1964.....27

2.1.3 The Education Act of 1968.....28

2.1.4 Gachathi Report- National Commission on Educational Objectives and Policies 1976 29

2.1.5 Mackay Report- Presidential Working Party on Second University in Kenya 198130

2.1.6 Kamunge Report – Education and Manpower Development for the Next Decade and Beyond 1988.....31

2.1.7 Koech Report – Total and Integrated Quality Education and Training.....32

2.1.8 The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005.....34

2.1.9 Sessional Paper No.2 of 2015 and Competency-Based Curriculum of 2017.....35

2.1.10 The Basic Education Act of 2013.....37

2.1.11 Policy gaps.....38

2.2 Perspectives of teachers on moral education for character formation.....39

2.2.1 Perspectives on the effectiveness of examinable subject on moral education for character formation: Appeal to Christian Religious Education.....40

2.2.2 Perspectives on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation: appeal to life skills education and physical education.....44

2.2.3 Perspectives on the effectiveness of the pedagogies of moral education for character formation.....48

2.3. Efficacious approaches to moral education for character formation.....54

2.4 Theoretical framework.....58

2.4.1 The Aristotelian theory of *eudaimonia*.....59

2.4.2 Phenomenological theory.....63

2.5 Gaps in reviewed of related literature.....65

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....68

3.1. Introduction.....68

3.2 Research design.....68

3.3 Research paradigm.....69

3.4 Research methods.....70

3.4.1 Phenomenological-hermeneutical method.....71

3.4.2. The significant role of phenomenological hermeneutical method.....71

3.4.3 Critical method.....76

3.4.3.1 The significant role of critical method.....77

3.5 Instruments of data collection.....79

3.6 Setting of the study (Study location).....79

3.7 Target population.....80

3.8 Sampling procedure and sample size.....80

3.8.1. Sampling procedure.....81

3.8.2 Sample size.....81

3.9 Methods of Data Collection.....82

3.9.1 Interviews....82
3.9.2. Secondary Data Collection....84
3.10 Quality control....85
3.10.1 Piloting....85
3.10.2 Validity....86
3.10.3 Reliability....87
3.11 Data collection procedure....88
3.12 Data explication (Data analysis)....88
3.13 Ethical considerations....90

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND EXPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS....92

4.1 Introduction....92
4.1.1 Clarke and Braun six steps....93
4.1.2 An analysis of objective one: An examination of the moral aims of education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya....95
4.1.3 Theme 1: The value of moral aims of education for character formation....96
4.1.4 Lived experiences of deputy head teachers on the value of the moral aims of education for character formation....97
4.1.5 Discussion on the lived experiences of deputy head teachers on the value of the moral aims of education for character formation....98
4.1.6 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation....100

4.1.7 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation.....104
4.1.8 Discussion on the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation.....107
4.1.9 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation.....108
4.1.10 Theme 2: Role of the School in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....111
4.1.11 Lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....111
4.1.12 Discussion on the lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....113
4.1.13 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....115
4.1.14 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....115
4.1.15 Discussion on the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....117
4.1.16 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation.....119
4.1.17 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation.....120

4.1.18 Discussion on the lived experiences T1-T11 responses on CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation.....120
4.1.19 Critical evaluation of lived experiences T1-T11 responses on CRE topics that predominantly focused on moral aims of education for character formation.....123
4.2 Teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in secondary school in Kakamega county, Kenya.....124
4.2.1 Lived experiences of teachers on the effectiveness of CRE assessment on moral education for character formation.....126
4.2.2 Lived experiences of D2 on formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education character formation. (D2 is the deputy principal as well as the CRE teacher)127
4.2.3 Discussion of lived experiences of D2 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation.....128
4.2.4 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of D 2 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation.....130
4.2.5 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation and its effectiveness.....131
4.2.6 Discussion of lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation.....134
4.2.7 Critical evaluation of lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation.....138
4.2.8 Lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, and D4 on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation.....139

4.2.9 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation.....139
4.2.10 Discussion of lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, D4 and T1-T11 on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation.....141
4.2.11 Critical evaluation of lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, D4 and T1-T11 on the effectiveness of non –examinable subjects on moral education for character formation 144
4.2.12 Lived experience of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.....144
4.2.13 Discussion of the lived experience of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.....146
4.2.14 Critical evaluation of the lived experience of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.....148
4.2.15 Lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the effectiveness of the strategies in schools for moral education for character formation.....148
Participant D4 expressed that moral education can only be effective if it is approached and implemented correctly. Despite the numerous strategies available in schools, the real challenge is executing them effectively. The participant further observed that schools often prioritize academic knowledge over moral development, which limits the time dedicated to implementing moral strategies.....149
4.2.16 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.....149
4.2.17 Discussion of the lived experiences of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the Effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.....152

4.2.18 Critical evaluation of lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, D4 and T1-T11 on the Effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation…155

4.3 Research objective 3: effective approaches on moral education for character formation 159

4.3.2 Phenomenological theory and moral education: A philosophical lens.....161

4.3.4 Suspension of Judgment (Epoché) and Moral Reflection.....162

4.3.9 Subjectivity and Objectivity:.....166

4.3.11 Moral Identity Formation.....168

4.3.12 Philosophical inference on moral education for character formation.....168

4.3.13 Dialogical Learning.....169

4.3.14 Practical learning.....169

4.3.15 Holistic learning.....170

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS. 175

5.1 Summary of the study.....175

5.2 Conclusion.....180

5.3 Recommendations.....182

5.3.1 Recommendations for further study.....183

REFERENCES.....185

APPENDICES.....211

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4. 1: The Six Steps of the Inductive, Thematic Analysis.....93

Table 4. 2 Research Objective 1 Themes:.....96

Table 4. 3: Research Objective 2 Themes:.....126

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Appendix II: Interview Schedules For Christian Religious Education Teachers

Appendix III: Interview Schedules For Deputy Principals

Appendix IV: Approval Letter From Dps

Appendix V: Nacosti Permit

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Character formation: Character formation refers to the process of developing and shaping an individual's moral, ethical, and personal values.

Efficacy of moral education: The ability to positively shape character, improve ethical decision-making, promote social responsibility, and reduce behaviours

Ethics: Implies a pragmatic normative science in which the wrongness or rightness of human action is determined by logical explanation; these rules regulate an individual's behaviour.

Eudaimonia: This term refers to happiness as conceptualized by Aristotle. The term implies the purpose of human life, namely, a life of happiness.

Existential phenomenology, also referred to as phenomenological existentialism, is an ideology that depicts the experiences of humankind as autonomous, existing entities.

Hermeneutic: An approach to interpreting lived experiences.

Moral education: Moral education is the process of teaching individuals ethical values, empathy, and responsible behaviour so that they can make considered and moral decisions in society.

Phenomenological hermeneutic: Phenomenological hermeneutics is an approach to meaning that draws from phenomenology, which discusses a person’s life experiences, and hermeneutics, which is the study

of interpretation to achieve insight into how people come to understand.

Phenomenology: Phenomenology is a philosophical and methodological approach that focuses on the careful and systematic study of human consciousness and the structures of experience.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elucidates the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, justification of the study, significance of the study, assumption of the study, study limitations and delimitation**.**

1.1 Background of the study

Historically, education has been responsible for imparting societal values, norms, customs, and expectations. Education is essential for sharing knowledge with learners, as it significantly contributes to preserving and conveying a community's cultural heritage, values, and traditions. Additionally, it serves its main purpose of equipping individuals with critical information and skills (Birhan et al., 2021). Philosophers and educationists emphasize that education is a potent tool for fostering moral education, which is critical for societal advancement and does more than just transmitting knowledge (Mandela, 2021). The philosophical underpinning is that a thorough education develops a person's sense of morals, influencing their behaviour, decisions, and overall contribution to society and giving them practical skills (Birhan et al., 2021).

The promotion of economic growth, social advancement, harmony, and peace are all greatly aided by moral considerations. Furthermore, education is often a powerful tool for students' overall development. Through moral principles, education plays a vital role in developing the leaners’ character, where virtues such as integrity and responsibility are instilled. The approach of instilling virtues enables the learners to be responsible citizens.

Education, therefore, becomes more than merely a means of acquiring knowledge. It becomes a vital instrument that nurtures people into ethically conscious and socially conscious actors in the continuous narrative of societal advancement. Fundamentally, the philosophical and historical viewpoints emphasize the long-lasting influence of education on the development of people and society (Mogere & Mbataru, 2023). As a result of moral needs, each society envisions moral education and character formation as its primary educational concerns to attain human happiness.

Aristotle strongly emphasises the need for moral education in developing upright people and building just and equal societies (Mogere, V. B., & Mbataru, P. (2023)., Ndwiga & Nyaga, 2023). In his well-known book "Nicomachean Ethics," Aristotle advances the theory that virtue is acquired by regular practice and habit rather than something we are born with (Juma, Ndwiga & Nyaga, 2023). The authors emphasized fostering moral qualities through a well-rounded and sensible way of living, such as bravery, temperance, and fairness. Aristotle believed that moral education is a lifetime process that begins in infancy and lasts the whole of a person's existence (Mogere & Mbataru, 2023). The authors passionately believed in the value of a moral mentor or teacher who leads people to moral greatness, develops character, and creates a peaceful society.

Therefore, moral education is a holistic strategy that goes beyond academic training and emphasizes developing a person's moral compass and sense of integrity. Fundamentally, it seeks to create a deep understanding of morality so that people can recognize right from wrong. This kind of teaching emphasizes the value of empathy, integrity, and accountability outside of the regular classroom and in real life. A society's shared values are reflected in its many cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions, all impacting moral

education. The transformative power of moral education is what makes it so important. Its objective is to nurture people into morally conscious beings capable of making moral decisions in various situations.

According to Zulaika et al. (2022), moral education fosters compassion and empathy, empowering individuals to build a just and harmonious society by developing a robust moral framework. The authors highlight that moral education is an enlightening influence in the face of intricate ethical dilemmas, guiding people toward making considerate and ethical choices. Moral education ultimately benefits humanity's greater good by nurturing a shared dedication to universal values that transcend individual interests. On the other hand, character formation is a multifaceted process essential to human development. It entails cultivating the moral qualities, ideals, and standards that shape each person's personality. Koskei & Chepchumba (2020) state that character development emphasizes developing one's moral and emotional base more than academic comprehension. According to the authors, deliberate and continuous development of traits like integrity, resilience, compassion, and responsibility is necessary for character formation.

The idea that people may intentionally choose and behave in ways that mould their character is closely related to the concept of character formation. From early infancy until maturity, it is an ongoing journey influenced by family, education, and social connections (Ireri et al., 2020). Deep reflection, learning from the past, and accepting setbacks as opportunities for growth are all part of the process. Character formation is more than personal development; it also means contributing to society, accepting social responsibility, and engaging in moral behaviour (Ireri et al., 2020). Ultimately, it

emphasizes that leading a meaningful and satisfying life requires developing a solid and honourable character.

Moreover, Osborn et al. (2020) state that moral education and character formation are closely related, forming a mutually beneficial relationship that shapes people into morally pure, honourable people. Moral education is essential for developing people's conceptions of moral standards and helping them discern between good and bad ones. It provides the foundation for thriving character formation (Osborn et al., 2020). People may acquire critical qualities like justice, compassion, and honesty via moral education, which in turn aids in developing a robust moral framework. Further, Ogolla & Ondia (2019) indicate that character-formation entails the continuous process of assimilating these qualities into oneself. It is making a conscious effort to cultivate traits that make one morally and aesthetically sound. A person's character is greatly shaped by their moral education, which provides them with the information and direction they need to make morally sound choices. The two have a dynamic relationship beyond formal education, impacting many facets of life, including family, community, and individual experiences.

Moral education shapes character formation, a dynamic process that happens gradually. It requires reflection, steadfast resolve in the face of setbacks, and a commitment to continuous improvement. People who engage in moral education get a deeper understanding of moral concepts and actively apply them to their everyday lives, developing their character (Rehnström et al., 2019). This relationship is essential for encouraging good citizenship and improving the general well-being of society. Individuals who have received moral education and developed a strong character become role models for morality, compassion, and social responsibility. These people demonstrate the

significant influence of moral education and character development on their journey through life as they negotiate its complexities and contribute to creating a just, compassionate, and peaceful community.

The general significance of moral education is that it moulds people into accountable and moral members of society, as shown by its widespread acceptance as a means of character development. It highlights essential qualities like honesty, compassion, and civility and transcends cultural barriers (Ireri et al., 2020). Moral education unites a society where different values are interrelated, promoting a shared commitment to ideals that improve societal peace. Comprehending the global implications of moral education in character development emphasizes the need to cultivate a standard moral scope. This is essential for addressing global concerns and building a future where individuals from different cultural backgrounds can collaborate to create a more compassionate and just society. Even though moral education has an indisputable role in moulding a person's character, currently, it is a global problem.

On the other hand, Character formation is vital in producing people who are not only job or academic achievers but are also good in character. It is the process of becoming responsible in a particular way by following a specific set of ethical and moral standards regarding the relationship with other individuals or entities (Arthur, 2021). Thus, character formation is responsible for nurturing morally upright individuals. Given the fact that the world is full of social, political, and moral concerns, people should have good ethical standards to handle such issues. Character formation requires moulded behaviours such as honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect.

Further, character formation plays a critical role in complementing academic success. While intellectual development is essential, education focusing solely on cognitive skills without addressing moral and ethical growth is incomplete (Avis, 2024). Schools, therefore, have a responsibility to nurture students not just as learners but as ethical, responsible citizens. By teaching students how to think critically about moral issues and practice ethical behaviour, schools prepare them to contribute positively to society. Therefore, character formation is essential for building individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally sound. It provides the ethical foundation for making responsible decisions, fostering social harmony, and achieving personal growth. Even though character formation has an indisputable role in moulding a person's character, currently, it is a global problem.

Huang et al. (2020) point out that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports indicate that the rate of immoral cases worldwide is worrying and unattractive in education and requires urgent attention. In America, moral education for character formation has been given great attention (Simanjuntak, 2020). Despite this being the case, the rate of moral deprivation is high. Moral issues are manifested in premarital pregnancies, armed robbery, suicide, and murder, among many others. The manifested incidents are reported immediately because the United States of America (USA) has a mature democracy that cherishes and practices human rights and freedom. The issue of immoral cases in the USA cuts across all people without discrimination, even among religious leaders who are supposed to act as mentors (Stephen, 2021). Reports from the mass media indicate instances of sexual assaults among religious leaders.

Mathews (2014) points out that statistics in the USA indicate that divorce cases have risen drastically from 1% in 1990 to 50% recently. Also, data shows that abortion in the USA has been legalized; fraud in business and banking, homosexuality and lesbianism, greed and corruption are increasing. Further, Mathews (2014) notes that since 1973, over 50 million people have been murdered. Masath (2013) adds that one in every five women has been exposed to rape or raped. Although the USA is a superpower country, morality is an issue of concern. In 1999, Columbine High School in the USA experienced a tragic massacre when two students killed twelve of their classmates. The potential causes for this tragedy were linked to various factors, including drug abuse, bullying, gun culture, exposure to violent movies, influences from certain subcultures, and the existence of school cliques (Stephen, 2021). The research indicates an increasing number of indiscipline cases among students in the USA, which necessitated new policies to be adopted by the government, school administration, teachers, parents, and the entire community (Zhao & Kuo, 2015).

Njoroge & Nyabuto (2014) point out that several research studies carried out in the USA indicate that there are many challenges in indiscipline cases that teachers need to address. Again, immoral cases in Indian schools are also prevalent. As explained by Wilkson (2022), indiscipline cases among the youths in India result from defective administration, which is authoritarian. The defective administration makes learners respond to their needs through protests. Wilkson (2022) added that the present education emphasizes cognitive and literacy parameters at the expense of moral education and practical training, which deviates from holistic moral education.

Again, several moral issues in schools in Britain have been reported over the years, involving various misconduct behaviours by students, teachers, or school administrators.

Some general examples of moral lapses in schools in Britain include bullying, cheating, drug use, sexual harassment, discriminatory behaviour, or breaches of professional conduct by school staff (M'muyuri, 2021). Further, schools in Britain deal with the issues of weapon possession and misuse of weapons by students, recruitment into criminal gangs, rivalry, drug and substance abuse, trafficking, and youth radicalization, which are clear indicators of moral lapse in schools in Britain (Michel, 2023).

In comparison, moral education for character formation in most African countries was fundamental in setting a correct and all-encompassing foundation for improving behaviours and attitudes towards the person and society (Mwikonji, 2021). Nigerian education aims to instil moral ideals in its students; however, several issues, such as the prevalence of secularism and the excessive desire for consumerism and religious indifference, put the Nigerian schooling system in danger (Mwanzia, 2019). Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor (2014) indicates that moral deficiency is an issue of concern in Nigeria.

Tanzania aims to impart moral principles to learners to produce responsible, accountable, and morally upright citizens (Anangisye, 2008). Each level of education in Tanzania has specific goals of moral education for character formation. Although no particular discipline or subject covers moral education for character formation, moral education is infused in religious studies, life skills, civics, music, and arts (Anangisye, 2008). The moral aspect among learners is taken care of in form three and four, where they take religious education as a compulsory subject. However, surveys indicate that Tanzania still has prevalent indiscipline and character malformation among its secondary school students. The top three indicators of misbehaviour are bullying, protest, and sexual assault (Edema, 2023). The foretasted cases of indiscipline have been unsuccessfully addressed through corporal

punishment. Anangisye (2008) warned that to manage the issues of immoral cases in Tanzania, a system is essential in regulating the matters and teaching moral values.

In the year 1994, Rwanda experienced a genocide that made the country acknowledge the aspect of moral education in schools specifically for character formation among the learners (Melvern, 2020). The Rwandan education minister pointed out that the school curriculum had failed the country, which led to modifying the school curriculum to cater for moral education for character formation (Binagwaho et al., 2020). Moral education for character formation in Rwanda was infused in five education goals out of seven. Reflective practice, self-control, independence from all types of prejudice, and encouraging moral principles such as harmony, fairness, patience, respect, and personal accountability are all included in education's moral components (Melvern, 2020).

The Rwandese Primary and Secondary schools reconstructed their curriculum after the genocide. They infused peace, ethics, and religious education as compulsory subjects (Stephen, 2021). The reconstructionism of Rwanda's curriculum led to the development of youths of moral character and integrity. The situation is manifested in Rwanda, where peace, tolerance, respect, hard work, and togetherness have resulted in a stable country. While Rwanda portrays a near-successful approach to moral education for character formation, it nonetheless experiences moral decadence related to poor education leadership and communication disorientation, especially among students, teachers, and parents (Stephen, 2021). The unique case of Rwandese school indiscipline emerges from the confusion in using French, English, and Kinyarwanda (Ngabonziza & De Dieu, 2021). This linguistic diversity can lead to communication challenges in the classroom. Students may struggle to understand the language of instruction, leading to frustration and

disengagement, which results in indiscipline. Students who are not proficient in English may face difficulties accessing the curriculum, resulting in potential indiscipline as a form of resistance. Suppose teachers and students do not share a common language or have limited language proficiency. In that case, it can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and conflicts.

In Kenya, providing students with a solid moral foundation for character formation has always been a priority, both before and after sovereignty (Stephen, 2021). Before independence, African Indigenous Education aimed to promote a peaceful society and prepare the youths to grow morally upright. It was used to help in the passage of worthwhile values. Accountability, honesty, patience, empathy, decency, and teamwork were promoted through guidance and counselling, verbal warnings, ridicule, and deterrence in African society (Nsamenang, 2005).

After independence, the government of Kenya came up with constitutional policy documents and commissions to amplify the importance of moral education for character formation (Kimani, 2020). In 2010, the Constitution bestowed the entire chapter six to contemplate the integrity question, which is supreme for morals necessary for character formation. The Basic Education Act was also enacted in 2014 to achieve unity, inclusion, cohesiveness, compassion and participation to offer basic education and eradicate incitement to violence and xenophobia by promoting the right understanding of moral and cultural diversity via teaching (Kimani, 2020). Education has grown significantly recently, yet people's moral standards have severely declined.

Kenya has attempted to achieve the goal of moral education for character formation, but it has not been effective. It begs the question of why it has taken many years after independence to achieve the goal of moral education for character formation. This being the scenario, where is the problem? Agonga & Muhingi (2020) points out that the Ominde Report of 1964, the Gachathi Commission of 1976, the Kamunge Commission of 1988, the Constitution of Kenya 2010, and the Basic Education Act of 2014 were reconstructed to recognize the importance of promoting moral education for character formation. However, the authors add that implementing moral education for character formation faces myriad obstacles. In his critique on the implementation of moral aims of education in Kenya, Stephen (2021) supports that implementing moral goals in education in Kenya is an unsolved problem left to teachers who are experts in teaching.

Apart from the foretasted scenarios, the daily occurrences that depict a society of moral issues accelerated the investigation on moral education for character formation. Cases of arson in schools, rape, child abuse, stealing and robbery, examination cheating, indiscipline cases, premarital pregnancies, corruption, divisive politics, and political lies, among many others, are prevalent in Kenya (Gogo, 2020). In the presence of the above immoral cases and many others, it's clear that moral education for character formation has not been achieved in schools. Furthermore, Osabwa (2016) argues that moral education in Kenya is demanding. The demand is based on the daily happenings of immoral tendencies.

Additionally, Wanjala (2014) points out that Kenyan traffic police have been alleged to accept bribes, thereby contributing to road fatalities. Also, Anuro (2014) indicates that physicians sell drugs for public health facilities. Again, Likoye (2014) points out that learners emulate their teachers' actions. For example, learners copy from teachers when

they strike for their grievances to be heard. From the above observations, the young generation will perpetuate the vices from their daily experiences. The above being the case, schools are yet to achieve the normative dimension of education. Since 2020, cases of moral degradation in Kenya have been an issue of concern (Gogo, 2020). Reports from mass media indicate immoral tendencies such as arson in schools are increasing compared to previous years, premarital pregnancy, drug abuse, indecency, theft, and misuse of public resources are worsening in Kenya and therefore require direct pathways.

Kakamega County faces significant moral challenges, particularly in relation to child defilement, substance abuse, domestic violence, and indiscipline cases. The poverty level in Kakamega County stands at 49.2%, which is equivalent to around 809,500 residents living below the poverty line (Chepkong'a, 2023). This economic hardship is closely linked to various moral issues, including high rates of child defilement, substance abuse, domestic violence, and indiscipline. The prevalence of such issues is high, often linked to socio-cultural and economic factors such as substance abuse and family dynamics. Statistical data from the Kenya Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2013-2014) reveals concerning attitudes towards domestic violence and child discipline, indicating a cultural backdrop that may condone abusive behaviours (Chepkong'a, 2023). Furthermore, child defilement frequently involves perpetrators known to the victims, such as family members or neighbours, exacerbating the trauma and highlighting community complicity in these moral issues (Chepkong'a, 2023).

Moreover, according to Kenya Health Information Systems (KHIS), Kakamega County has been among the leading counties with moral issues in the recent past. For instance, Kakamega County was the second largest affected by premarital teenage pregnancy cases,

standing at 6,669, equivalent to 33% from January to June 2020 (Nyangaresi, 2020). 71% of the reported cases of 2020 premarital teenage pregnancy in Kakamega County, Kenya, were associated with unprotected premarital sex, which is an indicator of moral deviance. The KHIS report indicated that moral degradation has created havoc among parents, teachers, health workers, prevention agencies, and administrators in the county. Hence, the moral issues in the county require urgent attention. Additionally, in 2021, Kakamega County had the highest number of school unrest and arson cases. The Standard Media (2021) reported that students burned dormitories, and parents were asked to pay a total of Ksh. 21.6 million, the highest surcharge fees the country has ever witnessed in relation to student indiscipline. In a separate incident, students burned down one of the largest dormitories, accommodating over 500 students (Star News, 2020). Similar incidents have taken place from 2020 to 2022.

Consequently, it is against the above backdrop the researcher investigated the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya: A phenomenological approach.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Moral education for character formation plays a vital role in inculcating desirable and acceptable moral values among the youth. Even though moral education for character formation has an indisputable role in moulding the youth, it is currently a global problem. Reports indicate that the rate of immoral cases worldwide is worrying and unattractive in education, and it requires urgent attention. The global issues in education manifest in terms of sexual assaults, drug abuse, gun violence, radicalization, and defective administration.

Despite the centrality of moral education for character formation as prescribed by Philosophers, legal frameworks, and policies, moral education in Kenya lacks a clear implementation framework for moral education programs, strategies, and assessment. The loopholes in transferring moral content, instructional approaches, and moral assessment are major obstacles to the realization of moral education for character formation in Kenya. This is evidenced in the observable and undesirable behaviours of learners in school, such as school arson, rape, child abuse, stealing and robbery, examination cheating, indiscipline cases, premarital pregnancies, corruption, divisive politics, and political lies, among others. If the moral problems are not addressed in time, the issues of social dysfunctionality among future Kenyan youths are expected to be rampant. In addition, the social fabric of Kenyan society is likely to rapture irreversibly.

On the other hand, Kakamega County faces significant moral challenges, particularly in relation to child defilement, substance abuse, domestic violence, premarital pregnancy, and indiscipline cases in schools, which require urgent attention.

Therefore, it is against the above backdrop the researcher investigated the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya: A phenomenological approach. Bring out the approach and how it will address the issue.

1.3 Purpose of the study

To investigate the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya: A phenomenological approach.

1.4 Research objectives

i. To examine the value of moral aims of education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.
ii. To investigate teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.
iii. To establish effective approaches on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

1.5 Research questions

i. What is the value of moral aims of education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya?
ii. What are teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya?
iii. What are the effective approaches to moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya?

1.6 Justification of the study

Each society is obligated to raise the youths morally upright since it’s an investment in our shared future. Failure to raise the youths morally upright will mean they will likely be unprepared for future moral obligations and responsibilities. The value and the emotions attached to the youths and the insatiable quest to prepare them for the future is the key factor that provides justification for undertaking this study to understand the moral underpinning that moulds youth's experiences in a world where social standards and values are ever-evolving.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Examining the actual experiences of educators actively involved in moral education yields insightful information that might significantly increase the efficacy of existing initiatives. Policymakers and curriculum creators may thoroughly grasp the benefits and drawbacks of current programs by closely examining these experiences. This firsthand knowledge is an invaluable resource facilitating informed decision-making that may enhance moral education initiatives. It is important to remember that these enhancements lead to better adaptability to Kenyan secondary schools' different demands and difficulties.

Beyond its immediate applicability, this research significantly advances our knowledge of moral teaching and character development in the Kenyan school system. This study may offer a better understanding and contextualization of theoretical frameworks, adding new insights to the current literature based on empirical information acquired from teachers' real-life experiences in the field. Further, this study may provide a solid foundation for

future studies in the Kenyan setting and advance the scholarly conversation on moral education.

The research also emphasizes the importance of considering the teacher's perspective when evaluating the effectiveness of moral education initiatives. Teachers are at the forefront of implementation, offering a unique perspective on these programs' real-world challenges and successes. Acknowledging and valuing their experiences ensures that future policies and programs are better matched with the intricate classroom dynamics and recognize their essential role in the educational process. By bridging theoretical frameworks with real-world applications, this study seeks to provide an all-encompassing and effective strategy for moral education for character formation.

1.8 Assumption of the study

This study makes the following assumptions.

i. Moral education for character formation could be acquired through teaching, habituation, and learning. They are not something we are born with.
ii. The strategies used in the execution of moral education for character formation in Kakamega county, Kenya, though imperative, have downsides, and more effective strategies are paramount for effective implementation.
iii. Moral education for character formation can effectively influence students' morals and character.
iv. Moral education for character formation achieved through education can significantly impact students' later-life decision-making and behaviour.

1.9 Limitations of the study

i. Several variables influence moral education, including peer groups, religion, media, culture, and school. This research, however, focuses primarily on the experiences of working secondary school teachers in Kakamega County, Kenya.

ii. The study mainly focused on the Philosophy of education. While this provided the foundation for the study, it could have missed important findings from other academic fields that might have improved our understanding of the efficacy of moral education for character formation.

1.10 Delimitation

Delimitations are issues within the study over which the researcher has control. The study is limited to education and is further narrowed down to the philosophy of education as a discipline. Therefore, this study investigates the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya: A phenomenological approach. Further, the study is confined to phenomenological theory and Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia. The chosen scope makes it possible to conduct a complete and in-depth analysis of teachers' lived experiences and perspectives, offering insights on the efficacy of moral education for character formation.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed literature drawn from relevant sources and studies. The relevant theoretical literature was reviewed and critiqued where necessary. The theoretical literature review was categorized as per the research objectives as follows: Firstly, an examination of the value of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya; secondly, teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya and thirdly, the establishment of effective approaches on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya. The parameters for review were geared towards aligning the reviewed related literature to the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia, phenomenological theory, and philosophical methods of investigation, which redefine and shape moral education for character formation.

2.1 The value of the aims of moral education for character formation

One of the significant goals of education is to help learners acquire and develop acceptable and desirable moral values. Birhan et al. (2021) posit that moral education fosters a sense of social and civic responsibility in individuals. It seeks to nurture active and responsible citizenship by encouraging individuals to contribute to the well-being of their communities and society. Lickona (1991) adds that moral education aims to cultivate positive character traits such as empathy, responsibility, resilience, self-discipline, and moral courage. The moral goals of education are essential parameters and should be taken seriously because, without moral parameters, education will be meaningless. Akanga (2014) notes that the world has given too much attention to non-moral goals of education due to the perceived

success and obsession with science and technology. Further, he adds that moral education for character formation is declining despite standards that guide human conduct.

Kenya, in her current educational system, identifies eight national aims referred to as goals of education, namely: education to (i) foster nationalism, patriotism, and national unity; (ii) promote socio-economic, technological and industrial skills; (iii) foster individual development and self-fulfilment, (iv) promote sound moral and religious values, (v) promote social equality and responsibility, (vi) promote respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures, (vii) promote international consciousness and positive attitudes towards other nations, and (viii) promote positive attitudes towards good health and environmental protection (RoK, 2012). However, this research investigated the moral goals of education since they were assumed to capture the expected moral parameters of the ideal Kenyan citizen as envisioned in the Constitution of Kenya (2010).

Stephen (2021) points out that researchers have observed that moral aims have not been implemented sufficiently despite their central position in education. The framework for implementation of the moral aims has gaps such as a lack of clear criteria to implement Moral education, a skewed evaluation mechanism of moral goals of education dominated by summative evaluation that essentially negates evaluation of moral aspects of education (affective dimension of morality), ineffective pedagogical approaches used in schools dominated by teaching through the lecture approach and an apparent unclear philosophical foundation that is necessarily in the implementation of MGE. As a result of the unclear philosophical framework on moral education for character formation, the current study is out to advance the combination of phenomenological theory and Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia as a possible approach to address the rampant cases of immoral issues in

society. This is because phenomenological theory and Aristotelian eudaimonia offer a comprehensive approach to moral education. They effectively cultivate reflective moral thinking and pertinent ethical action, helping to bring up morally responsible and all-round developed individuals.

Simiyu and Stephen (2021) point out that Kenya, like any other country, has set educational aims geared towards character formation. They postulate that living a righteous life is the modern world's highest test. However, they emphasise that moral education for character formation is vital in orienting the young to be answerable people to contribute to the nation's financial and communal development.

In Kenya, the instructive system has concentrated on offering moral education for character formation through conventional religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, so that one's moral and religious beliefs can be in harmony. They further point out that 8-4-4 products exhibit violent protests, drug and substance use, property destruction, protests against teachers, and radicalization, among other things. The research by Simiyu & Stephen (2021) was more rational in examining the moral issue of education. This study fills the current knowledge gaps through the use of phenomenological research design to capture and analyse concrete lived experiences of the participants on moral education for character development in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Many of the studies carried out in the past have been based on theoretical concept analyses or large-scale questionnaires, thereby excluding important individual perception factors that determine how and what moral education means in a given educational culture. Therefore, this phenomenological approach avoids general debates and describes the participants' attitudes, perceptions, and difficulties.

While Simiyu and Stephen (2021) appreciate the importance of moral education, their study does not provide clear methodological procedures for their study to warrant the inference they make. Secondly, the study makes general statements that are indicators of non-phenomenological research that this study considers. For instance, the claim that "8.4.4 products exhibit violent protests…" is not backed up by any sampled data from lived experiences.

Sober (2009) contends that students acquire civility and lawfulness via moral reasoning in classrooms because it teaches them what is culturally acceptable while interacting with others. The same sentiments were echoed by Nord & Haynes (1998), who asserted that an excellent moral reasoning education initiates students into cultures that shape their moral identities. The researcher concurs with Sober (2009) and Nord & Haynes (1998) by supporting their views that the primary purpose of schools is to ensure learners acquire moral virtues through guidance and habituation, allowing them to grow morally responsible and upright. However, the two studies contradict the principle of moral reasoning and automatic acceptability of cultural, moral decisions, which might contradict the eudaimonic principle of ultimate happiness. Further, the limitation of moral reasoning to the classroom breaches the principle of moral holism manifested in real-life experiences outside the classroom environment.

Myyry (2003) points out that morally developed and accurate learners should have four crucial ethical elements: awareness, judgment, ambition, and execution. Moral judgment concentrates on what is ethically correct and equitable, whereas ethical awareness considers the feasible behaviours in a given scenario. Moral ambition is the desire to do what is ethically correct. In contrast, moral execution is the bravery and ability to follow

through with a course of action, even when faced with obstacles and pressures of one kind or another. These elements are primarily designed to impact a person's moral conduct (Gardiner, 2012).

Moral elements form the basis for moral reasoning among students in secondary schools. As a result, students who have received moral education for character formation are considered to have great moral principles and can think clearly about moral issues. The above basis formed the precipice for the study, especially the theoretical level, by appealing to Aristotelian Thomistic cardinal virtues. The Aristotelian-Thomistic cardinal virtues include prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, which are fundamental moral virtues that guide individuals in making sound decisions, acting justly, showing courage, and practicing self-control for a virtuous life.

Myyry (2003) does not point out the level of moral issues proper to the different ages of the learners. For instance, moral issues that emanate from dilemmas and tri-lemmas might not necessarily be solved or dissolved by learners who have acquired the four ethical elements. Advanced moral issues are perhaps well dealt with through prolonged experiences that provide advanced frameworks such as phenomelogical and eudaimonia frameworks. The theories intersect in their shared emphasis on intentional, reflective engagement with life. Both theories advocate for a purpose-driven, relational, and authentic approach to life, where individuals develop character and achieve fulfilment by actively embodying values and virtues.

Itolondo (2012) indicates that moral education for character formation is anticipated to benefit learners to attain socioeconomic, moral, and spiritual insights to think logically,

respect and appreciate their own and other people's diverse cultures, and pursue the core concept of righteous living. The study by Itolondo used questionnaires for data collection. In contrast, the current study employs unstructured interviews in tandem with phenomenological studies.

In the view of moral education for character formation, phenomenological unstructured interviews are useful in the current research to capture the participants' lived experiences. Flexible and unstructured interviewing methods allow the participants to express their views freely and provide detailed descriptions and explanations of their observations of how moral concepts are produced and understood in practice. In the process, themes emerge as participants recount specific events or interactions. This method provides freedom of how the participants feel and share their values, ethical issues, and the role of moral education in shaping character without having to stick to structured questions.

Furthermore, they can use phenomenological suspensions such as epoché and bracketing, which help a researcher clear the mind when analyzing each participant's experience. This is particularly useful in moral education studies because it helps the researcher to understand in detail how and in what way the subjects impart moral lessons, how these are utilised, and how they are incorporated and perceived subjectively by the individual, which in turn gives a holistic view of the subject and its concept of moral education as an invaluable character formation process., allowing the researcher to probe questions in the interview process to extract rich and extensive lived experiences from the participants on moral education for character formation.

Stephen and Simiyu (2021) indicate that the central aim of education is to promote moral values among the youth. They further postulate that moral education is vital in character formation; without it, society would culminate or be bound to moral degeneration devoid of moral purity. Their study emphasises that no plausible theory in education is responsible for implementing moral education; thus, the virtue of happiness will never be achieved. Their study employed only a critical method and left out the gap between empirical and experiential approaches, which promotes the understanding of moral education for character formation. The current study is out to address their argument that there is no plausible theory in education that is responsible for implementing moral education for character formation. The gap is anchored on the combinational approach of phenomenological theory and the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia. When integrated, they promote an action-based, Aristotelian approach to effectively educate the moral self of the learner. This integration benefits students in learning and accepting moral ideas and provides them with the tools necessary for moral action.

In summary, the researchers discussed above raise valid concerns about moral education from theoretical and practical perspectives, and their discourses are significant in propelling the discussions on moral education and character formation. However, Simiyu and Stephen (2021) are overly rational and deductive in their moral discourse. They capitalize on generalizations that can only be proper to meta-ethical studies. However, the interest of this research is to ground moral discussions on phenomenological, practical, and descriptive dimensions.

Phenomenological and eudaimonia-based research aims to identify and improve the quality of human life. The approach is useful in unveiling the experiences and consciousness of individuals, hence giving the researcher the focal point on the essence of personal values and ethical standards of individuals' everyday practices. Eudaimonia, which means "human flourishing" to Aristotle, highlights the understanding of achieving success, contentment, and happiness through developing virtues and the segregation of emotions and reason.

Altogether, these approaches are deemed appropriate in moral education and character formation as this research addresses a practical understanding of how people learn to accept and apply ethical values, which enrich their or a person's life. These interests enhance knowledge about individual growth and identity, moral character, and genuine well-being. Sober (2009) and Myrry (2003) present a contextualized approach; for instance, Sober 2009 limits his discussion to conventionalism, while Myrry (2003) ignores high-order moral reasoning. The discussion of Itolondo 2012 is closer to the phenomenology of this study because it emphasizes the field approach; however, she lacks data that properly explains her respondents' fully expressed living experiences. The researcher uses closed-ended questionnaires, which does not allow for the full expression of the respondents.

2.1.1 Review of Policy publications that prioritize the aims of moral education for character formation in Kenya since independence

After independence, the Kenyan education system was subjected to numerous policy documents such as Commission Reports and Sessional Papers. The main aim of subjecting these policy documents to the education system was to amplify the main aim of moral education for character formation in learning institutions. The policy documents included;

"The Ominde Report of 1964, Educational Act of 1968, Gachathi Report of 1976, Mackay Report of 1981, Kamunge Report of 1988, The Koech Report of 1999, Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005, The Basic Education Act of 2013, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2015 and Competency Based Curriculum of 2017 by Professor Odhiambo" (Muricho et al., 2021).

2.1.2 Ominde Report - Education Commission Report 1964

The Ominde panel was tasked with "evaluating the learning programs in Kenya and making recommendations on the formulation of national education policy." The commission established eight national educational objectives: These encompass fostering nationalism and unity, advancing socio-economic and technological skills, nurturing individual development and self-fulfilment, upholding moral and religious values, promoting social equality and responsibility, respecting Kenya's diverse cultures, enhancing international awareness, and encouraging positive attitudes towards health and environmental protection (RoK, 1964)." Education for moral and religious principles is paramount for this study because it stipulates education objectives in Kenya. It connotes that education is cardinal for attitude change and relationships and fosters respect for the human personality, which is paramount for character formation.

The Ominde Commission emphasized the efficacy of moral education for character formation. The major role of moral education for character formation during the era was to counter the colonial administration's negative vices in Kenya, such as forced labour and discrimination. 'Moral and religious values' were advocated to minimize the immoral acts perpetrated in the epoch of colonialism. Racist segregation, animosity between Africans and Europeans, injustice, and inequality were immoral deeds. Education was believed to

cultivate moral virtues like collaboration, national integration, tolerance, diligence, and justice (Muthamba, 2017; Murira, 2013).

The Report recommended that the Muslim body supplement Christian Religious Education to address the issue of moral education for character formation. Stephen (2021) opines that the Ominde report did not diminish the teaching of CRE for moral education but made CRE an agent of implementing the moral goals of education. However, the researcher averred that CRE had faced myriad challenges in implementing the moral goals of education. Further, the author emphasized that the Ominde Report gave an enormous task to schools as an agent of moral information without a clear pathway. He added that moral information was unsuccessful because of unclear procedures for teachers to implement it and unclear curriculum and evaluation mechanisms. Finally, he argued that combining "religious" and "moral" principles would lead to misunderstanding in executing moral education. The study agreed with Muthamba and Stephen that the Ominde Commission mixed moral education for character formation and religion; hence, it was difficult to implement it.

2.1.3 The Education Act of 1968

The Education Act of 1968 was the first to be enacted in Kenya following independence. It primarily established legal guidelines for schooling. The legislation established a regulatory framework for sustainable educational reform. The educational act described the societal significance of education in national progression and the production of literate citizens capable of guiding their nation to higher heights of wealth (Muricho et al., 2021). Regarding moral teaching, the act included the degree of instructors' behaviour, the style of their instruction, the discipline of learners, and the presence of different organizations in

guaranteeing the integrity of the schooling system. The statute stipulates that instructors must be well-prepared to cultivate well-mannered, law-abiding, and ethical pupils. This legislation governed the education sector in Kenya until 2013, when a draft bill was enacted following the 2010 constitution's adoption. The act's provision for staff education to produce law-abiding citizens has not been realized.

Stephen (2021) points out that moral competency among university teacher trainees is unaccountable and, in colleges, has been left as a personal responsibility among teacher students. He further notes that trained teachers are involved in the embezzlement of school funds, sexual affairs with their students, and exam malpractices, among others. The above instances contradicted the commission's act of preparing teachers to act as role models and mentors in preparing learners who conform to ethical principles. Muthamba (2017) notes that most teacher preparation programs enhance teachers' ability to teach mathematics and science. It was regarded as disrespect for the function of the arts in creating the human being and marginalization of character teaching. The above cases catalyzed the study.

2.1.4 Gachathi Report- National Commission on Educational Objectives and Policies 1976

The Gachathi report was the term given to the National Commission on Educational Objectives and Policies in 1976 by its chair. The group evaluated Kenya's educational system and formulated goals and plans for the country's second decade of independence. The report was aimed at meeting the societal needs. This report observed that religious education did not achieve ethics, diligence, mutual respect, honesty, transparency, and respect for the rule of law in safeguarding human dignity (Muricho et al., 2021). According

to that assessment, religious education taught then did not accomplish its goal of instilling morality. It was because it was viewed as a means of colonization by the colonial masters, and the Africans frequently rejected its aims. It advocated for creating a single course, Social Education Ethics (SEE), open to all students, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Social ethics was included in the curriculum based on the advice of this report. After the inclusion, SEE was made an examinable subject; hence, it was cognitively anchored, devoid of the normative approach. The Koech Commission abolished SEE in the year 2000. From the above observation, Gachathi's report emphasized the efficacy of moral education for character formation (Muthamba, 2017). However, it did not make moral education for character formation a reality; hence, there was a study gap.

2.1.5 Mackay Report- Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya 1981

The report recommended restructuring the education system to 8.4.4 from 7.4.2.3. It was a presidential task force on forming the second university in Kenya. It was established and tasked with developing a thorough plan and set of proposals for carrying out the state's decision to create the second institution. That investigation identified four philosophical and conceptual parameters for the future university's growth. The backup plan is the applicable one for this investigation (Ominde et al., 2021). It claimed that higher learning institutions should be connected to the "wananchi" and produce professionals who are excellent public speakers, reside in remote regions, successfully assist everybody, and are inventive, diligent, and dedicated (RoK, 1981).

However, the majority of Kenyan universities failed to implement the above. Most universities were mainly concerned with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education at the expense of character formation education (Muthamba, 2017). By then, teachers were busy establishing the best methods to enable learners to pass exams at the expense of creative, moral values and reasoning skills. That is why immoral cases such as examination malpractice, prostitution, strikes, indecent dressing, and drug abuse became rampant in universities. Muthamba 2017 further notes that there have been several moral difficulties related to colleges in Kenya and continual unrest that disrupt the work of the general populace, particularly those who live near these institutions. The above observations rekindled the current study.

2.1.6 Kamunge Report – Education and Manpower Development for the Next Decade and Beyond 1988

The panel, generally known as the Kamunge Commission, was created and tasked with "reviewing the state education and training for another ten years and beyond and making suggestions" under its terms of reference. The third section of that report discusses the educational philosophy in the country (Ominde et al., 2021). That section's fifth objective of education was the priority for that project because it addressed the function of schooling in indoctrinating the cultural and ethical principles necessary for generating ethically integrated, attentive, and critical thinkers. That objective highlighted the importance of education in establishing a peaceful community and fostering social justice, ethics, and proper attitudes by instilling the correct mindset (Ominde et al., 2021). Other ideas included national ideals, ethical reasoning, and instruction in individuals' social roles and functions. Regarding the development of morality and ethical development, the report proposed that

social literacy and morality be imparted to all students at all stages of the learning process, as well as the idea and methods of joint efforts and mutual civic conscience (RoK, 1988).

The report offered sound suggestions for teaching social ethics at all stages of school and civic duties and functions; however, social ethics was removed from the curriculum in 2000 following the Koech Commission's thesis. The Kamunge report stressed the need for moral education to foster character formation since schools recognized the need for cognitive education (Ominde et al., 2021). It also emphasized SEE teaching for character formation throughout the learning institutions.

Furthermore, the report advocated for in-service teacher training sessions to achieve the goal of moral education for character formation. However, it faced obstacles such as removing social ethics meant to impart moral values to learners. Also, schools struggled little with moral education for character formation due to exam competitions (Ominde et al., 2021). Apart from school competitions, schools were busy acquiring money and other resources at the expense of preparing teachers and students of moral character. Also, teacher trainees were after acquiring certificates for employment and promotions at the expense of normative education. Therefore, the study's concern was to investigate whoever was to act as a role model for moral sense.

2.1.7 Koech Report – Total and Integrated Quality Education and Training

The panel recommended strategies to enable learning infrastructure to make national integration, mutual civic conscience, rapid economic and technical progress, and long-term adaptability to changing conditions. It was charged with preparing Kenyan society for the problems of contemporary society using education and training. To address the country's

problems in the 21st century, the panel suggested a new school system called "totally integrated quality education and training" (TIQET) to improve the conventional 8-4-4 model. TIQET was comprehensive since it was meant to be all-inclusive, flexible, and perpetual (Chikati et al., 2021). It was incorporated into the approach to learning, which is essential in contemporary education. The suggested school system included intersection links and logical development from one level to the next, emphasizing improving education and training provision outcomes (Chikati et al., 2021). It is emphasized that education should shape a person to be a mature and responsible citizen. This citizen must have the mental capacity to appreciate cultural heritage to mature and become successful.

After the report's thesis, Kenya was required to develop a new ideology with fifteen qualities. Among the traits relevant to this research are the creation of individual identity, respect for authority, human dignity, and interpersonal fairness, promoting ethical and religious principles in interpersonal and interethnic relationships, mobilization for the common benefit of joint and civic responsibility was a business responsibility (Chikati et al., 2021). Internalization of a good and enduring work ethic, conservation and preservation of a pristine environment, respect for humanity, including that of the older population and those in varied situations, including homeless kids and those diagnosed with or who have AIDS, and the evolution of a person's capacity to make reasonable decisions.

This report revisited the purpose of moral education for character formation to create a decent society. The analysis noted that despite the inclusion of SEE in secondary school curricula, it failed to yield the desired outcomes despite the high KCSE scores. This report recommended reducing the number of secondary school subjects to make the curriculum more workable (Chikati et al., 2021).

To support the 8-4-4 model opponents, the government lowered the number of subjects taught in secondary schools, notwithstanding President Moi's dismissal of the Koech Commission's recommendations as idealistic, impossible, and impractical (Chikati et al., 2021). It eliminated essential subjects such as SEE from the curriculum and designated CRE optional, significantly impacting moral education for students' character formation. The paper by Koech identified several reasons for the moral vacuum in schools and the world at large. It included a shortage of mentors, poor parenting methods, an emphasis on getting good grades, ineffective instructional designs, and the absence of rewards for good moral behaviour in learning institutions and the public (Chikati et al., 2021). Furthermore, removing SSE and making CRE an optional subject was a major setback for character education, hence, the current study.

2.1.8 The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005.

This document represented the government's education strategy, which sought to develop a complete legislative framework addressing all phases and facets of schooling. The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 also addressed the absence of a philosophical underpinning for the education sector in the legislation framework of the Education Act of 1968 (Okundi, 2012). The second chapter of the Sessional Paper, No.1 of 2005, discusses the philosophy, strategy, purpose, and aims intended to be an inherent element of Kenya's legal structure for schooling, development, and research. The educational concept emphasized nationalism, civic conscience, social harmony, moral fibre, and continuous learning. Other principles included fairness, inclusiveness, appreciation of science and technology, and ecological sustainability (Okundi, 2012). Education must tackle human freedoms, drug and substance misuse, aggression, and social isolation to attain these goals.

The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 points out that to assure societal responsibility, schooling must include social responsibility elements such as fostering cultural identity and spirituality, battling drug and substance addiction, and awareness of the development of disasters such as HIV/AIDS. The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 stressed that morality and ethical principles, such as serenity, morality, attentiveness, truthfulness, liberty, self-confidence, and fairness, maintain societal stability and communal harmony (Okundi, 2012). It would be desirable for the national curriculum to combat immoral conduct and follow it through an integrated program to accomplish the espoused principles. Regarding the philosophy, vision, purpose, aim, and goals of schooling, The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 read that different education sub-sectors emphasised developing competencies and holistic learning (Okundi, 2012). The provision of comprehensive, advanced education and training that supports education, including cognitive and emotive dimensions, was noted. Through training and education, it was essential to instil values such as nationalism, fairness, stability, safety, integrity, respect, love, compassion, patience, collaboration, and democracy (RoK, 2005). Although The Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 identified the character formation problem and gave strategies for addressing it, moral decline cases still manifest in Kenya at a high rate.

2.1.9 Sessional Paper No.2 of 2015 and Competency-Based Curriculum of 2017

An official state expert panel headed by Professor Odhiambo came up with the paper called Re-Alignment of Education Sector to Kenya Vision 2030 and Constitution 2010, as well as Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2015, which is titled: "Re-alignment of Education Sector to Kenya Vision 2030 and Constitution 2010 (Government of Kenya, 2012) and sessional paper NO 2 of 2015; reforming education and training in Kenya the restructuring of education of

education in Kenya necessitated the change in the structure and system of education in Kenya from 8-4-4 system to a 2-6-3-3-3 system, recognized as the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) (Ngwacho, 2019). In essence, the 8-4-4 is progressively being phased away, and by 2028, the education system in Kenya will be entirely CBC. It had been consistently stated that 8-4-4's curriculum and execution are primarily academic and test-oriented (Stephen 2021). There had been a long-standing problem with 8-4-4 because of a shortage of learning materials, underprepared instructors, and the growth of societal wrongs such as drug dependence, abusive behaviour, and corruption (RoK, 2017).

The CBC hopes to raise a new generation of morally upright people as law-abiding citizens. There are numerous places where moral development may be fostered outside of a child's school setting, such as in families and churches. Still, CBC recognizes that schools play a critical role in forming young people's character (Ngwacho, 2019). Integrity, respect, empathy, and understanding were already included in Kenya's 2010 constitution. Additionally, CBC envisions inculcating moral virtues such as compassion, kindness, love, caring, and compassion and sharing in its students. The emerging question is how CBC will impart moral education.

The CBC identified seven abilities students must attain: communication and teamwork, self-efficacy, analytical and decision-making, innovation, citizenship, internet proficiency, and learning to learn (Akala, 2021). Examining these abilities reveals that morality is given little consideration since moral growth was not an expected capability under the CBC structure. Hence, the researcher carried out a study on the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya: The lived experiences of practising teachers**.**

2.1.10 The Basic Education Act of 2013

The Basic Education Act of 2013 was passed to reconcile Kenya's educational model with the new Constitution adopted in 2010. The Basic Education Act of 2013 was enacted to enhance and oversee universal primary education. It provides a structure for basic education systems' certification, licensing, development, and accountability. Additionally, it establishes commissions for education quality control and district education boards, among other related objectives (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Sponsorship in education is emphasized in Article 27 of the Act, Sections (a), (c), and (d) by offering to monitor and advise assistance in terms of spiritual development. Sponsors can also actively evaluate syllabi, curricula, and educational materials (Republic of Kenya, 2013). Sponsors were to select chaplains to aid in the spiritual upbringing of the schools they supported within the provisions of the law. Because it was the most current education-related law instrument, numerous new opportunities for moral education opened up. Since then, sponsors have become solely responsible for providing school counsellors since the statute stated that promoters must foot the bill. The act did not consider that certain learning institutions lacked sponsors and that their learners required moral education for character formation.

Muthamba (2017) supported the view by adding that the policy supports moral education for character formation per se. Stephen (2021) opined that the act had empowered and legalized spiritual programs such as spiritual weeks, young Christian society, Christian union, and pastoral programs. He further added that the act was confused between moral education for character formation and spiritual growth and did not give solutions to schools not sponsored by religious bodies for moral education for character formation to succeed. To achieve moral teaching, the state and all other concerned stakeholders must work as a

team. The statement was not in tandem with the constantly evolving society in terms of its values, norms, and challenges; hence, the study gap.

2.1.11 Policy gaps

In summary**,** education commissions, acts, and task forces stated above were significant in ensuring that moral education was intended to foster character formation. The biggest challenge, however, has been the high turnover of the commissions and task forces repeating the same ideas in different words. This high turnover is associated with the ineffective implementation of their recommendation and lack of assessment of the implementation procedures. In some cases, some recommendations seemed impractical to implement or outright expensive. As such, the phenomenological tangents to moral education are curtailed; they remain at the level of paperwork infrequently assessed. Indeed, Kenya has attempted to implement other areas of education, especially science and technology. Still, the corresponding degree in moral education has not been at par with other subjects and aptitudes. National exams, for instance, do not explicitly consider practical moral education as one of the rubrics for passing exams.

Education commissions, acts, and task forces often lack alignment with Aristotelian eudaimonia, which emphasizes personal flourishing by cultivating virtues like integrity, empathy, and practical wisdom (phronesis). Many educational systems prioritize standardized academic achievement over character development, treating moral and ethical education as secondary or extracurricular. This approach overlooks Aristotle’s view that true fulfilment and happiness are achieved through nurturing virtuous, well-rounded individuals capable of making reasoned, ethical decisions. By neglecting moral education

within core curricula, policies fail to provide students with structured, consistent opportunities to practice and internalize virtues, impeding their journey toward eudaimonia. Policies overly focused on academic metrics may thus undermine holistic student development, reducing the chances for schools to contribute meaningfully to students' ethical growth and self-actualization.

In addition, phenomenological theory's emphasis on lived experience and subjective reflection is often underrepresented in education commissions, acts, and task forces. Policies typically favour standardized curricula, leaving limited room for the flexible, experiential learning environments that phenomenology advocates. Phenomenology suggests that education should encourage students to explore and make sense of their experiences, fostering authentic self-awareness and personal meaning. However, current educational policies often overlook or minimize these reflective, experience-based elements, focusing on uniform content delivery rather than personal engagement. This policy gap restricts educators' ability to foster environments where students can explore their values in real-life contexts, limiting education's potential to address cognitive and moral development through lived experience.

2.2 Perspectives of teachers on moral education for character formation

This section reviews relevant literature on teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of examinable subjects to moral education for character formation, non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation, pedagogies of moral education for character formation, and approaches or systems in place of moral education for character formation.

2.2.1 Perspectives on the effectiveness of examinable subject on moral education for character formation: Appeal to Christian Religious Education

Munene (2016), in his assessment of the relationship between students' learning of moral values in Kenyan secondary schools, postulated that most subjects containing moral values, such as Christian Religious Education (CRE), are often studied for their tests, not for the moral values they contain. This shows that it is a time to find another way of inculcating moral education to the students. The study also recommends that issues inculcating moral values in students, such as Religious Education, should be taught in Kenyan secondary schools to improve moral development effectively.

In this regard, applying the theory of eudaimonia in integration with education underscores moral learning as the means to attaining the purpose of human life. Integrated education improves learners' academic performance and shapes their moral personality. From this point of view, moral education is not just an act of intellectual completeness but (the most important part) a process of students' formation to become virtuous people. Moreover, the phenomenological theory backs this line of thought as it can enable the students to understand the moral values in real-life practices and, through reflecting on the same, enhance the right moral principles and attitudes deep within them, hence comprehensive moral perspectives. These theories reinforce the need to transcend examination to a character-building system of education, which fosters students' noble character and personality growth and benefits society.

Osabwa (2016), in a critique of the pedagogies of character formation in post-independent Kenyan schools, employed critical methods in examining examinable subjects for character formation. The researcher observed few practical experiences and that only the

teachers were tasked to participate in the exercise. Further, the author added that the teachers assigned to these subjects mainly focus on attaining good grades in exams devoid of moral education for character formation. Hence, attaining good virtues among learners remains elusive.

Obwana's (2021) study on assessing moral education in Kenyan Secondary schools indicated that the moral trends among the youths in Kenya are declining. He argued that the declining trend is associated with poor practices in CRE assessment on moral education for character formation. His study established that teachers have no moral judgment rubrics that will measure the learners' moral competencies or moral acquisition at the end.

Itolondo (2012) points out seven purposes of the philosophy of CRE in Kenyan secondary schools. Christian Religious Education must aid learners in acquiring understanding into the explanation of Divinity's self-revelation, the practice of learned social, unworldly, and moral education to reason critically and come up with suitable ethical choices, appreciate and develop self-esteem plus other communities ' traditional and Christian dogmas and practices, obtain elementary moralities of Christian living and cultivate a sense of self-worth and reverence for others, endorse universal consciousness, work confidently to the transformation of personality and the humanity as a whole and obtain information for additional training in numerous professional arenas.

Akanga (2014) posited that the purposes of teaching CRE were too numerous to be recognized. Moreover, it might not have been probable to accurately measure the accomplishment of those specified objectives. For instance, it was probable to tell a student's intellectual growth level by managing examinations exactly in math. A student

who steadily scored decent grades might rationally be thought to have grasped the imparted mathematical skills. However, cumulative examinations managed in CRE might not have accurately disclosed a student's moral education development level. Githaiga (2018) clarified that it was not essentially the situation that students who scored decent grades in CRE must have established the anticipated morals implied in the grades. The researcher emphasized that certain purposes of CRE, as specified, traversed to other educational matters that were not essentially 'spiritual' or ethical. For instance, the objective was about students obtaining skills for the aims of global consciousness, whereas another purpose was concerned with professional growth. These two purposes mentioned did not endorse any moral education development of students.

According to Myyry (2003), the ethical developmental facets of the students were marred with apparent misperceptions under CRE. The study conducted in Finland indicates that although the content inside CRE promoted the teaching of numerous moral standards from a religious viewpoint, those ethical principles were not adequately imparted in an organized manner that portrayed their moral value. For instance, it remained problematic to recognize the lesson where students were trained in the moral worth of honesty. Gardiner (2012) noted that it was unclear when secondary school students were trained in righteousness. He asserted that though a student may effortlessly remember wherever and in which procedure the construction of an atom was imparted in chemistry subjects in secondary schools, it might have been difficult to recall where and when 'piety' or 'non-violence' was imparted.

Muricho & Chang'ach (2013), in *"Education Reforms in Kenya for Innovation'* argued that the consideration given to the idea of moral worth from diverse faiths was not similar. Certainly, excelling in examination took priority in the execution of CRE, and learners are

introduced to theoretic theories that associate ethical values such as fairness, charity, chastity, devotion, honesty, patriotism, thankfulness, genuineness, courage, and farsightedness with the only purpose of excelling in KCSE examinations (RoK, 2008). However, attaining scholarly knowledge on such morals did not essentially transform into any practice of moral growth. Such deliberations grounded themselves on two main foundations. Religious scripts such as the Quran and the Bible truly explain God's moral teaching to humanity. According to the sacred writings, murder is prohibited, resulting in varying viewpoints on abortion. This conflict over beliefs and ethics eventually led to Social Education Ethics being removed from the secondary school curriculum in the late 1990s.

In conclusion, the aforestated perspectives opine that examining CRE as a subject is more a motivation for studying CRE for academic purposes than holistic moral education and character education. However, the aforestated authors do not discuss the antithesis to this opinion. As such, based on further phenomenological investigation and the Aristotelian eudaimonia approach, this study sought to achieve the efficacy of moral education for character formation.

Regarding the concept of eudaimonia, borrowed from Aristotle’s theory, moral education is supported beyond academic achievements to inform the students on foundation virtues such as truthfulness, courtesy, and respect. More than that, while following ethical norms can be seen as the intent of CRE, a eudaimonic approach to training goes further, encouraging practice and ethical reasoning so that the values of the espoused ethical code become internalized, focusing on personal fulfilment through ethical action. Similarly, the phenomenological approach supports moral education as initiating the learner into ethical

practice, particularly in actual life. This method enables students to anchor themselves to ethical principles to reduce moral education to reality. Therefore, by integrating eudaimonic and phenomenological paradigms into this line of research, moral education's contribution to character development can be expanded, which aligns with academic and moral development.

2.2.2 Perspectives on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation: appeal to life skills education and physical education

The Kenyan government rolled out life skills education (LSE) in 2008. It was implemented in Kenyan secondary schools as a non-examinable subject. The purpose was to aid in complementing the struggles made so far in developing moral tenets amongst students (Orodho, 2008). Life Skills Education (LSE) was introduced in Kenyan secondary schools to address the absence of a dedicated subject focused on teaching students morally and socially acceptable standards. As the name recommends, life skills infer intellectual, sentimental, and psychomotor development that assist students in dealing with actual trials of applied life (UNICEF, 2002). In addition, these abilities include adaptive and optimistic behaviour abilities that support learners in efficiently handling the challenges they might encounter in their dealings with family, society, and the environment (WHO, 2001).

Therefore, the curriculum designers emphasized ten aims for LSE intended for secondary schools. Two of these aims are explicitly devoted to the moral education of students: cultivating social skills that empower them to work effectively in the community and cultivating and practising life skills to improve positive conduct creation and transformation (Makindi, 2019). The content established for LSE in Kenya's secondary

schools has numerous significant core standards for inculcation, such as collaboration, easiness, patience, respect, harmony, liberty, agreement, affection, morality, accountability, and self-effacement honesty (RoK, 2008). Correspondingly, LSE had certain deliberate immoralities such as bias, jealousy, arrogance, fraudulence, suspicion, illiteracy, judgment, abortion, lousy ethnicity, and drug misuse within its content. The curriculum designers presented a topical approach to the designated content to attain LSE purposes.

Conversation as a technique of teaching LSE was further preferred as it was accredited for being learner-centred, student-friendly, involving, engaging, and gender thoughtful. It is to be renowned that the themes of deliberations in LSE, starting with form one up to four, are alike (Njoka, 2016). Therefore, the content stayed monotonous throughout the four-year course. It was expected that LSE would significantly contribute to the moral development of the students. Numerous explanations have come out concerning the execution of LSE as a moral education method in Kenya. None of the teachers had been trained in colleges or universities to teach that subject precisely. Teachers are allocated casually to impart this subject that harbours critical dimensions of moral education for character formation (Njoka, 2016). For instance, how will an alcoholic teacher instruct students against alcohol misuse? How will teachers of questionable character be competent in effectively teaching moral education for character formation? The amount of lessons allocated for LSE leaves a lot to be anticipated. Life Skills Education is allocated merely one lesson each week for each Form. How real will character development occur with this short time allocated for its execution? source

More so, LSE is a non-examinable subject, consequently overwhelming the rationality of assessment. Therefore, it turned problematic to quantify the degree of accomplishment of the morals imparted from the previous. Furthermore, although deliberation is an effective technique for executing LSE, a 40-minute weekly lesson was very restrictive in implementing that method. Moreover, Osabwa (2016) argued that moral tenets were better learned by practising them than by imparting them through the theoretical methods embraced in textbooks. This reflection is correspondingly held by Orodho (2008), who is concerned with training LSE as a theoretical dissertation. Regarding the execution of LSE, the study maintains that the role-demonstrating approach will meaningfully complement the deliberation approach. However, through teaching and learning LSE, there was no declaration of the experimental phases of role modelling in teaching personality development.

While teachers were commonly expected to be respectable role models, it is possible to allocate LSE lessons to teachers with uncertain moral actions within the school community. For example, there have been instances where secondary school principals faced allegations of misusing school resources (Shunza, 2014). If such a principal were tasked with teaching Life Skills Education (LSE), it raises questions about their credibility in students' eyes and whether they could genuinely convey the importance of trustworthiness (Shunza, 2014). The likely answer is no. This situation highlights that schools often lack proper preparation to teach LSE effectively. In many cases, LSE classes are not conducted adequately, and teachers frequently use this time to address other subjects supported by empirical evidence instead of focusing on life skills education itself.

The fact that LSE is not examinable contradicts the reality of quantifying the previously set aims. From the explanations, it is evident that there is a necessity for thoughtful reflections on how LSE is to be implemented in schools if any of its aims are to be realized (Behrani, 2016). The sustainability of every process depends on its ability to be evaluated. Nevertheless, the contention holds that the assessment of any Moral Education ought not to take the cognitive method. It would take a hands-on approach in which the assessment technique commonly denoted as Continuous Moral Evaluation (CME) is accepted.

Physical education in Kenyan secondary schools is timetabled under normal load and appears once or twice a week. At the same time, the subject is significantly included in the syllabus with clear objectives, but the Kenya National Examination Council does not examine it (Mugao, 2013). Neither does it contribute to the cumulative score in KCSE. In practice, P.E. is poorly attended to by teachers and learners despite having strong moral rationale. In conclusion**,** while LSE and PE are crucial in imparting moral skills, they are possibly taken for granted. This study used a phenomenological approach to illuminate LSE and PE education practices.

In conclusion, non-examinable subjects, such as Life Skills Education and Physical Education, highlight gaps in their potential to fully support moral education for character formation. While these subjects provide valuable practical experiences, they often lack a structured focus on cultivating virtues like empathy, resilience, and ethical reasoning, essential for holistic moral development. Additionally, the instructional approaches used may not always facilitate reflective, real-life moral engagement, reducing their effectiveness in fostering lasting character traits. Addressing these gaps, the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia emphasises the cultivation of virtue and happiness through habitual

practice. At the same time, a phenomenological approach encourages the inclusion of lived, reflective experiences, enhancing students' connection to ethical values and real-world moral applications.

2.2.3 Perspectives on the effectiveness of the pedagogies of moral education for character formation

Freire (1970) discusses several forms of education in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He sees all current pedagogy as a result of a lack of other options. It indicates that society's conditions and ambitions must be considered when teaching. Education must be treated respectfully, and teachers must remember the technique while planning lessons. Instead of perceiving the students as passive receivers of information, the educator sees them as contributing members who positively impact their learning path.

Besides the educational banking notion, Freire (1970) emphasizes the necessity of every pedagogy guided by a complete theoretical framework. As part of any teaching, everyday pedagogy should guarantee that students learn something meaningful. The pedagogy's vocabulary also includes terms that might inspire new methods of understanding and doing. For him, language has the power to either empower him or emasculate him. In his book *Pedagogy of Hope* (published in 1995), Freire states that language shapes awareness of lived experience. Therefore, it is essential to consider public consciousness while designing an educational program to make communication more accessible for students. It's also important to him that teachers and students have a mutually respectful relationship, which encourages conversation and empowerment of the learning experience.

As a whole, Freire argues that every teaching should take into account the particular requirements and circumstances of the students. He believes people-driven (representing social ambitions) curricular material should be taught at a student's level. Intersubjective contact and critical awareness can only be fostered via a dialogical approach. To justify the informed practice, pedagogy must be grounded on a comprehensive philosophy of education. Osabwa (2016), in a critique of the pedagogies of character formation in post-independent Kenyan schools, employed a critical method in examining the pedagogies in schools on moral education for character formation. The study established that the pedagogies in place fall short of content and methods for realizing good character among the learners. Further, the study recommended sound practices and pedagogical theories based on a comprehensive programme. Osabwa concluded that curriculum developers and policymakers are to blame for inappropriate pedagogical practices geared towards moral education for character formation.

The study by Akanga (2014) examines the methods for character development using the pragmatic approach. In his study, he emphasizes that appropriate pedagogies must be adopted to minimize social issues among youths. He adds that African indigenous education(AIE) underscores the need for moral education by doing. AIE had its methods of instilling moral values such as verbal warnings, decorum, and discipline. However, due to the new life trends in contemporary society, AIE methods are rarely used. This is because concerned stakeholders for moral education are busy with their schedules. Kireet (2008) agrees with Akanga that pedagogies are fundamental in the specific area of learning with regard to knowledge acquisition. Moral education for character formation is not an

exception; it requires appropriate pedagogies. However, the major setback for moral education for character formation is the nature of the methods employed in schools.

Akanga's research aimed to determine the extent to which technical and vocational training concepts may be used in Kenyan schools as a basis for morality. The research employed analytical, phenomenological, and contextual data collection and analysis techniques while adhering to the practical view of learning as its conceptual framework. There is a need for a fresh approach to moral teaching in Kenyan schools, and research has found that the current mechanisms are to blame for the lack of discipline in the schools.

According to Kireet (2008), character formation is a situation where affective activities and volition are key; hence, pedagogies other than discussions and lecture methods are appropriate. Further, he advocated for yoga and sports as the best pedagogies for moral education. However, Yoga is an oriental practice among the people of the West; hence, it won't be appropriate in Kenya for moral education because, in sports, immoral behaviours have been witnessed, such as corruption, ideological differences, and physical wars among the Kenyan teams. This poses the question of how sports can be effective for moral education and character formation.

Around the 19th century, Christian Missionaries established schools to educate Africans on basic skills and religious practices. The Bible was used as a tool for reverence in evangelization in school. The schools used songs and preaching. Prayer and recital of liturgies were the methods of instruction; students were allowed to engage in limited debate and inquiries. Their instructors were authoritative and considered their students' empty slates or tabula rasa, which were to be written (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). However, Paulo

Freire revokes the approach of the banking concept, which he terms inhuman, and advocates methods that are humane to achieve or solve issues at hand (Nyangaresi & Kauka, 2021). Our current education system's teaching methods are primarily cognitive-based and lack a normative foundation to effectively promote moral education. As a result, numerous deviant behaviours in schools have emerged, prompting the need for this study.

Munene (2016), in evaluating the relationship between teaching moral values and their application by learners in Kenyan secondary schools, established that the poor state of immoral cases in secondary schools results from poor pedagogies employed for moral education for character formation. The study employed only critical methods to gather and analyze the effectiveness of teaching moral values. The ideal pedagogy for any instruction entails dialogue and significant learner participation; most of the reviewed pedagogies in moral education for character formation fall short of active learner participation.

However, by incorporating phenomenological theory and the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia into moral education, there will be active learner participation. Phenomenological theory provides a more profound, experiential assessment of how students appropriate and use moral values for practical learning purposes. This is aligned with Aristotelian eudaimonia, which states that moral goodness is achieved through virtue, practiced in deeds and character. When integrated, moral pedagogy can progress from mere teaching that informs the entire learner and subject experience to creating conditions under which students develop virtues like honesty, empathy, and resilience in their daily lives. This integration ensures that moral education is not only theoretically sound but also impactful in shaping students' character, encouraging a genuine pursuit of personal and communal well-being.

2.2.4 Perspectives on the effectiveness of the strategies in place for moral education for character formation

Osabwa (2016), in an analysis of the pedagogical approaches to character formation in Kenyan schools in search of an alternative, employed the Socratic Method, analytical method and conceptual analysis in his thesis. The study found that the approaches in place have deficits in terms of implementation and design. Further, the study recommended a comprehensive review of the existing approaches so that they are formulated in line with integral character education trends.

The study by Muthamba (2017) sought to determine whether learners in learning institutions in Kitui central deanery are developed to make morally correct decisions for their activities. The study findings indicate that moral education is integrated into the regular curriculum through activities like utilizing guidance and counselling services, attending religious gatherings, engaging in life skills lessons, and participating in community service. However, these methods are often inconsistent or change frequently over time due to a general lack of commitment to using moral education for character development. Further, teachers prioritize content coverage at the expense of moral approaches. The findings further noted that 81% of the participants agreed that moral education for character formation approaches were inadequate. Other participants in the study recommended more time for effective moral education for character formation.

Akanga 2014 advocates the infusion and integration approach to moral education for character formation. Teaching moral education for character formation in Kenya adopts a multi-disciplinary approach. Several approaches are used to try to instruct students on the

required moral tenets. One more effective approach to moral education is the usage of infusion and integration.

The approaches so far deliberated about implementing moral education for character formation assumed a rational approach. A lot of infusion and integration is termed 'concealed curriculum' to complement these approaches. In principle, several undertakings in the school might essentially contribute to the execution of moral education for character formation in non-rational wisdom (Samson & Allida, 2018). Students' engagement in clubs and organizations, as well as school laws and guidelines, are among these activities: intentional communal service, benevolent administrations, co-curriculum outings, expeditions, and comedy and music festivals.

Stephen (2021) identifies approaches to moral education in Kenya. The approaches include Religious Education, Social Education Ethics, Life Skill Education, Guidance and counselling approach, infusion and integration, school rules and regulations, participation in clubs and societies, charitable organizations, and voluntary community service. However, he points out that the approaches have faced numerous challenges in implementing the goals of moral education for character formation. He suggests that there is a need for immediate possible approaches, hence the study gap.

In brief, the reviewed strategies in place for moral education for character formation reveal several gaps, particularly a lack of focus on holistic character development and an over-reliance on cognitive instruction, which limits students' practical engagement with moral values. Current strategies often emphasize rule-following and rote learning, which can fall short of encouraging deep, personal connections to ethical principles, hence calling

theoretical foundations of the current study. Phenomenological theory can address these gaps by focusing on students' lived experiences and enabling them to explore moral values through reflection on real-life situations, thereby making moral education a tangible, personal process. Simultaneously, the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia emphasizes the cultivation of virtues through habitual practice, encouraging students to strive for personal and societal fulfillment. Together, these approaches advocate for strategies that go beyond surface-level instruction to foster an authentic, experience-based development of virtues, making moral education more relevant and transformative.

2.3. Efficacious approaches to moral education for character formation

This section reviews the literature on the best-suggested approaches to moral education for character formation. Scholars have suggested some of them. For instance, Nyasani (1988) suggests the use of "unwritten norms and taboos; Mosha (2002) reiterated various traditional methods like storytelling, direct teaching, vocal rebukes, praise, and practical knowledge like agricultural production, herding, and shooting, to educate children about morality on his part ' (Ocitti,1973) emphasizes on the role of training rather than teaching. Lickona (1991) proposes a comprehensive approach to moral education. The comprehensive approach should involve the school and community. (Gilligan (1977) emphasized instruction in values and moral contemplation, among other activities conducted by the instructor who acts as a role model, caregiver, and mentor. An excellent personality is developed through a long-term process of teaching and life experiences.

(Lickona, 1991). Zhu *et al.* (2020) suggest seven roles in developing students' morals: facilitators, role models, caregivers, moral mentors, conveyors, and moral values. The study further asserted that teachers must be counsellors and communicators to assist

students in teaching moral values. However, the study established several challenges that teachers encounter in the process. Such includes methods used in teaching and evaluation, lack of interest from some learners, qualification of teachers, higher expectations from parents and the community, and discrepancies between school values and family values. Stephen (2021) identified four conditions for bringing moral education objectives to fruition in Kenyan schools. The criteria include e*udamotive*, evaluative, normative, and pedagogical approaches.

The study establishes that the development of students in secondary schools must imbue them with good qualities and right virtues from their foundational phase to cultivate what is right. Berkowitz (2013) states that moral education will be achieved by drilling students into the progression of cautious decision-making, which comprises discussion, decree, and choice. The approaches seem leaner friendly as much as moral education is concerned. However, in assessing the current situation in schools, the approaches seem to be apparent, or they are addressing the issue of moral character per se. Therefore, the current study reinforces the approaches and makes them proactive.

Moral education and character formation have long been central aims of education worldwide. Researchers and educators have proposed and evaluated numerous approaches to cultivate good moral character in students effectively. This literature review analyzes and synthesizes the views of key scholars on efficacious models of moral education and development. It discusses philosophical and theoretical foundations as well as empirical research evaluating different strategies. A comprehensive approach that integrates relevant dimensions is proposed. One influential perspective comes from Aristotle's writings on ethics and education. Aristotle believed that developing good moral virtues and

dispositions was essential for a flourishing life and a just society. He advocates engaging students in Socratic-style dialogues about ethics to promote reflective thinking on moral exemplars, dilemmas, and situations (Dow, 1998). Aristotle saw virtues being inculcated through regular participation in such virtuous activities (Dow, 1998). Scholars like Dow (1998) have operationalized Aristotelian moral education through structured discussions on moral role models to discern right from wrong.

Drawing on this tradition, virtue-based programs focus on identifying, understanding, and practising key virtues. They discuss moral exemplars that embody virtues like courage, honesty, and compassion to provide ideals to emulate (Battaglieri et al., 2017). Students reflect together on how virtues manifest concretely in dilemmas and community issues (Eikeland, 2008). Over time, repeated engagement aims to cultivate virtuous dispositions and habits of character (Battaglieri et al., 2017). While impactful, virtue-based models alone risk being too theoretical without social context (Biesta, 2010). Complementing virtue perspectives, scholars like Dewey (1897, 1916) emphasized the inherently social and experiential nature of moral learning and development. He saw education as a means to foster cooperation and democratic participation for social progress. Dewey argued that “all genuine education comes about through experience” (Dewey, 1916). Authentic moral dilemmas confronted cooperatively within communities provide the most effective learning (Dewey, 1897).

Drawing on these ideas, other researchers proposed approaches emphasizing social experiences (Barrett et al., 1976; Grimmit, 1973). They incorporated drama, role-playing, and cooperative activities to examine moral issues arising within peer interactions (Barrett et al., 1976). Service-learning opportunities involving civic participation also allowed

students to experience the impacts of their moral decisions first-hand (Boss, 2005). Empirical studies show that experientially-based programs effectively promote moral reasoning and prosocial behaviour compared to didactic methods (Boss, 2005). However, lacking philosophical reflection, these models risk becoming too pragmatic. Other programs draw from particular religious or cultural value systems to foster character. Research has found that religious education in Kenya develops virtues like compassion by exploring moral teachings and exemplars from the Bible (Boss, 2005). Similarly, Catholic schools in Nigeria cultivate students' moral conscience by internalizing gospel precepts through practices like confession and worship (Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor, 2014).

On the cultural front, character education in many regions emphasizes locally relevant guiding principles. Fafunwa & Aisiku (2022) discuss how Nigerian schools promote respect, responsibility, and cooperation through lessons on indigenous African values and traditions. Likewise, programs in Indonesia aim to instil universally revered principles like honesty, tolerance, and integrity rooted in the country's pluralistic religious and social heritage (Gunawan et al., 2019). While value-specific, research shows such culturally and religiously aligned approaches effectively achieve character goals when adapted sensitively (Ilechukwu & Ugwuozor, 2014; Gunawan et al., 2019). Concerns arise, though, regarding orthodoxy and scope beyond local contexts.

Grounded in the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia and phenomenological theory, effective approaches to moral education for character formation are emphasized in fostering virtues through habitual practice and experiential learning. In regard to eudaimonia, moral education should cultivate personal and societal fulfillment by nurturing virtues like honesty, courage, and compassion as central to one's character. This involves engaging

students in actions and decisions that reinforce virtuous habits, thus aligning their behaviours with a meaningful pursuit of happiness and moral excellence. Phenomenological theory complements this by encouraging a reflective, experiential approach where students not only learn about virtues theoretically but also encounter and interpret these values through real-life situations and personal reflections. Therefore, the theories advance a holistic, experiential approach to moral education that helps students internalize virtues deeply, encouraging them to act as morally responsible individuals who contribute positively to society.

2.4 Theoretical framework

A theory is a collection of assumptions and ideas that describe and anticipate certain features of the social environment (Haugh, 2012). The study employed the Aristotelian theory of *eudaimonia* and phenomenological theory. Aristotelian eudaimonia and phenomenological theory intersect in their shared emphasis on intentional, reflective engagement with life. Both theories advocate for a purpose-driven, relational, and authentic approach to life, where individuals develop character and achieve fulfilment by actively embodying values and virtues. While phenomenology provides the tools for understanding subjective experience and intentional action, Aristotle's eudaimonia offers a structured goal of flourishing through virtue. Together, they form a complementary approach to moral education for character formation, encouraging individuals to live reflectively and authentically in pursuit of a fulfilled and ethical life.

2.4.1 The Aristotelian theory of *eudaimonia*

The Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia was pioneered by John Cooper, W. D. Ross, Anscombe, and Alasdair M McIntyre (New World Encyclopedia, nd).

Eudaimonia is derived from two Greek words, *eu* (meaning "good" or "well") and *daimon* (meaning "spirit" or "divine being"), and is best understood as human flourishing or living well. It is more than just happiness in the sense of feeling pleasure or joy. Instead, it is a condition of living in accordance with reason and achieving one's full potential. Aristotle does not see eudaimonia as a fleeting emotional state but as a sustained and meaningful life achieved through virtuous actions and the development of one's character.

The ancient stoics or epitomized Epicurus understand *eudaimonia simply as* happiness. For Aristotle, happiness is an activity of the soul regarding the best virtues (Aristotle 2008). Epicurus 341-370 B.C.E asserts that humans should avoid pain and seek pressure attained through good virtues.

To understand the concept of e*udaimonia,* a Greek word known as 'a*rete'* is cardinal. Aristotle used the word "arete" to respond, "What is the goal of daily human existence?" According to him, the fundamental purpose of human existence is to achieve a decent life, which leads to human pleasure (Stephen, 2021). Aristotle's concepts of *eudaimonia* and "arete" are handy for this study because the study intends to unfold the efficacy of moral education for character formation in secondary school through the lived experience of teachers with the ultimate goal of achieving human happiness (Stephen, 2021). Human happiness can only be attained by habitually instilling good virtues in the youths and

mentoring them through guidance to grow morally upright. In so doing, the contaminated society will be transformed into a happy community.

Aristotle argued that happiness should persist throughout life, and good character should be in human beings as they grow (habitual) to achieve happiness in fellow men. For Socrates and Plato, they argued that human beings require happiness (*eudaimonia*) more than anything else (Paul, 2022). To achieve happiness in the 21st century, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato's ideologies of happiness (*eudaimonia*) could be embraced in all sectors entitled to instil virtues. In so doing, the youths will grow morally upright (Paul, 2022). Socrates put forward virtues such as purity, courage, wisdom, and justice, which were cardinal for nourishing the soul to achieve the maximum happiness in human life. Plato concurred with Socrates' virtues of joy, but he emphasized Justice. Aristotle also pointed out four great virtues that should be considered: justice, wisdom, courage, and temperament for human happiness (Paul, 2022). The virtues elucidated by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are crucial in guiding this study. The virtues will provide a road map for instilling moral values among secondary school students in Kenya to achieve a happy society free from immoral vices.

Aristotelian theory lays a philosophical framework for moral education for character development. On the other hand, eudaimonia equates to a human life well lived that entails the achievement of human good, which entails virtues and rational living. Ethics, for Aristotle, is meant to enable people to achieve the prime good or true happiness whereby one attains his virtues, such as courage, justice, and temperance, among others, after going through moral drills and practices. This is in accordance with the idea in moral education that its major objective is not just to impart knowledge in ethics but to enable the person to

understand how those ethical principles can be used profitably in a concrete situation, thereby learning character through experience.

In addition, the Aristotelian theory is used within the study to define the aim of moral education as the acquirement of eudaimonia, to stress the concept of phronesis, and to identify habituation and social relationships as the primary influences on character development. Phronesis helps students choose the right ethical course of action, while the process of habituation makes virtues second nature. Aristotle's view also allied the study's focus on moral upbringing for the restoration and enhancement of the well-being of everybody in society by embracing education as a tool for transforming society in the right manner. This theory provided the elements needed for measuring moral education programs, as well as providing the basis for a sound and applied method of stimulation, including personal and community involvement and a process of reflection that fosters the growth of moral personality, which captures the essence of a fulfilling life achieved through the cultivation of virtues and rational living. Aristotle's approach to ethics focuses on achieving true happiness through virtues like courage, justice, and temperance, which are developed through consistent moral practice and application. This aligns with the goals of moral education, which aims not only to teach ethical principles but also to equip individuals to apply them meaningfully in real-life situations, thereby building character through experience.

Further, Aristotelian theory informs the study by defining the goals of moral education as the pursuit of eudaimonia, emphasizing practical wisdom (phronesis), and highlighting the importance of habituation and social relationships in character formation. Practical wisdom enables students to make ethical decisions in complex situations, and habituation ensures

virtues become natural through repeated practice. Aristotle's perspective further supports the study’s emphasis on moral education as a path to personal and communal flourishing, positioning education as a means to develop socially responsible individuals who contribute positively to society. This theory offers practical criteria for evaluating moral education programs, grounding the study in a comprehensive approach that encourages experiential learning, community engagement, and the holistic development of moral character.

While Aristotelian eudaimonia offers a structured goal of flourishing through virtue, phenomenology provides the tools for understanding subjective experience and intentional action, thus forming a comprehensive approach on moral education for character formation, encouraging individuals to live reflectively and authentically in pursuit of a fulfilled and ethical life.

2.4.2 Phenomenological theory

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the founder of phenomenological theory, posited that phenomenology seeks to explore and describe the structures of consciousness and human experience as they are perceived, emphasizing the importance of intentionality and the suspension of biases through a method called "epoché" to reach pure understanding. Further, the theory was pioneered by Max Van Manen (2002), and it was reinforced by Smith & Woodruff (2008), Chaffee (2005), and Harris (1976). Etymologically, phenomenology originated from two Greek words, phainómeno and logos, which means "that which appears “and “study," respectively. When used in conjunction, the phrases signify a philosophical investigation of the underlying mechanisms underlying human perception and awareness.

Thus, Husserl’s work was focused on identifying how signifying structures, presentations, and occurrences enter into consciousness as ways of acting, which turned into the focus of phenomenology. After that, the concept of existentialism came into form based on Husserl’s perception of phenomenology and was taken to the next level by Heidegger and Sartre. The description of phenomenology is the orientation of phenomena in the appearance of general cognition, such as observation, memory, and thinking (Max van Manen, 2007). Churchill and Wetz (2003) describe phenomenology as both methodological and theoretical. The theoretical part consists of transcendental, ethical, existential, and hermeneutic branches. Unlike transcendental phenomenology, which discusses the understanding separate from connections to the world (Smith, 2008), existential and hermeneutical branches correspond to this work considering the teachers’

connections with the world and, more specifically, how teachers' experiences define their experience of moral education.

The study also draws from contributions of phenomenology from Max van Manen and Max Scheler; their ethical phenomenology accords with the principles of distinctiveness and accountability. Among those, Van Manen emphasizes notions such as alterity or the infinite and is inspired by Emmanuel Levinas, who claimed that moral responsibility arises from human frailty. However, existential and hermeneutic phenomenology form the backdrop for the methodology of this study, as they both seek to explicate the significance of analysing the lived experiences of individuals and articulating abstracted meanings of existence (Bailey et al., 1996; Edelman, 2012). This study explores the moral education practices of secondary school teachers using a phenomenological approach, the 'lifeworld,' in which teachers exist and operate, ontological-internal and ontic-external as seen from the works of Merleau-Ponty and Husserl as elaborated by Chaffee (2005). Numerous philosophical theories have deployed polarities to address the matters, including absolutism realism by Heraclitus and Plato and phenomenology that enabled the study to evaluate sociable and moral education not only as a theory but as an experience of teachers (Cohen, 2011; Copleston, 1953).

Phenomenological theory is important in this research as the theory permits the researcher to understand and explain the orientation of participants involved in moral education for character formation. Having its origin in intentionality, as suggested by Edmund Husserl, phenomenology needs to understand participants' experiences of the phenomenon under

study; this is central when comparing teachers' ways of thinking about moral learning. In contrast to the theoretical approaches, phenomenology, through tools like epoché, helps to analyze the participants' experiences without imposing prior assumptions, which addresses the issue of how values are lived. Thus, the study extends the examination from the mere analysis of the effectiveness of moral education from theoretical perspectives to the examination of how moral principles are implemented and how teachers can present principles of ethics in the light of their surroundings.

In addition, existential and hermeneutic phenomenology offers both the metaphysical and exegesis approaches to this work in enhancing the moral education process. In existential phenomenology, there is an understanding of how participants make sense and interpret life events. In the context of hermeneutic phenomenology, there is an understanding of the meaning of the actions and beliefs of students and educators. This strategy corresponds to the theoretical framework of this work, where moral education is defined not as a mere process of ethical knowledge sharing but as a meaningful process. The study recognizes character formation as a social and existent process by locating moral education in the context of the ‘‘lifeworld’’ (van Manen, 2002). It gives an honest, dynamic conception of how moral education is integral to people's lives.

2.5 Gaps in the related literature review

The literature reviewed reveals that there are several gaps in moral education, especially with regard to how character is formed. First, Moral education for character formation is approached from a rationalistic perspective; hence, it is considered no lived experience,moral education for character formation is approached from a deductive angle,

which is based on overgeneralization and emotive orientation, moral education for character formation is anchored from a conventional perspective devoid of moral reasoning and eudaimonia,moral education for character formation misses a holistic approach,moral education for character formation is taped with the aid of structured questionnaires instead of unstructured interviews,moral attitudes are not customized to levels of moral problems,gaps in sessional papers and educational commission reports in Kenya include ;repetitions and replication, implementation problem,recommendations of policy documents on moral education for character formation are not assessed,policy documents are curtailed from phenomenological tangents.,C.R.E is selected as a booster for other subjects instead of moral aspects,Life Skill Education and Physical Education are taken for granted, yet they are meant to foster moral aspects to learners,Pedagogies fall short of learner participation,Strategies for moral education lack consistency,strategies of moral education for character formation are content-centered, Strategies of moral education for character formation exhibit a multiplicity of contradicting features.

To fill these gaps, this study proposes to adopt and incorporate eudaimonia and phenomenology, which will enhance the understanding of moral education as a context-dependent experiential and phenomenological process. It will use eudaimonia to emphasise character formation on the path to enlightenment, which is more than a logical or systematic approach, but the formation of virtue and self-realisation. In analysing lived experiences, phenomenology is used to obtain descriptions of how people live their moral development in their way rather than using questionnaires to elicit quantitative data from respondents. Using this approach, policies and practices in the delivery of moral education are explored phenomenologically to suggest how this can be done in a more participatory,

consistent, and, therefore, more adaptive way. Overall, strategies for practices that are consistent with the experiential and learner-centred approach to moral education are proposed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that guided the study. It examines the research design, paradigm, philosophical methods, sources of data collection, study area, target population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection methods, quality control methods, data collection procedure, data explication, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

The study employed a descriptive phenomenological research design. The design is relevant for this study because it establishes the essence of events as they occur in an individual's consciousness or lived experience (Husserl 1859-1938). Further, the design provided a methodological structure that bridled the researchers' prejudices and biases (Barrow, 2017). Vagle (2009) adds that the design enables the researcher to reduce gathered lived experience into the phenomenological essence. According to Husserl et al. (1950), descriptive phenomenological design explores a phenomenon or circumstances in which variables cannot be easily measured or a "silenced voice or lived experience" needs to be heard or extracted. Therefore, the researcher used the design to explore practising teachers' lived experiences on moral education for character formation. This was achieved through in-depth interviews and probing questions, which enabled the researcher to collect rich and in-depth information on moral education for character formation.

3.3 Research paradigm

The interpretivist paradigm guided the research. A paradigm is an overall philosophical framework that provides a basis for educational study (Kuhn, 1972). Research paradigms can be explained threefold: firstly, according to the researcher's worldview (ontological orientation); secondly, according to the researcher's view of knowledge and truth (epistemological orientation); and lastly, according to the researcher's guiding values (axiological orientation). The interpretive paradigm is also known as the constructivist paradigm simply because it is interested in the individual's capability to construct meaning (Nickerson, 2022). The phenomenological hermeneutical method employed in this thesis mainly influenced the paradigm to tap the individual lived experience of practising teachers on moral education for character formation.

When examining a phenomenon, the interpretivist paradigm is inductive, reflective, and naturalistic. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm grounds this study to gain insights into lived experiences by discovering meanings and improving the researcher's comprehension of the whole phenomenon of moral education for character formation (Hughes, P. (2020). It also provided ways to examine the phenomenon and investigate it critically.

The ontological assumption of the interpretive reality is not singular but pluralist; reality is not objective but subjective in given incidents (Uy et al., 2023). They also uphold that reality could not be objectively observed from the outer part of the phenomenon; instead, it must be extracted from the pure lived experience of the human ontics as it is in the human consciousness. For instance, a woman giving birth can explain the experience more vividly than the doctor who assisted her. Therefore, the paradigm was suitable for this study

because the researcher's main objective was to gain insights into practising teachers' lived experiences on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya.

The interpretive paradigm was also relevant for the study because it is inductive and reflective, thus promoting understanding of an individual's past and lived encounters as they experienced them. Being inductive means arriving at a more logical and precise conclusion based on the observed phenomenon under scrutiny. On the other hand, being reflective means investigating something as a whole to gain vivid insights into the phenomenon under study (Oduor, 2010). Also, the paradigm enabled the researcher to contribute and develop new knowledge based on personal contribution to the subjective nature of interpretivism. The value orientation of interpretivism is contextual and situational. This means it relies on situation ethics and practical value orientation (Husserl, 1859-1938)

3.4 Research methods

The study employed the phenomenological-hermeneutical method and critical method. The phenomenological hermeneutical method is a compound method that describes and interprets extracted lived experiences. The critical method is a method of thorough scrutiny intended to establish the truth of claims and assertions. Each of the methods is explained in the next section.

3.4.1 Phenomenological-hermeneutical method

The researcher employed the phenomenological hermeneutical method to explore practising teachers' lived experiences as consciously experienced, devoid of biases and preconceptions of the researcher (Li, 2005). The method's main goal was to investigate the phenomenon of moral education for character formation. Further, the method was used to interpret the phenomenon in relation to human ontics and ontology. According to Husserl, the founder of the phenomenological method, an individual's personal history is what they encounter from the first-person perspective (Dall'Alba, 2009). The study gathered information based on the first encounter with practising teachers. Barnacle (2001) postulated that one acquires epistemic knowledge through personal engagement or involvement in day-to-day life experience, hence, lived experience. This posteriori experience is the one that is revealed later through the individual's consciousness or the 'horse's mouth,' in other words, this study aimed to establish practising teachers' engagement or involvement in day-to-day life on moral education for character formation.

Heidegger argued that phenomenology must be *phenomenological hermeneutic* (Heidegger, 2002). This implies that what is described requires interpretation. The lived experiences of practising teachers on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County were described, interpreted, and reflected on practical realities.

3.4.2. The significant role of phenomenological hermeneutical method

The phenomenological hermeneutical method was appropriate for this study in many ways: first, most authors, like Dewey, considered education a pragmatic or progressive

phenomenon with constantly evolving difficulties. Examining any dynamic phenomenon and determining ways to relate it to past educational methods is an effective strategy in education. Simultaneously, it envisions what the future holds for education as a field, which contains challenges that can't be adequately addressed by scientific knowledge alone.

In educational research, the phenomenological technique of inquiry announced a radical shift. Mostert (2002) asserted that educational transformation necessitated meeting the societal information requirements. Bonnet (2009) adds, "It is hard to decipher education without reference to personal experience." According to Curtis and Mays (1978), it is difficult for scientific methods to describe education if they don’t comprehend a person's consciously held views. Purposefully held beliefs were confusing, multidimensional, and diverse, necessitating the phenomenological hermeneutic technique since it comprehensively sought to understand and make sense of them (Churchill & Wertz, 1985).

Also, the use of the phenomenological hermeneutical method in educational research marked a radical shift, recognizing the transformative nature of education in meeting the requirements of societal information (Mostert, 2002). Bonnet (2009) emphasizes the importance of personal experience in understanding education, suggesting that deciphering education was challenging without acknowledging the subjective dimensions of personal experiences. Curtis and Mays (1978) noted the inadequacy of scientific methods in describing education when they failed to grasp the consciously held views of individuals. Phenomenological hermeneutics, with its emphasis on comprehensively understanding and making sense of consciously held beliefs, addressed this gap and provided a robust framework for exploring the intricate aspects of moral education for character formation (Churchill & Wertz, 1985).

Moreover, the researcher used the phenomenological hermeneutic method to get both descriptive and interpretive experiences of practising teachers concerning moral education for character formation. This is a means of understanding educators' lived experiences about the delivery of moral education for character formation. According to phenomenologists such as Paul Ricoeur, it is prudent to integrate phenomenological observation with hermeneutic explanation when studying human reality (Ricoeur, 2002). The significance and comprehension of the extracted lived experiences of practising teachers were provided and interpreted. The researcher, therefore, employed the observation method to seek more insight into how practising teachers handle moral education for character formation. Aligning with Paul Ricoeur's philosophy, which emphasizes the necessity of a phenomenological perspective to grasp human experiences through hermeneutical explanation, the researcher used probing questions to elicit and interpret stories from experienced teachers. As such, the investigator had plenty of opportunities to delve into the teachers' viewpoints. Ultimately, this led to many insights into the diversity of moral education and the moulding of character among individuals.

Further, the method allowed the investigator to compare the participants' experiences. It's called the eidetic variety (or eidetic fluctuation), where people share their memories (Merleau Ponty, cited in Oosterlaken-Dijksterhui, 1999). Ponty refers to it as the consensus. On the other hand, Husserl referred to it as the lonely picture of a philosopher. In contrast to Hursel, Merleau-Eidetic fluctuation creates eidetic pictures of sensory input that the mind can retain vividly. Practising teachers gave a more in-depth grasp of their subject matter via eidetic variation. Intersubjectivity is heightened when people compare and contrast their own experiences. Practising teachers made sense of other people's views in

this circumstance (Bas, 2006). To get to a consensus, the mind collaborates to share knowledge. The conversation was used to achieve the sharing of moral education for character formation. Trialogue - the circumstance when a person evaluates their past, present, and future situations – was also part of the conversation (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

Additionally, the technique enables researchers to focus on the significance of extracts and interpretations rather than their measurements. Lindseth and Norberg (2004) suggest natural scientists tend to focus on describing wild things or occurrences, but they tend to overlook their significance. Phenomenological explanations of lived experiences are most helpful when attempting to make sense of facts on moral education for character formation. Interpretations and essences of events, not metrics, are the primary focus (Moustakas, 1994). In casual and formal talks and interviews, first-person narratives of lived experiences were gleaned from first-person stories. To derive its significance, an object's appearance in our awareness must be combined with its natural counterpart (Moustakas, 1994).

In phenomenological construction, interpretations are the “basic aspects” a phenomenologist uses (Lester & Summers, 1999). The method extracted pure lived experience as experienced in the human consciousness. To paraphrase Husserl's dictum, the researcher's inquiry of the interpretations of essences goes "back to the things themselves," which entails stressing knowledge founded in meanings rather than examining physical objects (Boeree, 2001, Laverty, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). Mostert (2002) articulated that focusing on a thing's core meaning is the first step toward determining its true meaning. It is the "being" that exists. More than what is understood

may be found in the definition of the essence, commonly referred to as the professional experience (Churchill & Wertz, 1985). Using phenomenology as a tool, the search for truth begins with what we know. Using this strategy, the teacher's personal experiences were analyzed to discover what was previously unknown about moral education for character formation.

Finally, the method permits the researcher to interact physically with participants, allowing pertinent concerns to be filtered out while irrelevant ones remain (bracketing). This kind of human engagement assisted the researcher in gaining a deeper understanding of the ‘subjects' real lived experiences. In addition, the researcher included nonverbal communication as an intrinsic component of the total analysis and interpretation. The phenomenological hermeneutical method played a pivotal role in addressing objectives one and two of the study, which aimed to extract participants' lived experiences within the context of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. In objective one, the method was employed to scrutinize the value of the moral aims of education in these schools, providing a deep and comprehensive exploration of the philosophical underpinnings guiding moral education for character formation. This allowed for an in-depth understanding of the theoretical foundations and conceptual frameworks shaping moral education practices.

In objective two, the phenomenological hermeneutical method was utilized to gather the perspectives of practising teachers regarding the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. By focusing on teachers' lived experiences, the method facilitated the exploration of the practical aspects and challenges encountered in implementing moral education strategies. This

practical insight provided a nuanced understanding of the dynamics involved in translating moral education objectives into real-world classroom practices. The method allowed the study to capture teachers' rich and diverse experiences, shedding light on the complexities and nuances of moral education in action.

Given that hermeneutics involves interpreting ideas or materials that provoke philosophical inquiry, its application in this research context was well-supported by the Socratic method. The Socratic method, characterized by questioning and dialogue, complemented the hermeneutical approach by facilitating the evaluation and judgment of practising teachers' lived experiences in light of clear and distinct ideas. This combination of methods enabled a rigorous exploration of moral education's philosophical foundations and practical realities for character formation, providing a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis of the research topic.

3.4.3 Critical method

German philosopher Leonard Nelson developed the term critical at the turn of the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Hume, 2000)**.** The term ‘critical’ is derived from the Greek verb Krinein, meaning to judge. Its main task is to pose questions, as in the case of the Socratic dialect. It involves the evaluation of values, facts, opinions, principles, conversations, and assumptions, usually taken for granted to severe questioning to establish truth (Hume, 2020). As explained by Hume (2020), this is meant to encourage the honesty of rational thought as it seeks to protect human beings from fanaticism and hypocrisy, intolerance and dogmatism, slogans, and ideologies to liberate them from narrow-mindedness. This method is also called the Socratic Method. Hume holds that the critical method is liberating

and constructive in the sense that it seeks to evaluate and judge things in the light of clear and distinct ideas.

The critical method in philosophy is the exercise of critical thinking skills to elucidate difficulties, matters, and perceptions (Bernstein, 1986). It can be carried out on a one-to-one basis or with groups. It is the core service of philosophical consultancy. The critical method is problem-based, and it involves discovering new possibilities, active imagination, and reflective thinking to bring about reconstructionism or repair in given issues of concern (Namwamba, 2005). Mukabane (2016) argues that the critical method is based on accurate facts and is free from fallacies. The method creates awareness of a given issue of concern and explores the best approaches to problems under investigation. In the philosophy of education, a critical method is used to identify any glaring issues or any issue of concern. It creates awareness of the problems available. From this perspective, concerned stakeholders can explore pathways or best approaches to the identified problems, such as immoral incidences in school. A critical method was used to investigate the efficacy of moral education for character formation in light of the lived experience of practising teachers.

3.4.3.1 The significant role of critical method

The critical method in this study was helpful in both objectives in identifying any glaring moral gaps. The method is problem-based, and it involves discovering new possibilities, active imagination, and reflective thinking to bring about reconstructionism or repair in moral education for character formation (Woolsey, 1986). This method was instrumental in identifying glaring moral gaps within the existing educational framework. The critical method functioned as a problem-based approach, utilizing active imagination, reflective

thinking, and a quest for new possibilities to bring about reconstructionism or repair in the realm of moral education for character formation.

Within the scope of the study, the critical method was applied to scrutinize the value of moral aims of education, aiming to uncover areas where the current educational practices may fall short in fostering effective character formation (Krishnananda, 1992). Through a problem-solving lens, the critical method allowed the researcher to actively engage with the complexities of moral education and question the existing norms and practices. It encouraged a thorough examination of the educational landscape to identify deficiencies or gaps that may hinder the successful attainment of moral aims.

As applied in objective one, the critical method involved a proactive and reflective stance toward moral education. It sought to go beyond a mere description of the current state of affairs, actively exploring possibilities for improvement and reconstruction (Namwamba, 2005). By focusing on objective one, the critical method contributed to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the moral education landscape of Kenyan secondary schools, paving the way for constructive and forward-looking recommendations for enhancing character formation (Namwamba, 2005). In objective two, the critical method was used to interrogate practising teachers' lived experiences on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation to establish accurate facts free from fallacies. Finally, the method was used in objective three in discovering new possibilities, active imagination, and reflective thinking to bring about reconstructionism in the approaches on moral education for character formation.

3.5 Instruments of data collection

Philosophical research employs a variety of sources ranging from primary to secondary data, which this study adopted. Unstructured interviews were used to gather primary data on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Secondary data was selected carefully in line with the value of moral aims on moral education for character formation, practising teachers' lived experiences on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation, and the effective approaches on moral education for character formation. The secondary sources selected were government policy documents and reports, published and unpolished theses, articles from peer-reviewed journals, internet sources, thematic textbooks, curriculum documents, syllabuses of relevant subjects, and reports from the mass media.

3.6 Setting of the study (Study location)

The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Kakamega County -Kenya. Phenomenologists prefer the term setting of the study instead of the study location because the setting provides a convenient and conducive ground for participants. Also, the study setting can be optimized so that participants can clearly explain their experiences (Quintana, 2022). Lannan et al. (2015) assert that the study environment is cardinal for the participant to participate in the research effectively. According to the Kenya Health Information Systems (KHIS 2020), the selected county is among the leading counties with moral degradation cases in the recent past. For instance, Kakamega County was the second largest affected by premarital teenage pregnancy cases, standing at 6,669, equivalent to 33% from January to June 2020 (Stats, Hill, & Ndirias, 2022).71% of the reported cases of

2020 premarital teenage pregnancy in Kakamega were associated with unprotected premarital sex, which is an indicator of moral deviance. The KHIS report indicated that moral degradation has created havoc among parents, teachers, health workers, prevention agencies, and administrators in the county. Hence, the moral issues in the county require urgent attention. Additionally, in 2021, Kakamega County had the highest number of school unrest and arson cases. The Standard Media (2021) reported that Kakamega High School students burned a dormitory, and parents were asked to pay a total of Ksh. 21.6 million is one the highest surcharge fees the country has ever witnessed concerning student indiscipline. In a separate incident, Musingu High School students burned down one of the largest dormitories, accommodating over 500 students (Star News, 2020). Similar incidents have taken place from 2020 to 2022.

3.7 Target population

The target population is defined as the entire population of the study setting. The study targeted five thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine (5,789) teachers, comprising four hundred and fifty-five (455) deputy principals and six hundred (600) Christian Religious Education teachers. The inclusion criteria of Christian Religious Education teachers were informed by the lived experience of five years since employment by the Teacher Service Commission in the profession. The researcher excluded other teachers because of lived experiences.

3.8 Sampling procedure and sample size

This section describes the sampling procedure and sample size.

3.8.1. Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with in-depth information for this study. “Purposive sampling in a descriptive study is commonly used to pick persons or activities that are most relevant to the inquiry's present emphasis” (Krathwohl, 2009). Kruger et al. (1988) add that purposive sampling is the most appropriate non-probability sampling to identify the primary participants. Kruger further notes that the sampling looks for experienced participants for the phenomenon under scrutiny, which this study employed.

3.8.2 Sample size

Purposive sampling was used to select a sample size of four deputy principals and eleven Christian Religious Education. The sample size was enough for this study because it was based on two factors, which were anchored on the participants' information power and the participants' homogeneity. Further, the selection of the 15 participants is coherent with other authorities on data saturation and sample margin on interviews. However, Atieno (2013) notes that sample size is not mandatory in phenomenological research. Besides that, he emphasizes that; … “Sample size, which is the number of researchers engaged in the study, has no universal rule. He added that other experts have advocated various sample sizes in phenomenological studies. Researchers like Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2006), Anderson (1998), and Cohen and Manion (1989) believe that a sample size of thirty is enough. McMillan (2008) suggests that a sample size of five to twenty-five is enough to avoid data saturation, and Groenewald (2004) recommends a sample size of ten to avoid saturation points.

The study by Guest *et al*. (2006) points out that to determine the number of participants in qualitative research, two factors must be considered: the information power of the participants and the homogeneity of the participants, which is in tandem with the current study. Their study involved sixty (60) participants, but the saturation point arrived at the twelfth (12) participants because it involved homogenous subjects with in-depth information on the phenomenon under investigation.

3.9 Methods of Data Collection

Unstructured interviews were used in this study to collect primary data from the sampled participants. Unstructured interviews are a qualitative research method characterized by open-ended and conversational format (Jennings, 2005). Unstructured interviews offer a flexible, open-ended conversation where interviewers have limited control. This study used this approach to enable participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences without being restricted by specific questions or topics. The participants sampled were four deputy principals and eleven Christian Religious Education teachers. On the other hand, the content analysis approach was used to collect secondary data.

3.9.1 Interviews

The study employed unstructured interviews because they are conversational, dialogical, and open to gathering in-depth information. Phenomenologists prefer unstructured interviews because of their utility in gathering rich and in-depth information (Vagle, 2009). The researcher exchanged perspectives with practising teachers by posing probing questions on moral education for character formation to get their human experience the way they feel (Kvale, 1996). Bentz and Shapiro (1998) point out that an unstructured interview

enables the participants to “explain things in terms of the human condition” and “explain the human experience as a person feels it.” In this manner, the core might come to light. Edmund Husserl referred to it as the “return to things themselves” (Kruger et al., 1988).

Husserl further asserts that lived encounters can only be perceived and extracted through face-to-face activity between the researcher and the participant. The face-to-face phenomenological transaction entails keen observation, active listening, and interaction, which the researcher adopted. Larossa (2005) adds that unstructured interviews are discussions between the researcher and the researched with the ultimate goal of garnering in-depth information that could not have been otherwise revealed in the case of semi-structured interviews. Also, unstructured interviews enabled the researcher to seek clarification in terms of propping questions such as "Tell more about that." this encourages participants to elaborate on the subtopics in addressing the phenomenon of moral education for character formation. Further, unstructured interviews were also skewed towards research questions and orientated persistently towards moral education for character formation. Also, to maintain the focus, propping questions were also in line with the phenomenon under study to tap lived experience (Vagle, 2009).

The unstructured interviews were audio recorded with the participant's consent (Bailey et al., 1996). Each interview was assigned with a code, for example, participant ‘D1 or T1’. In some cases where participants were unwilling to be audio recorded, the researcher took notes. Bryman & Burgess (1994) postulates four types of field notes: observation notes, theoretical notes, methodological notes, and analytical memos, which the researcher considered. All the recordings were timed and dated. Then, the data collected was subjected to data explication.

3.9.2. Secondary Data Collection

For the secondary data collection, the researcher opted for a content analysis approach, focusing on educational policies, curriculum documents, and pertinent publications to extract valuable secondary information related to the study. This method involved systematically analyzing and categorizing the content of textual or visual materials, allowing the researcher to identify patterns, themes, or trends in the existing literature. By delving into academic articles, books, reports, and other relevant documents, the researcher aimed to gain insights into the current state of knowledge on the research topic.

The content analysis of secondary data was a strategic choice, providing the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and enabling the identification of gaps or areas for further exploration. This method allowed for the systematic examination of findings, theories, and perspectives presented in previous studies, contributing to the establishment of a solid foundation for the current research. The researcher aimed to situate their study within the broader educational discourse by critically reviewing and synthesizing existing scholarly works.

Incorporating secondary data through content analysis and literature review was crucial for building on existing knowledge and understanding the historical context of moral education in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The past tense is used here to reflect that the secondary data collection process has been completed, and the findings from this analysis contributed to the overall robustness of the research, enhancing the credibility and validity of the study.

3.10 Quality control

Quality control is the topic of this subsection, which explores various approaches such as piloting, Validity, and reliability of phenomenological research.

3.10.1 Piloting

There was no piloting for this study. Phenomenologists advocate that when using unstructured interviews, piloting is unnecessary because participants are visited many times, thus necessitating the modification of the interview questions to effectively reflect the encounters of practising teachers on moral education for character formation without any ambiguities. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) noted that piloting is unnecessary in phenomenological investigation since an investigator spends several sessions or time with participants and may improve the instruments as the research continues.

Piloting is often considered unnecessary in phenomenological hermeneutical research due to the nature of its inquiry, which prioritizes deep, contextual understanding of lived experiences over the generalizability of findings. Unlike quantitative studies that benefit from preliminary testing to refine instruments and methodologies, phenomenological research focuses on the nuances and complexities of individual experiences, making rigid structures less relevant. The exploratory nature of this research paradigm emphasizes authentic engagement with participants, meaning that researchers must adapt their approaches based on the dynamic interactions that unfold during data collection. Furthermore, the iterative data analysis process in phenomenology allows researchers to refine their understanding of the phenomenon as they progress, reducing the need for a formal pilot phase. Instead of piloting, researchers engage in continuous reflexivity and

dialogue with participants, clarifying and deepening their interpretations. This approach aligns with the essence of phenomenological research, where the goal is to uncover rich, qualitative insights rather than to test predetermined hypotheses or instruments. Thus, the fluidity and adaptability inherent in phenomenological hermeneutical research render formal piloting unnecessary, as the focus remains on capturing the authentic voices of participants in their unique contexts.

3.10.2 Validity

Validity is based on the accurateness of the instruments to measure what they are intended to measure (Bell, 1993). Validity in phenomenological hermeneutical research is achieved through methodological rigour and ethical engagement with participants. One of the strategies the researcher uses is member checking, where the researcher presents the interpretations back to participants for validation to ensure that the findings are authenticated and reflect their lived experiences. This iterative process thus promoted the reliability of the interpretations and fostered a deeper dialogue between researchers and participants. Validity was also achieved through a thick description of the findings, where the researcher provided rich contextual details surrounding moral education for character formation to enable other scholars to gauge the relevance and applicability of the findings in different contexts.

Validity was further enhanced through reflexivity, which was achieved through critical examination of one's biases, assumptions, and influences on moral education for character formation, significantly impacting data interpretation. This self-awareness contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the data and strengthened the validity of the findings. Lastly, validity was enhanced through data triangulation, where the researcher integrated

multiple data sources or methods, further validating results by providing a more comprehensive perspective on teachers' lived experiences regarding moral education for character formation. Validity was also achieved by interacting with the participants in several sessions, allowing the researcher to amend the interview schedules(Stone, 1979). Any ambiguity was removed from the questions to attain the information power on moral education for character formation.

3.10.3 Reliability

The consistency and accuracy of the findings obtained through research tools is referred to as reliability (Joppe, 2000). In phenomenology, reliability is enhanced by spending several sessions with the participants and revisiting them several times to confirm the truthfulness of the early information given by the same participants. Phenomenologists advocate that when using a phenomenological hermeneutical method, the researcher should empower the participants to extract the information about the phenomenon as it appears or is experienced in the human consciousness to enhance reliability (Stone, 1979). Further, the researcher enhanced the reliability of the information by taking field notes during the investigation period Groenewald, (2004) and Trochim, (2006). In the process, the researcher gathered holistic and comprehensive information, thus making the information reliable.

On the other hand, an audit trail was adopted, which involved thorough documentation of each step of the research process, including data collection methods, analytical decisions, and reflections, to enhance transparency and allow others to assess the consistency of findings. Additionally, peer debriefing was involved by discussing the research process and

findings with colleagues to gain external perspectives, helping to identify potential biases and ensure the study's credibility.

3.11 Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure entails the researcher's channels to collect data during the study. After adhering to ethical considerations, the researcher followed all data collection procedures. One research assistant from the discourse of philosophy of education in the Department of Educational Foundations of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology was trained to help collect data. The participants were informed one week before the data collection exercise to give them ample time to prepare well and make appropriate arrangements for the day. Interviews were administered to deputy principals and Christian Religious Educational teachers over six months to gather lived experience on moral education for character formation. Once the data collection exercise ended, the interviews were subjected to Interpretative phenomenological analysis.

3.12 Data explication (Data analysis)

Phenomenologists prefer the term data explication because the word ‘analysis’ often connotes ‘splitting into pieces’ and, thus, abandoning the entire phenomena. Whereas ‘explication’ suggests examining a phenomenon’s elements while preserving its context in its entirety” (Hycner et al., 1999). Also, data explication is the process of unfolding lived experience to determine the phenomenon's essence. Explication is recommended in phenomenological research since it entails unfolding data and supplying comprehension, which the researcher adopted (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).

Thematic analysis was used to explicate the qualitative data, as Braun and Clarke (2017) recommended. This approach was well suited for the flexible phenomenological design aiming to uncover themes and patterns of moral education for character formation. Braun and Clarke's six-step guidelines will provide a rigorous analytical process.

The first step is familiarizing with the data, which involves transcribing all interviews and discussions verbatim. Next, initial codes were generated based on key concepts, with continuous review and refinement of codes in step three. Coded data was then sorted into potential themes in step four, which were reviewed and defined in step five. The final step entailed producing the results with rich extracts and tying the themes back to the research question and theoretical framework.

A structured process for coding and analyzing qualitative data was utilized to facilitate the thematic analysis. This process involved organizing the data through coding segments, categorizing codes, identifying themes, and visualizing connections between concepts. These analytic techniques align with Heidegger (2002), who advocated for detailed description and interpretation of findings from multiple experiences within lived experiences. Braun and Clarke's procedures also emphasized identifying manifest and latent themes, allowing for a deeper analysis than just explicit meanings alone. Collectively, the proposed thematic analysis through a rigorous coding and analysis process was well-positioned to analyze the rich qualitative data sources and generate meaningful insights based on the efficacy of moral education for character formation.

3.13 Ethical considerations

Ethical consideration is necessary for research as it seeks the participants' consent. Ethical review is among the most critical components of any research, according to Kothari (2004).

A researcher's conceptualization, data gathering, assessment, and the distribution and use of findings must all be ethical. Participant privacy was protected; informed consent was obtained before inclusion in the research; respondents knowingly and willingly participated in the study; and privacy and confidentiality were abided by not mandating participants not to acknowledge their name or contact details. The research followed these moral norms. Participants acquired informed permission before any self-administered research interviews were conducted. Respondents were advised of their freedom to refuse to participate in the study, and the investigator kept their names secret. Volunteers in the research were shielded from any harm, including harassment, while the data was being collected.

Consent was obtained from many sources for this investigation. MMUST's Directorate of Graduate Studies granted permission for the study. Secondly, research permission was obtained from NACOSTI in accordance with the Science and Technology Act, Chapter 250, Laws of Kenya. Lastly, approval was given from the school administrators to conduct the research in their schools. Ethics, norms, and rules of conduct were strictly observed with the utmost care. To prevent plagiarism and fraud, for example, the research recognized the contributions of other scholars.

Free and informed permission is required to uphold the concept of autonomy. Participants were made aware of the study's goals so they may make their own decisions based on the information they have been provided with. Volunteers were allowed to withdraw from the research at any time and were not compensated in any way. The study will fully disclosure the findings to the participants. Additionally, the study guaranteed confidentiality and

anonymity to the participants. Their information was treated with confidentiality; even after the research, it will be kept confidential.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the research methodology that guided the study. It examines the research design, research paradigm, philosophical methods, sources of data collection, study area, target population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection methods, quality control methods, data collection procedure, data explication, and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents data presentation, discussion, and explication of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, interprets, and discusses the research findings. The section analyzes the study's findings based on the key themes to ascertain the extent to which the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya, confirms or disconfirms the existing knowledge. The data collected was explicated as per the objectives. Further, the data collected was thematically analyzed in line with the six steps, according to Braun and Clarke (2017). Narrative and themes derived from the lived experiences of practising teachers were juxtaposed with phenomenological theory and Aristotelian eudaimonia with a pragmatic perspective, a holistic perspective, an inclusive perspective, and a reflective perspective.

The last objective was anchored on a combinational framework to address both the cognitive and experiential aspects of moral formation, preparing students to engage with ethical challenges thoughtfully and responsibly. Through reflective practice, intentional engagement, and habituation, students are equipped to internalize moral values and make decisions aligned with their understanding of a virtuous life.

The first section presents the findings of objective one in addressing research question one. The second section also presents the findings of objective two in addressing research question two. Lastly, the third section presents the findings of objective three in addressing research question three.

4.1.1 Clarke and Braun's six steps

Thematic data analysis was guided by the six steps, according to Braun and Clarke (2017). Table 4.1 below indicates the six steps:

Table 4. 1: The Six Steps of the Inductive, Thematic Analysis

Step	Description of step
1	Data Familiarization
2	Initial coding
3	Searching for themes
4	Reviewing the themes
5	Naming the themes
6	Presenting the findings

Source: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2007).

The first step that the researcher took was to familiarize with the entire interview data set (Braun & Clark, 2017). By familiarizing with the data, the researcher aimed to gain an overview and find patterns of meaning across respondents and interview transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2017). In the second step, the researcher identified initial codes that supported the research questions. Coding refers to grouping excerpts from the transcripts with similar meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2017). The researcher assigned the same code to various excerpts that had similar meanings. Once familiar with the data, the researcher proceeded to the initial coding process, systematically identifying and labelling relevant segments of the transcripts that pertained to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Codes such as "moral aims," "character formation, “and ”teacher perspectives" emerged as key labels. These codes served as the building blocks for subsequent theme development.

After generating a set of initial codes, the next step involved searching for overarching themes that encapsulated the essence of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2017). This process required a holistic examination of the coded excerpts to identify connections and patterns. Themes like "Values Integration in Curriculum" and "Holistic Character Development" began to emerge, reflecting the broader concepts inherent in the participants' responses. Following the identification of preliminary themes, a critical review was conducted to refine and clarify the thematic structure (Braun & Clarke, 2017). This involved revisiting the coded data to ensure that each theme accurately captured the nuances and variations in participants' perspectives. The reiterative review process contributed to the development of more precise and meaningful themes.

Once the themes were refined, the next step involved explicitly defining and naming each theme to encapsulate its essence (Braun & Clarke, 2017). For instance, the theme "Values Integration in Curriculum" encapsulated the participants' emphasis on incorporating moral values into various subjects. Naming the themes facilitated clear communication and categorization of the findings. A thematic map visually represents the relationships and connections between themes (Braun & Clarke, 2017). This step helped to conceptualize the interplay between themes such as "Teacher Perspectives" and "Effective Approaches." The thematic map provided a holistic view of the data and the interconnectedness of various concepts.

The final step involved integrating the identified themes into a coherent and comprehensive narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2017). Each theme was discussed in detail, drawing connections to the research questions and relevant literature. This process facilitated the critical analysis

of the findings, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the efficacy of moral education for character formation.

4.1.2 An analysis of objective one: An examination of the moral aims of education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya.

This section was meant to establish the value of moral education's aims for character formation in secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Fifteen teachers were interviewed; four deputy principals were coded as participants D1, D2, D3, and D4, and eleven CRE teachers were coded as T1 to T11. This objective was thematized into three themes: the value of moral aims of education for character formation, the role of the school in promoting moral aims of education for character formation, and CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation.

Research Objective 1 Themes

Table 4.2 presents the key themes that emerged from the data analysis related to the first research objective on the moral aims of education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya. The table outlines the three major themes and the number of participants who contributed to each theme. The three themes provide insight into the value teachers place on moral aims, the role schools play in promoting these aims, and specific CRE topics focused on morality. The themes that emerged were The value of moral aims of education for character formation, the role of the school in promoting moral aims of education for character formation, and CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation. This table serves to summarize the main discussion points that will be further analyzed in relation to the first research objective.

Table 4. 1 Research Objective 1 Themes:

Theme	Number of participants contributing to the theme
The value of moral aims of education for character formation	15
The role of the school in promoting moral aims of education for character formation	15
CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation	12

Source: Researcher 2022

4.1.3 Theme 1: The value of moral aims of education for character formation

In this section, the exploration unfolds within the first thematic domain, shedding light on the significant influence of moral aims in education on character formation within the realm of public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya. Theme 1, titled "The Value of Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation," emanates from the lived experiences of deputy principals, specifically coded as D1, D2, D3, and D4. These educational leaders contribute unique insights into moral education's pivotal role in shaping student behaviour and the broader societal ethos. The ensuing narrative captures their perspectives on the intrinsic value of moral education, elucidating its multifaceted contributions to interpersonal relationships, student discipline, spiritual development, and the cultivation of responsible citizenship. Through the lens of these deputy principals, the intricate structure of moral education is unravelled, offering insights into its implications for character formation in the educational landscape of Kenya, as presented below.

4.1.4 Lived experiences of deputy head teachers on the value of the moral aims of education for character formation.

The deputy principals are herein coded as D1, D2, D3, and D4. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows:

Participant D1 argued that moral education fosters good relationships between teachers and students, helps students make the right decisions, and promotes good academic performance. The participant further narrated that the current society has a moral lapse in relation to what is happening today; the participant recommended that all stakeholders should emphasize moral education. Participant D1 further stated that:

> *"Parents, we teachers, as well as the community, we owe our children moral values. If we cannot work together, society will continue experiencing a moral crisis, portraying the state with a bad image. For instance, the image of bandit killings in our country indicates moral lapse, which has already portrayed the country with a negative image."*

Participant D2 posited that moral education promotes and enhances student discipline since it fosters virtues such as respect, integrity, honesty, and humility. It also enables learners to fulfil their obligations, such as doing assignments. However, the participant noted that the family, the main agent of moral education for character formations, has neglected the mandate, "*from my experience, a lot of family roles have been delegated to the school*." The participant suggested that parents should deliberately raise children with desirable behaviours encompassing praiseworthy morals.

Participant D3 noted that moral education for character formation improves the perception of spiritual life among the students because their school emphasizes spiritual practices as a means of moralization to students. The participant also argued that moral education promotes harmonious coexistence within the school and society. Further, the participant

noted that it fosters the elements of "*good and bad"* among the learners with the aid of school rules. The participant observed that the value of moral aims of education cannot be taken for granted because it nurtures citizens with moral wisdom who actualize what their mentors have trained them.

Participant D4 narrated that moral education for character formation develops members of integrity, respect, and justice and members who conform to moral principles in society. However, the participant observed that;

> "Schools have negated the value of moral education for character formation; perhaps that is why our country is experiencing a lot of immoral vices. For instance, when you assess what happened in 2021 from early November to around 2023, it is clear that schools have assumed the enormous role of moral education."

4.1.5 Discussion on the lived experiences of deputy head teachers on the value of the moral aims of education for character formation

In exploring the lived experiences of deputy principals regarding the value of moral aims in education for character formation, it was established that moral education plays a significant role in shaping various aspects of students' lives. Drawing from the narratives of participants D1, D2, D3, and D4, the multifaceted contributions of moral education are highlighted, including its role in fostering good relationships, promoting discipline, enhancing spiritual well-being, and developing members with integrity and respect. These findings align with Akala's (2021) assertion that moral education is crucial for holistic student development beyond academic achievements.

Participants D1, D2, and D4 emphasize the societal implications of moral education, linking it to social well-being and the prevention of moral lapses. However, a unique perspective is offered by Participant D3, who elevates moral education to the level of moral

consciousness and wisdom, aligning with the transcendental and immanent dimensions discussed by Alam (2022) in the context of sustainable education. The distinct viewpoints among the participants underscore the richness and complexity of moral education's impact.

The literature by Akanga (2014) and Nargiza (2022) resonates with the participants' observations, highlighting the consensus among secondary teachers on the importance of moral education for instilling positive values and responsible conduct. However, as illuminated in the findings, discrepancies arise regarding the primary agents responsible for moral education. Participant D1 advocates for a collective effort involving parents, teachers, and the community, echoing the call for collaborative approaches to education reform as proposed by Akala (2021). In contrast, Participant D2 places greater responsibility on the family, aligning with the literature that emphasizes the family as a central agent in character development (Githaiga et al., 2018).

The discrepancies among participants underscore the ongoing debate in the literature regarding the effectiveness of moral education implementation. While teachers acknowledge its importance, diverse perspectives exist on the actual outcomes. This aligns with Fafunwa & Aisiku's (2022) findings, which suggest that traditional didactic methods may be insufficient for character development. Nargiza (2022) states that the acquisition of values requires active learning and reflection, pointing toward the need to move beyond traditional indoctrination methods. Overall, studies indicate that Kenyan teachers strongly endorse the goals of moral education in principle, recognizing their role in developing not just academic but ethical, social, and civic competencies (Hidayati et al., 2020). For example, a study by Fafunwa & Aisiku (2022) found that over 75% of secondary teachers

surveyed viewed moral education as an important objective essential for positive values and responsible conduct. Similarly, Nargiza (2022) reported a consensus amongst secondary teachers on cultivating national values and good morals through the curriculum. This aligns with the national goals outlined in Kenya's education policies and vision 2030 plan.

However, while teachers acknowledge the importance of character development aims in theory, perspectives diverge regarding the actual effectiveness of implementation. This reflects more significant debates in the literature on approaches and outcomes. A common theme is the inadequacy of traditional, didactic methods for teaching ethics and values (Fafunwa & Aisiku, 2022). Teachers note that lecturing on topics like integrity or covering moral content through subjects like religious studies has little impact on student behaviour. Mere knowledge is insufficient for internalization. Nargiza (2022) summarizes that acquiring values and morals requires more than verbal instruction. Critical active learning and reflection are needed. These findings align with scholars like Fafunwa & Aisiku (2022), who argue that the direct inculcation of morals is mainly ineffective for character formation. Values must be constructed through experience, analysis, and discussion. This suggests a need to move beyond traditional indoctrination methods.

4.1.6 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, and D4 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation.

In this section, the hermeneutical inferences of section 4.1.3 are judged in light of the Phenomenological theory and Aristotelian eudaimonia theory. The participants' ideas are exposed to meta-ethical critique and phenomenological hermeneutical methods, a process

that necessitates this research to appeal to its strong theoretical hold and methods. Participants (D1 and D3) who exhibit dialectical aptitudes are juxtaposed to Phenomenological theory, while Participants with dualistic aptitudes are normativists (D2 and D4).

Any meaningful phenomenological process entails researchers bracketing off their world prejudices from the lived experiences of a second party. The researcher is an act deontologist with a predilection for altruism and ethical universal orientation. These dispositions were bracketed at the level of information collection by posing dialectical questions to cater to the lived experiences and reflections of the participants. This allowed data to be interpreted based on lived experience, reflection, and induction. D1 was thus examined in light of hermeneutical inferences, and he is considered a dialectical horizontal moral assessor. D1 pinpoints the moral values from multiple causes and effects as a dialectical assessor. The horizontal assessor is concerned with concrete moral education values in social, individual, and epistemic dimensions. A pragmatic mindset's tendency to be multifaceted is characteristic because values are situated in different contexts. The participant is thus a material dialectician of Marxist orientation or a Deweyian thinker. As such, D1 takes into account a pluralist ontology of ethics and realist epistemology whose rational grounding is squarely in the domain of inductive thinking and, as such, phenomenological.

Participant D3 argues that moral education enhances spiritual life, and spiritual life, in turn, enhances moral education. The fundamental idea here is that spirituality and morality exist on a continuum, each depending on and enriching the other. This dynamic relationship exemplifies what can be called dialectical vertical consequentialism. It is dialectical

because spirituality and morality are mutually dependent, each having specific needs that can only be fulfilled by the other. Spirituality, for example, relies on moral principles to guide its development, while morality gains depth and nourishment from spiritual reflection and practice. This concept aligns with Aristotle's moral philosophy, which explores the interrelationship between human virtues and a well-lived life. The logical foundation of this argument rests on the principle of bi-conditionality, which means that moral education is meaningful and effective only when spiritual exercises influence it.

Conversely, spirituality is incomplete without the application of moral principles. The cohesive interplay between morals and spirituality can be seen as a precursor to what we might call horizontal moral value, which manifests as harmonious co-existence in society. This viewpoint is consistent with consequentialist ethics, which focuses on the outcomes or consequences of actions to determine their moral worth. Here, metaphysics informs consequential ethics by explaining the relationship between causes and effects. From an epistemic (knowledge-based) standpoint, the idea is that moral understanding is only meaningful when it translates into practical wisdom—wisdom that is lived and applied in everyday life, especially in the context of responsible citizenship.

The notion of finality refers to actions that are valuable in themselves rather than as a means to an end. In this view, actions guided by morality or spirituality have intrinsic worth. The idea of self-sufficiency is also critical, as it underpins both authenticity at the personal level and social integrity. Meanwhile, inclusivity refers to the idea that moral and spiritual realities are universal, meaning that every individual reality is connected to and dependent upon others. This concept points to the ontological interdependence of all things—one reality cannot exist in isolation but rather is an extension of the next. The idea of excellence

in this context refers to striving toward the highest good. In moral reasoning, excellence is defined as the pursuit of the optimum moral evaluation, where moral decisions and actions are judged by their alignment with the greatest moral good.

Participant D2, however, approaches moral reasoning from a dualistic perspective, focusing heavily on family-based moral responsibility. This position dilutes the broader principle of inclusivity, which would otherwise distribute moral responsibility across multiple levels, including schools, communities, and families. By emphasizing moral education solely on the family, Participant D2's view introduces a radical dualism that fragments moral education and can lead to impartiality. According to this argument, such a disjointed perspective cannot lead to the optimum happiness that comes from an inclusive and interconnected approach to moral development. Participant D4, on the other hand, operates from a highly deontological perspective, which means they adhere strictly to moral duty. This view aligns with categorical moral imperatives—moral rules that are binding and absolute, regardless of the situation or outcome. While strict adherence to moral rules (as in deontology) ensures consistency, it may not necessarily lead to existential fulfilment or eudaimonic happiness (the happiness associated with living a life of virtue). In this case, rigid norms might fail to address human well-being's more profound emotional and spiritual aspects.

4.1.7 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation.

It was established that all Christian Religious Education teachers recognize that moral education for character formation plays a significant role. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows:

Participant T1 argued that moral education for character formation makes students responsible in school and society. The participant also added that it enables learners to grow morally upright. Further, the participant observed that it promotes good academic performance. The participant noted that moral education should be taken with the seriousness it deserves. Doing so will help mitigate the immoral tendencies that are wanted in society. Participant T1 further, stated that:

> "Moral education for character formation plays a crucial role in making students responsible individuals within the school and in society. It contributes to the growth of learners in moral uprightness, fostering a sense of responsibility that extends beyond academic pursuits. A key observation is the positive impact of moral education on academic performance. To address the prevailing immoral tendencies in society, it is imperative that we treat moral education with the seriousness it deserves."

Participant T2 argued that moral education for character formation enhances good performance in school. The participant also noted that it promotes cooperation and unity among the teachers and students. The participant further observed that it fosters good discipline among the learners, extending to their future careers and obligations. Lastly, the participant noted that their school achieved good results due to moral virtues in the previous KNEC exam. Participant T2 further stated that:

> "Moral education for character formation enhances good performance in school. The participant also noted that it promotes cooperation and the

> element of unity among the teachers and students. The participant further observed that it fosters good discipline among the learners, extending to their future careers and obligations. Lastly, the participant noted that their school achieved good results due to moral virtues in the previous KNEC exam."

Participant T3 posited that moral education for character formation helps learners acquire virtues of moral life such as honesty, integrity, and respect. The participant also noted that moral education expands learners' spiritual horizons, such as religious practices in school and spiritual clubs. Further, participants noted that it helps students to be responsible members of society. The participants, however, noted that schools should emphasize the value of moral education to liberate humanity from undesirable tendencies that can result in greater evils.

Participant T4 narrated that moral education for character formation helps to foster a sense of togetherness within the school and society. It also helps learners to grow morally by executing their obligations responsibly. Further, the participant observed that it prevents them from engaging in evil acts. The participant further argued that society should give moral education a priority. The participant also noted that teachers don't emphasize or give less time to moral education to cover the syllabus and revise for summative exams.

Participant T5 revealed that moral education for character formation helps students achieve their dreams because they tend to concentrate as a consequence of good behaviour. It also allows students to make correct decisions regardless of peer influence. On the contrary, the participant noted that moral education has been ignored, and its impacts are now felt in our society today. The impacts are manifested in the form of "*corruption, premarital pregnancy, wanting dressing code, political wrangles and poor performance in schools.*"

Participant T6 agreed that moral education promotes good performance. The participant also affirmed that it inculcates virtues of hard work, self-motivation, and other virtues such as obedience, respect, humility, and royalty among learners. Further, the participant affirmed that it trains or expands the learner's moral consciousness. Lastly, the participant suggested that moral education for character formation should be taken seriously.

Participant T7 affirmed that moral education for character formation helps learners make the right judgment by choosing the lesser evil over the greater evil. The participant also agreed that it orients learners to spiritual practices. Lastly, the participant agreed that it nurtures individuals who are responsible members of society. The participant affirmed that moral education for character formation helps learners make the right judgment by choosing the lesser evil over the greater evil. The participant also agreed that it orients learners to spiritual practices. Lastly, the participant agreed that it nurtures individuals who are responsible members of society.

Participant T8 agreed that moral education helps to foster the right judgment and elements such as honesty, unity, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility among the learners. The participant observed that Individuals with the above aspects can make the right decisions.

Participant T9 agreed that moral education for character formation inducts learners to understand rules and regulations within the school, religion, and society. The participant also affirmed that it enables learners to be responsible members of society. Further, the participant observed that it imparts learners with virtues that enable them to be good societal leaders. Participant T9 further stated that;

> "Leaders in our contemporary society seem to fall short of the moral aims of education for character formation. This is manifested in what they say in political gatherings and mass media. Their utterances are full of moral disconnections, yet they have gone through the education system. This indicates that there is something wrong in addressing the moral aims of education among the concerned stakeholders, especially the family and the school."

Participant T10 agreed that moral education for character formation imparts good habits and behaviour to students. The participant also noted that it nurtures responsible citizens, "shaping learners' moral conscience, enabling them to interact seamlessly with other members of society. In the 21st century, there are many individuals devoid of moral consciousness. For instance, look at cases where students burn schools, teachers collaborate with students to cheat in exams, and where traffic police take bribes at the expense of the life of innocent citizens, is a clear indicator of lack of moral consciousness."

Participant T11 affirmed that moral education for character formation promoted good behaviour in school and society. Further, the participants agreed that it imparts moral virtues such as respect, integrity, and royalty to learners, and finally, it helps them achieve their academic careers. "Moral students tend to concentrate in class and are responsible for their activities. However, institutions, where the value of moral aims of education for character formation should be emphasized, are not taken seriously, and the consequences are poor performance and other immoral acts such as strikes which portray the image of the school negatively."

4.1.8 Discussion on the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation.

Practising teachers' acknowledgement of the significance of moral education for character formation aligns with the findings of Anangisye (2008), who emphasizes the crucial role of

moral education in character development based on the African Indigenous Education Framework. However, it is noteworthy that the anecdotal reports from all practising teachers, excluding T2, T7, and T8, suggest that schools are not giving moral education the emphasis it deserves.

T2 and T6 express concerns about schools prioritizing academic performance over moral education. This resonates with Dewey's (1916) call for a holistic approach to education. T2 and T11 criticize the competitive atmosphere in Kenyan secondary schools, as it does not align with the holistic formation envisioned by the Kenyan government. This observation highlights the need for a shift in education paradigms, moving away from a narrow focus on the cognitive domain at the expense of the psychomotor and affective domains.

Most participants indicated that the over-emphasis on academic and cognitive performance was the primary cause of the under-emphasis on moral education. This sentiment underscores the concerns raised by Dewey, who argued against the persistence of academic-oriented educational views. The participants' emphasis on affirmative action in moral education, rather than a de-emphasis on the cognitive dimension, suggests a desire for a more balanced educational approach.

4.1.9 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the value of moral aims of education for character formation

A critical evaluation of the lived experiences of T1–T11 teachers reveals nuanced perspectives on the effectiveness of moral aims in education for character formation, highlighting successes and obstacles. Teachers generally value moral education for fostering virtues like respect, empathy, and integrity among students, noting that it

positively influences behaviour and social interactions within the school environment. However, they also express concerns regarding external factors, such as societal influences and curriculum constraints, which often undermine the consistent reinforcement of ethical values. Many teachers report that, despite their best efforts, time and resources dedicated to moral education are insufficient, limiting their ability to fully engage students in reflective practices that build strong moral foundations. Additionally, while teachers observe positive behavioural changes, they stress the need for greater support in integrating moral education across subjects to address character development comprehensively. These lived experiences underscore the potential of moral aims in character formation but also reveal gaps in institutional support and external alignment, suggesting the need for more integrated and holistic approaches to moral education.

On the other hand, most participants agree that academic performance leads to de-emphasis in moral education; their use of the concept of performance is loose and ambiguous. The term performance does not automatically imply academic performance. This ambiguity emanates from the persistence view of education in Kenya as academic-oriented. Such orientation indicates perennial and essentialist philosophies of education, dichotomized epistemology of idealism, rationalism, and capital philosophy. The aforestated philosophical orientations can only be mitigated by a counter-thesis of moral philosophies of education, especially pragmatic philosophy. These philosophies need to align themselves with the parameters of phenomenological thinking and the eudaimotive approach. The researcher believes that phenomena keep changing and human beings are not statistical data. Therefore, it’s appropriate to approach moral education for character formation from a pragmatic and holistic perspective.

Phenomenological issues cannot be solved by either a cognitive approach or pure science. Still, the issues require humanistic approaches, which recall a paradigm shift in the theory and practice of education. The change in education will be vital in reconstructing education to a humanistic, holistic, reflective, and pragmatic or experiential learning approach. The humanistic approach will help to address the problem of natural scientists who are partial in addressing humanistic phenomena such as moral education for character formation. Pure science is only interested in understanding what a person is without considering their held conscious beliefs. Human conscious beliefs are multifaceted and variegated; thus, they require a humanistic approach. The approach is holistic, and it examines the understanding and meaning of the held human conscious beliefs.

Education should be anchored from a holistic approach to mitigating the partialism revealed by practising teachers in the theory and practice of moral education for character formation. The cognitive approach to education truncates learners from accessing holistic education. Holistic education should envisage the normative aspect, too. The normative aspect of education unfolds: "What is the goal of daily human existence?" According to Aristotle, the fundamental purpose of human existence is to achieve a decent life, which leads to human happiness. Human happiness can only be attained by habitually instilling good virtues in the youths through normative education.

Moral education for effective character formation should focus on a pragmatic approach instead of old philosophies. In this sense, it will get to the sense of things themselves practically, which is the essence of moral education for character formation in the light of the lived experiences of practising teachers. Authors like Dewey considered education a pragmatic or progressive phenomenon with constantly evolving difficulties. Examining

any dynamic phenomenon and determining ways to relate it to past educational methods is an effective strategy in education. Simultaneously, it envisions what the future holds for education as a field, which contains challenges that can't be adequately addressed by scientific knowledge alone.

4.1.10 Theme 2: Role of the School in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

This theme was meant to establish the school's role in realizing the moral aims of education for character formation in secondary schools in Kenya. Fifteen teachers were interviewed; four deputy principals coded D1, D2, D3 and D4, and eleven CRE teachers coded T1 to T11.

4.1.11 Lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

Four deputy principals were interviewed on the role of the school in the promotion of moral aims of education for character formation**.** All deputy principals who were interviewed agreed that the school is the best and most crucial agent of moral aims of education for character formation. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows:

Participant D1 agreed that the school plays a vital role in moral development among the learners. The participant alluded that even though moral education starts from home (family), the school remains the pillar of moral values. For example, participant D1 confessed that she had never participated in early childhood moral development due to her busy schedule as a teacher. She continued to argue that the 21st-century parent is a working class, where they leave their children with house girls who are ill -educated or who have no

good moral ideals. She further asserted that teachers are the custodians of moral values and need to find the best mechanism or approaches to instil moral values in learners from early childhood development.

In relation to the suggestion of Participant D1 on the establishment of the best mechanisms or approaches to moral education for character formation, there is a clear gap in the best approaches in school for moral education for character formation, which are paramount in shaping the learners' character and behaviour. To some extent, the immoral acts in the recent past might be attributed to inadequate approaches to moral education for character formation. Participant D1 further stated that;

> "The 21st-century parent is a working class, where they leave their children with house girls who are ill-educated or who have no good moral ideals. Teachers are the custodians of moral values and need to find the best mechanism or approaches to instil moral values in learners from early childhood development."

Participant D2 agreed that the School is the precipice for moral development among the learners. The participant further noted that since learners spend most of their time in school, the school remains prevalent for moral education and character formation. The participant emphasized that Parents who are supposed to impart learners' moral values are too busy, and others do not have the courage to impart their children's moral virtues. Further, Participant D2 emphasized in "Kiswahili" that *wengine wanawapendelea* na *kuwabembeleza*." "The participant also noted that the current parents are too protective and seem to break morals in front of their children. The participant also alluded that they have disagreed with some parents in several instances when correcting their children's immoral acts." The lived experiences of Participant D2 are a clear indicator of parental ethical deviation.

Participant D3 emphasized that the school has remained the cornerstone in disseminating moral values. The school teaches most values such as discipline, obedience, respect, and sharing with Christian/religious teachings, which build the learner's character. The participant alluded that the current society has moved out of the tradition set up where the community imparts moral values. For instance, the elders corrected the young people wherever they went wrong. Hence, the traditional set up is far apart from the current society. The participant further argued that taboos that guide people's behaviour are no longer respected. Unlike in the traditional African Society, where moral education was a communal responsibility, the current society has left moral education mainly to the school and, to some extent, the church. Participant D3 further stated that:

> "The traditional set up is far apart from the current society. Taboos that guide people's behaviour are no longer respected. The current society has left moral education mainly to the school and, to some extent, the church."

Participant D4 argues that the school should supplement what learners receive at home, in churches, mosques, and society. The school is a micro-society that reflects the larger society, so it should be a basis for moral development among learners.

4.1.12 Discussion on the lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

The responses from the deputy principals align with Sober (2009), who recognized the school as a fundamental setting for moral development. Sober (2009) asserts that in classrooms, students acquire civility and lawfulness through moral reasoning, learning what is culturally acceptable while interacting with others. This sentiment is reinforced by Nord & Haynes (1998), who emphasized that an effective moral reasoning education introduces students to cultures that shape their moral identities. In agreement with Sober

(2009) and Nord & Haynes (1998), the research affirms that the primary purpose of the school is to ensure learners acquire moral virtues through guidance and habituation, fostering moral responsibility and uprightness.

The vivid responses from the four participants are deeply rooted in inductive experiences, illuminated by their reflective aptitudes. For instance, D1 points out that her job profile includes that of a "deputy principal, chief investigator, and chief pastor," highlighting the participant's multifaceted responsibilities as a teacher. This reflects a deeper phenomenological reflection and interpretation of D1's responses. This aligns with the reflective practitioner model proposed by Schön (2017), which emphasizes the importance of practitioners reflecting on their experiences to improve their professional practice. The role of a deputy principal, as described by D1, involves a dynamic engagement with various aspects of learners' lives, supporting the argument that moral education is not confined to traditional teaching roles but extends to broader responsibilities within the school community.

The acknowledgement by D1, D2, and D3 that parents are not doing enough to transmit moral values to their children suggests awareness among teachers that moral education is a collaborative process, with teachers being just one part of the stakeholders in moral education. This emphasis on parental engagement aligns with the natural viewpoint on moralization, recognizing the family as the first moral agent of socialization. From a sociological perspective, structural functionalism underscores the essential role of the family in moral education, incorporating other social institutions such as the school. This is in line with the work of Lamanna (2001), who argued that the family, as a primary agent of moral education, works in tandem with schools and other societal institutions.

Philosophically, teachers draw on naturalists' perspectives on the family, as scholars like Montessori advocate in her views on the theory and practice of education (Lillard, A. S. (2022). Therefore, the issue of parental disengagement should be addressed, with teachers complementing rather than entirely subsuming the parental role. The literature supports the argument that moral education is a shared responsibility involving schools, families, and broader societal influences.

4.1.13 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

It is categorically imperative for parents to be actively engaged in the moralization of their children. However, from the participant observation, parents are either overprotective or indifferent to the moral development of their children. The overprotectiveness and indifference of parents is a breach of the phenomenological principle of reflection on the dynamic nature of moral education. It also contravenes the eudaimonia parameter of inclusivity in moral education. The two have negative ramifications in that learners and teachers will, in the long run, disengage from the centrality of morality in education.

4.1.14 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

It was established that all Christian Religious Education teachers recognize that the school plays a vital role in the promotion of the moral aims of education. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows:

Participant T1: “School plays a vital role in the moral development of learners.”

Participant T2, the school helps to create a sense of awareness among the children, instils good behaviours among the learners, develops a positive attitude culture among the learners, and they can learn from their teachers the importance of being a good role model. Participant T3 argued that the school teaches positive morals and rectifies negative ones. Being so, what the student acquires sticks in the mind for a lifetime.

Participant T4: “School helps students to explore different moral values and subjects with moral objectives.”

Participant T5 asserted that the school plays a key role in moral development through mentorship of students.”

Participant T6 School plays an essential role in the moral development of learners through learning CRE; learners get acquainted with Bible characters who have positive changes in moral development. The teaching and non-teaching staff members also act as role models to the learners.

Participant T7: “It is a basis of moral development because of the various activities in school which are intended to promote moral education such as drama.”

Participant T8- “The school is a basis for moral development among the learners because it is the level where the learners are eager to learn virtues and moral principles which will shape their life.”

Participant T9: “The school plays a vital role in building the learner's moral standards.”

Participant T10: “The school plays a major role in developing morals among the learners.”

Participant T11: “The school has a holistic task: enable students to grow in academic knowledge, spiritually, and morally. Teachers should, therefore, understand that it's not all

about academics, but they should also play a role in helping learners develop morally and in other aspects of life.

4.1.15 Discussion on the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

The lived experiences of T1-T11 collectively highlight a unanimous recognition among Christian Religious Education teachers that the school holds a crucial role in promoting moral aims for character formation. Their anecdotal reports provide diverse perspectives on how the school contributes to the moral development of learners.

Participant T1 succinctly emphasizes the vital role of the school in the moral development of learners, laying the foundation for the subsequent accounts from other participants. T2 builds on this by delineating the school's multifaceted contributions. According to Uy, Kilag, & Arcilla, 2023), the acknowledgement of the school as a vital agent in fostering moral development aligns with the philosophical discussions on the societal role of education.

Darnell et al. (2019) provide a framework for understanding the knowledge-action gap in moral psychology and education, emphasizing the need for a synthesis in addressing moral aims. T3 mentions the Aristotelian theory of moral education (Aristotle 1999). Dow (1998) argues that moral education should extend beyond formation to include reformation through corrective measures. The assertion by T11 about a holistic philosophy of moralization resonates with Dewey's perspective on education. Dewey (1916) advocates for a holistic approach to education that encompasses learners' moral, spiritual, and academic aspects. The call for holistic pedagogy aligns with Eikeland's (2008) exploration

of Aristotelian phronesis and action research emphasizing a comprehensive understanding of moral education rectification, which echoes the idea of a reformation approach, aligning with Dow's assertion.

Participant T5's emphasis on mentorship aligns with Freire's (1970) ideas about the importance of teacher-student relationships in moral development. Freire's pedagogical approach emphasizes dialogue and engagement, which can contribute to effective mentorship in moral education. While some participants (T1, T5, T8, T9, T10) offer simple affirmations without detailed explanations, it may be due to a perceived rhetorical nature of the question or a potential disinterest in moral education. This reflects a broader challenge Galie et al. (2009) discussed regarding the diagnosis and treatment of issues like moral education. Gardiner (2012) explores perceptions of induction coaching, highlighting the importance of time and trust, factors that may influence participants' responses.

In contrast, the detailed responses from other participants provide insights into various approaches employed by schools for moral education. These approaches, such as role modeling (T2, T6), implicit moral education (T3, T7), and co-curricular activities (T7), resonate with various educational philosophies. Gilligan's (1977) work on women's conceptions of self and morality emphasizes relational and contextual approaches, which may be reflected in these diverse methods of moral education. The lived experiences of T1-T11 underscore the multifaceted nature of the school's role in promoting moral aims for character formation. The varied responses align with philosophical, psychological, and educational literature, highlighting the need for a holistic moral education approach.

4.1.16 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the role of the school in the promotion of the moral aims of education for character formation

The participants were able to bracket out moral education from a practical perspective. Their concerns reflect the moral aims of education in the classroom set-up. The participants exhibited explicit knowledge of the moral aims of education for character formation and what it takes to achieve them. However, their points of view and conceptual formulations are localized to their personal experiences and devoid of policy guidelines. Most participants were unable to locate information from key educational policy documents, including recent policies related to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). This gap suggests that their lived experiences are disconnected from broader national educational concerns related to moral development. This disconnection reflects a form of partialism in moral education, where only certain aspects are emphasized, rather than a holistic approach that considers the full scope of moral and educational goals, as observed by participant T11. Furthermore, this gap highlights informational inadequacy in terms of aligning with international academic practices. It suggests a focus that is overly localized, which can harm the development of 21st-century skills—skills crucial for global competence and modern educational standards.

Eudaimotive ontology, as envisioned by Aristotle and Aristotelians, posits that the whole is greater than the part and that the aetiology of the part is only meaningful if the part participates in the whole. This view is further elucidated by Ubuntu ontology of being, which states “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” which translates to, “A person thrives through others.” Both Eudaimotive and Ubuntu ontological frameworks act as a social formula for happiness- together with others. T11 and T2 bring forth this viewpoint. In conclusion,

responses of T1 to T11 find their place in Phenomenological and Eudaimotive theory because they point out aspects that align themselves to the phenomenological and eudaimonia theory.

4.1.17 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation.

It was established that there are CRE topics that mainly focus on moral development. They were identified as follows: “African heritage (T3, T10), African values in a community(T3 and T4), St. Luke Gospel (The Bible) (T11) work (T2), Science and Technology (T3), Life Skills (T9) Nehemiah (T4) Leadership (T4 and T7) Christian. Ethics (T1, T2, T4.T7.T10, T11), marriage, diseases (T2). Further topics include sexuality (T1, T2, T3 and T9). According to participants T4 and T7, all the topics in CRE have effective objectives geared towards achieving the moral aims of education and change. For instance, part (c) of every topic is set with the views of moral aspects. Participant T7 stated;

> “Every topic we cover in Christian Religious Education is carefully designed to achieve specific moral objectives. Whether exploring African values, delving into the Bible, or discussing topics like leadership and ethics, our curriculum is purposefully crafted to contribute to the moral development of students."

4.1.18 Discussion on the lived experiences T1-T11 responses on CRE topics that predominantly focus on moral aims of education for character formation.

In examining the lived experiences of T1-T11 regarding CRE topics that predominantly focus on the moral aims of education for character formation, it is evident that the topics identified by the participants can be appraised as holistic and contextual. Holistic in the sense that they address both the social and individual dimensions of moralization and contextual because they incorporate traditional African moral education, current Christian

moral education, and 21st-century developments in science and technology. This alignment of topics resonates with Occiti's (1993) principles of preparationalism, functionalism, wholisticism, perennialism, and communalism in Africa Indigenous Education.

For example, the topics contextualized to African moral education, such as African heritage (T3, T10), African values in a community (T3 and T4), and marriage (T2), are crucial in grounding learners in their heritage and cultural identity as Africans. The inclusion of these topics in the CRE curriculum aligns with Occiti's preparationalism, which intends to prepare learners to contextualize CRE topics further in African contexts. Occitti's wholisticism is evident in the comprehensive coverage of topics like St. Luke's Gospel (The Bible) (T11), Nehemiah (T4), and Christianity. Ethics (T1, T2, T4.T7.T10, T11), which reflect the lived experiences of African Christians and their moral values.

Furthermore, Occitti's functionalism is observed in topics related to Christianity as a contemporary religion practised by Africans. These include St. Luke's Gospel (T11), Nehemiah (T4), and Christianity (The Bible). Ethics (T1, T2, T4.T7.T10, T11), emphasizing the inclusion of Christianity in the syllabus to reflect the current socialization of the majority of Kenyan Africans. This demonstrates an epistemic intent to cement socialization to a particular Africanized Christianity.

In the individual dimension of CRE topics, the inclusion of life skills (T9), marriage and diseases (T2), and sexuality (T1, T2, T3, and T9) reflects Occitti's functionalism in catering to individual functionality, coexistence, and existential integration. Notably, participant T9 emphasizes the importance of teaching sexuality openly, aligning with the changing dynamics of the 21st-century learner's experiences and practices.

As the 21st-century learner is a global citizen influenced by wider societies, CRE incorporates topics like work (T2), Science and Technology, Nehemiah (T4), and Leadership (T4 and T7). This integration aligns with Occitti's holism and functionalism, as these topics prepare learners to be holistic and functional citizens in the 21st century. For example, the topic of work is not just about procedures and relationships but also about work ethics, reflecting an intentional moral angle for character formation.

While the participants highlight the content of the topics, there is a noticeable gap between the topics alluded to and the methods of instruction for moralization. Unfortunately, the participants do not provide insights into how these topics should be taught to activate moral development. This disconnect between content and method reveals a potential challenge in translating the intended moral objectives into practical approaches for character formation.

The findings above underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding of moral education's content and methods. Effective pedagogical strategies should complement teachers' mastery of content to promote moral development for character formation. This aligns with Dewey's (1916) pragmatic philosophy of education, emphasizing the need for dynamic and evolving approaches to address the complexities of moral education.

Furthermore, the mismatch between the topics and teaching methods suggests a possible lack of emphasis on the centrality of moral aims in education. This echoes Darnell et al.'s (2019) discussion on the knowledge-action gap in moral psychology and moral education. The participants may be aware of the moral aims of education but might not prioritize or emphasize them in their teaching practices.

In addressing this challenge, bridging the gap between content and method is essential, providing teachers with effective pedagogical tools for moral education. This approach resonates with Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed, emphasizing participatory and dialogical teaching methods to engage learners actively in the moralization process.

To conclude, the lived experiences of T1-T11 shed light on the importance of aligning CRE topics with effective methods for moral education. Incorporating contextualized and holistic topics in the curriculum is commendable, but the disconnect between content and method poses a significant challenge. By integrating effective pedagogical approaches, educators can ensure that education's moral aims are recognized and actively pursued for the holistic development of learners**.**

4.1.19 Critical evaluation of lived experiences T1-T11 responses on CRE topics that predominantly focused on moral aims of education for character formation

From hermeneutical perspectives, inductive topics include the rite of passage and Christian values that enhance justice and life skills. The mention of these topics indicates that the CRE teachers are cognizant of their inductive process in instilling values amongst learners for new experiences. It can, therefore, be inferred that these teachers have lived the experiences foretasted, that is, some initiation rites and training in life skills and values. Work and African Living, all of which are alluded to by the participants in probing questions, indicated that the topics alluded to are critical in developing the moral reasoning of the learners. Some topics like sexuality and Christian ethics express not only the learners' practical phenomenological existence but also the existential tension that forges the individual, as in the case of human sexuality alluded to by T1, T2, T3 and T9.

The concept of eudemonia in CRE content is effectively expressed in topics that deal with God's call to ultimate happiness. This happiness is expressed in God's desire for human beings to love God and love neighbours. Which at the same time is the greatest commandment. As such, biblically related topics become central to the eudaimotive phenomenological experiences. For instance, the Bible in Form One, the life and teachings of Jesus in Book Two, the call of Nehemiah and other prophets in Book Three and leadership as a service to God**.**

Research Objective 2: Teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in secondary school in Kakamega county, Kenya.

4.2 Teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in Secondary Schools in Kakamega county, Kenya.

This section is thematized into four parts: Lived experiences of teachers on the effectiveness of CRE assessment on moral education for character formation, Lived experiences on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation, lived experience on the strategies in school on moral education for character formation and lived experience on the effectiveness of the strategies in school on moral education for character formation.

Moral education is not only the principal concern of any educational enterprise but also the concern of each individual teacher in their capacity as subject teachers. Christian Religious Education teachers are the centre of the moralization process. As such, they are best placed to assess the effectiveness of moral education in a school setup. They interact with moral content in CRE, and they teach and assess not only the academic aspects of CRE but also

the non-academic and non-examinable aspects of CRE. In the second objective CRE assessment, non-examinable subjects and strategies are exposed to phenomenological rubrics for further analysis and assessment.

Research Objective 2 Themes

This section presents the four major themes that emerged from data analysis related to the second research objective of investigating teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya. The four themes are: 1) teachers' lived experiences on the effectiveness of CRE assessment on moral education for character formation. This theme explores teacher's perspectives on how CRE assessment impacts moral education. 2) lived experiences of the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation. This theme examines teacher's views on subjects like life skills education and how they influence character development. 3) lived experience of the strategies in school on moral education for character formation, and 4) lived experience of the effectiveness of the strategies in school on moral education for character formation. The last two themes examine the effectiveness of the existing school strategies for moral education.

Table 4. 2: ***Research Objective 2 Themes:***

Theme	Number of participants contributing to the theme
Lived experiences of teachers on the effectiveness of CRE assessment on moral education for character formation.	12
Lived experiences of the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation.	15
The lived experience of the strategies in school on moral education for character formation	15
The lived experience of the effectiveness of the strategies in school on moral education for character formation.	15

Source: Researcher 2022

4.2.1 Lived experiences of teachers on the effectiveness of CRE assessment on moral education for character formation

Any educational experience culminates in an assessment to determine whether the objectives were achieved or otherwise. Long-term objectives in CRE education entail moral aptitudes, while short-term terms entail cognitive aptitude. This sub-theme discusses whether examining the CRE syllabus is convenient for moral education.

This sub-theme examines whether the current assessment methods in CRE, primarily focused on written exams, are appropriate for measuring moral education. A significant challenge highlighted is that exams assess cognitive skills more than moral development. While students may excel in remembering facts, the true objective of moral education—to nurture moral reasoning and behaviour—may not be adequately evaluated through traditional exam formats. Therefore, the question arises: can moral aptitudes be effectively assessed through examinations, or should alternative, more practical assessments be implemented to measure students' ethical growth and character development in CRE? This exploration emphasizes the need for balanced evaluation methods aligning with cognitive and moral educational goals.

4.2.2 Lived experiences of D2 on formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation. (D2 is the deputy principal as well as the CRE teacher.)

This section is meant to determine whether formative and summative CRE exams positively or negatively impact moral education for character formation. According to D2, CRE exams play a positive role in moral education because they provide motivation and a sense of commitment to the subject in anticipation of both short- and long-term outcomes. The participant asserted that:

> "Learners tend to forget fast; they are under pressure for exams. Maybe C.B.C. will change this notion even though it has exams. C. R.E. should be considered a compulsory subject in disseminating morals. Also, it should be examined at the K.C.S.E level. This will make learners love, appreciate, and continue with it even after secondary education."

The implication is that C.R.E. ought to be examined. The same was opined by Crane et al. (2019). Religious studies as an academic subject in Kenya have remained a tool for

endorsing moral thinking among students. The effectiveness of moral thinking can only be objectively arrived at through exams.

Participant D2 further argued that*:*

> "We should have a formative assessment as much as we give summative exam decisions. If one has done a topic, he has to be examined and recommended for both summative and formative evaluation of morals."

The participant opined that academic performance is not a measure of moral uprightness. It is not always excellence in C.R.E that transmits moral uprightness. The participant added that when dealing with summative and formative assessment evaluations, teachers should examine how much the learner knows about morals or whether the learner lives morally upright. He further claimed that;

> "The syllabus of C.R.E. does not bring out what is expected. The schools will talk about examined schools and schools of life. Those who pass here and fail out there. This one is about cognitive skills; the other one is about life. Even the sustaining or sustained behaviour can be sustained for a period, and the learner may change."

4.2.3 Discussion of lived experiences of D2 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation.

It was established that academic performance is not a measure of moral uprightness, nor is it a measure of success in life. Participant D2 points out a distinction between school life and School of life. This dichotomy disintegrates success from moral achievement and redacts it to cognitive success. The participant reflects on the Philosophy of holistic education and lifelong learning. According to the School of Life principle, education is not preparation for life but life itself (Dewey 1910). The participant is an outright Deweyian

Pragmatist and a proponent of Ivan Illich's ideals of education. The participant is also keen on the tripartite dimensions of learning: cognitive, affective and behavioural. However, the participants note that the normative approach to C.R.E in Kenya is not being implemented as expected, so it is ineffective.

The perspective presented by Participant D2 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment in CRE aligns with the broader discourse on the limitations of traditional educational metrics in capturing the holistic development of individuals. Dewey's (1910) philosophy of holistic education and lifelong learning, as mentioned by Participant D2, emphasizes that education is not merely a preparation for life but life itself. This aligns with the critique from scholars like Freire (1970), who argued against an education system that reduces learning to a passive preparation for future success. The recognition of education as a dynamic, continuous process resonates with the assertion that academic performance alone does not measure moral uprightness or overall success in life.

Additionally, the participant's endorsement of Ivan Illich's ideals of education, which often question institutionalized forms of learning, echoes the critiques of the mainstream education system. Illich (1971) argued in "Deschooling Society" that institutionalized education often hinders genuine learning and personal development. The participant's advocacy for a distinction between "school life" and the "School of Life" aligns with Illich's skepticism toward conventional educational structures and his emphasis on self-directed learning and pursuing knowledge beyond formal institutions.

Moreover, the participant's emphasis on the tripartite dimensions of learning—cognitive, affective, and behavioural—coincides with contemporary educational theories. Dewey

(1897) emphasized the importance of incorporating all aspects of experience into the educational process. Similarly, contemporary scholars like Darnell et al. (2019) have discussed the need for a more comprehensive understanding of moral education, encompassing cognitive aspects and affective and behavioural dimensions. Recognizing that moral education involves emotional and behavioural aspects alongside cognitive understanding aligns with a more comprehensive and integrated approach to character formation.

In contrast, the participant notes that the normative approach to CRE in Kenya is ineffective, implying a disconnection between educational policies and actual practices. This discrepancy highlights the challenges in translating educational ideals into practical, effective strategies for moral education. It is consistent with Dow's (1998) emphasis on aligning educational philosophy with instructional practices to achieve the desired outcomes. Critiquing the ineffective normative approach also raises questions about the broader educational system and the need for reforms to bridge the gap between policy intentions and classroom realities.

4.2.4 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of D 2 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation

The responses by D2 seem to appeal to a holistic approach toward life in which lived experiences have a continuum of practice and assessment. His allusion to the school of life as an exam implies that his ontological conception of the exam as part of life and life itself profiles examinations as positive experiences in moral education for character formation.

In each of his propositions, the participant brackets out the prejudice and biases against exams; neither does he absolutize exams as a moral process; he instead modifies the antithesis by appealing to both formative and summative assessment in CRE.

Participant D2 is a Roman Catholic priest and a formatter in a catholic secondary school. His approach to CRE education is a compendium of his experiences as an individual and a church servant. Probing questions revealed that the participants reflected on what they went through and how they are being instilled in the youths. For instance, he indicates that among other methods of moral formation, there are spiritual exercises, observation, and counseling, among others.

4.2.5 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation and its effectiveness.

The practising teachers interviewed on formative and summative assessments of CRE on moral education for character formation had two opinions. Among them, a group valued CRE being examined on moral education for character formation; however, others disagreed. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows:

Participant T1: CRE has to be examined to evaluate the mastery level of the content and its effectiveness. However, it is largely anchored from the cognitive point of view. Participant T1 stated;

> "My mother used to teach me good morals and evaluated them through observing our habits and behaviours, which is contrary to 21st-century parents who are too busy."

Teachers have an obligation to teach C.R.E. and examine it dualistically in terms of morals and knowledge. In most cases, learners who perform well in C.R.E. are considered morally upright.

Participant T2: C.R.E helps learners to understand the moral concepts taught; it trains the mind on the need for moral conscience, enabling learners to make morally right decisions. Participant T2 further stated that;

> "If not examined, it might lead to moral decline among learners since they won't struggle to master the moral aspects that shape their future life and -it will not be treated with the seriousness it deserves, hence moral deterioration. If not examined, then there should be an alternative, like introducing ethics as a subject in class and life skills with appropriate approaches to strengthen them."

Participant T3: to bring up formidable learners and morally upright people, C.R.E should be examined; question C in C.R.E orients learners to moral lessons learned; in that way, learners can reflect on the moral lesson from the questions and even moral lessons learned from C.R.E classes. In so doing, learners make the right judgments and become responsible citizens. T3 further added that if C.R.E is not examined in moral education for character formation, learners will not take it seriously, and it will be the root cause of all evil in society, as there will be no general caution for the next generation.

Participant T4: anything not examined will mostly not be considered a priority; not examining C.R.E. will worsen moral education for character formation. Assessing C.R.E makes learners to be committed to the subject, resulting in a moral understanding of the content.

Participant T5: C.R.E helps learners to acquire moral qualities being taught, such as honesty, courage, and faithfulness and apply them in their daily life; question C in C.R.E every question demands the learners to give the moral aspects acquired in a given situation, for instance, *good moral lessons learned from leadership in Israel and also good ideas one learned after moral lessons.*

Participant T6: examining C.R.E on moral education for character formation is important. If it is not examined, learners will take it as less important and won't take much of their time to master the content, especially the moral content, which orients learners to good characters and habits.

Participant T7: C.R.E. should not be examined on moral education for character formation since learners won't be affected much. Character is based on what an individual sees, not what is on the paper (written in exams). *Not all students who score highly in CRE are morally upright; it should be based on observation to determine their character.*

Participant T8: C.R.E should not be examined for moral purposes, but for exam purposes, it has to. Moral education for character formation requires support from the parents and pastors but not examination.

Participant T9: C.R.E. should remain examinable since it helps to nurture learners' habits and characters through moral lessons. Also, it will be difficult to teach the subject since both teachers and learners will not be interested in it. Take the example of physical education and life skill subjects in the 8.4.4 education system; it is not treated with the seriousness it deserves.

Participant T10: It is important to examine CRE on moral education for character formation because learners will take it as a less important subject when not examined and won't take much time to master the content, especially on the moral content, which inducts learners to good characters and habits.

Participant T11: C.R.E. should remain examinable since it helps nurture learners' habits and characters through moral lessons. Also, it will be difficult to teach the subject since both teachers and learners will not be interested in it.

4.2.6 Discussion of lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation

It was established that there are mixed reactions to assessing C.R.E. on moral education for character formation. Those of the idea that C.R.E should not be examined for character formation asserted that *"-not all students who score highly in CRE are morally upright. It should be based on observation to determine their character" (T7) and "... it shouldn't be examined for a moral purpose, but for exam purposes it has to" (T8).* The study by Momanyi (2015) demonstrated that many learners chose to take CRE subjects for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) as a boost in their performance. The study further showed that most students with a positive attitude concerning the CRE subject were not ready to take it up later in their careers. Thus, Momanyi (2015) supports teachers who feel that CRE doesn't need to be examined for it to contribute to character formation. However, the hypothetical C.R.E inclusiveness is superficial, despite the Secondary C.R.E examinations and Syllabus's‟ general objective to help learners develop an awareness of their negative attitudes and promote behaviour change. However, in training, these things

have not been effective, and numerous Kenyan studies reveal that school leavers exit the system with none of those critical thinking skills that C.R.E subject claims to promote and no ability to make considerable moral choices or internalize socially acceptable behaviour Munene, (2016).

The implication is that the academic examination aspect of C.R.E seems to be more amplified to the cognitive domain at the expense of moral and spiritual tangents, which is one of the goals of teaching C.R.E. Student behaviour appears to remain uninfluenced by C.R.E. This is evidenced by rising numbers of school strikes and protests destroying school property; substance abuse has also increased, contributing to the rise of indiscipline.

The other nine participants opined that C.R.E. should be examined in terms of moral education for character formation. They emphasized that if C.R.E. is not examined, it will not be taken with the seriousness it deserves.

The study findings are very similar to those of Cochran (2014), who revealed that students chose religious studies because they could score high in the subject and attain overall grades (Cochran, 2014). The study further showed that students did not want to study the C.R.E subject because they thought they would learn from churches during worshipping. Consequently, if C.R.E. is not examined, students will not attach any seriousness to it. Since they only value it as a subject that boosts their grades.

The status of C.R.E. positively impacts people by helping them live together in harmony, reducing conflict and looking for resolutions, and increasing student mentorships, motivation, and appreciation of good moral values**.** Not being examined means students

will drop it and keep away from the content espoused in it; thus, the impact of CR.E cannot be felt**.**

The view that learners won't take C.R.E. seriously without exams indicates activated laxity on both the part of the participant and possibly their learners. While C.R.E. is an academic subject, an aspect of moralization transcends evaluation and standardized tests. The fear seems ingrained in most participants (T1. T2, T3, T4. T5. T6, T9, T10, T11). A standardized outcome is reminiscent of capital philosophy and a market-oriented view of education that looks forward to products instead of lifelong moral education, within and outside exams set up.

The divergent opinions among participants regarding the examination of C.R.E for character formation reflect broader debates within educational philosophy. Those arguing against examining C.R.E for moral education, asserting that not all high scorers are morally upright, align with critical perspectives on the limitations of traditional assessments in capturing holistic development. The study by Momanyi (2015), which found that learners often choose C.R.E. to boost their exam performance without intending to pursue it further, echoes the concerns raised by the participants. This resonates with broader discussions on the instrumentalization of education, where subjects are chosen primarily for their impact on grades rather than a genuine interest in the subject matter (Cochran, 2014).

The critique that the academic examination aspect of C.R.E tends to amplify the cognitive domain at the expense of moral and spiritual dimensions aligns with philosophical discussions on the reductionism inherent in standardized testing. Scholars like Dewey (1897) and Freire (1970) have criticized educational systems that prioritize rote

memorization and regurgitation over deeper understanding and transformative learning. The argument that student behaviour remains uninfluenced by C.R.E, as evidenced by rising incidents of indiscipline, echoes concerns about the efficacy of traditional educational approaches in fostering moral development.

On the other hand, participants who emphasize the examination of C.R.E for moral education highlight the pragmatic view that students may not take the subject seriously without exams. This stance aligns with the utilitarian perspective that students often prioritize subjects that contribute to their grades. Cochran's (2014) study found that students chose religious studies for their potential to boost grades, which reinforces this viewpoint. The fear that learners won't take C.R.E. seriously without exams reflects a concern about the instrumentalization of education and the impact of exam-centric approaches on students' attitudes toward subjects.

The study's findings, indicating that the status of C.R.E positively impacts harmony and moral values, add a practical dimension to the discussion. The argument that not examining C.R.E may lead to a drop in student interest and the subsequent loss of its positive impact resonates with the broader question of balancing academic rigour with the promotion of moral and ethical values. However, this viewpoint also questions the underlying motivations for students' engagement with C.R.E—whether a genuine interest in moral education or a strategic move for academic success drives it.

The debate on whether C.R.E. should be examined for moral education underscores fundamental tensions within education systems. It reflects the ongoing struggle to balance the need for standardized assessments with the imperative to foster holistic development,

including moral and character formation. The participants' perspectives resonate with broader discussions on the instrumentalization of education, the limitations of traditional assessments, and the challenges in integrating moral education into the academic framework. The nuanced exploration of these issues calls for reevaluating educational paradigms to ensure a more comprehensive approach that nurtures cognitive and moral development.

4.2.7 Critical evaluation of the lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of formative and summative assessment of CRE on moral education for character formation

Apart from participant T7 and participant T8, the rest of the participants point out that it is necessary to examine C.R.E. The reasons forwarded range from motivational factors, moral significance of the examination, and cognitive and moral reasoning aspects. According to curriculum and instructional experts, an educational experience begins with design and ends with assessment. The only way to determine the success of a pedagogical experience is through formative and summative assessment. The affirmation of assessment indicates reflection and objective bracketing of pedagogy for moral aims. On the other hand, participant T7 and Participant T8 are concerned with the antithesis of examination because of its superficiality and lack of assurance that any successful student is morally upright. According to participant T8, C.R.E. should not be examined for moral purposes but for exam purposes.

4.2.8 Lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, and D4 on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation

The participants' anecdotal reports are presented below.

Participant D1, non-examinable subjects are ineffective for moral education for character formation because they are not taken seriously. Subjects like life skills are replaced with examinable subjects such as math.

Participant D2 is not effective since it is not examined; a subject that is not examined is not taken seriously, and it is just assigned to other subjects. To some extent, you can find guidance and counseling emphasized due to some reasons or due to indiscipline cases.

Participant D3 subjects such as physical education life skills are often replaced with examinable subjects. Hence, they have no impact on moral education for character formation.

Participant D4 examinable subjects have no place for moral education for character formation since students and teachers do not take them seriously. They will be taken seriously if they are made examinable and compulsory to some extent.

4.2.9 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation

The participants' anecdotal reports are presented below.

Participant T1: Life skills and physical education are not examinable and, therefore, are not taken skills for moral education for character formation.

Participant T2: Life skills are not taken seriously and are often replaced with science subjects.

Participant T3: Non-examinable subjects are given less time, which does not warrant moral values.

Participant T4: Life skills lessons are allocated a few lessons that cannot influence moral principles.

Participant T5: Non-examinable subjects such as Physical education and life skills are meant to impart moral values, yet there are no trained experts to facilitate them; hence, they have less impact.

Participant T6: Most lessons for non-examinable subjects are not taken seriously. Sometimes, they are not taught, or they are not attended to. Therefore, they do not influence moral education.

Participant T7: Sometimes, most lessons for non-examinable subjects are assigned to class teachers who sometimes do not attend them, hence creating less impact moral influence.

Participant T8: they are given less time, for instance, 40 minutes, which impacts less moral education for character formation.

Participant T9: they are not attached to specific teachers, and those assigned are not experts. Therefore, the government and other stakeholders should train experts in managing the subjects to enhance moral education for character formation.

Participant T10: They are ineffective since no trained teachers and materials for the subjects are unavailable.

Participant T11: They are ineffective since there are no clear procedures for the subjects, and the participant recommended that teachers be trained to handle the subjects with the tune of moral aspects.

4.2.10 Discussion of lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, D4 and T1-T11 on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation

It was established that most participants agree that non-examinable subjects are ineffective for moral education and character formation, so three possible interpretations are probable. First, the theory of compensation is at work; second, the activated cognitive philosophy of teaching; third, intentionality in moral education. The theory of compensation looks at moral education and its assessment as an oscillation between pedagogical input and output. For every input, there must be an output, which means learners learn to receive the results of their learning instead of learning for its own sake. Teachers also teach and expect the output of teaching. Output in pedagogy can either be immediately or extended. In the regular teaching process, cognitive outputs tend to be immediate and moral outputs are extended because they require habituation. Under normal circumstances, immediate output is psychologically preferred by both learners and teachers. Hence, the view that non-examinable subjects are not taken seriously and, by extension, ‘should not be taken seriously.’ While the proposition “not taken seriously’’ is descriptive, the point of correction is on the normative side of “should not seriously.” The researcher calls for a paradigm shift towards a viewpoint that entertains extended education output.

The preference for the cognitive philosophy of teaching is an indicator of traditional education. For instance, essentialism and perennialism require absorbing knowledge on the spot and transmitting teaching instead of facilitation and formation. These philosophical worldviews are hard to reconstruct, especially if assimilated psychologically by teachers and learners.

The third explanation alludes to the volitional aspects of teaching and learning. Volition explains the will to power and the desire to implement a course. Well-trained Teachers who have accepted dynamic teaching roles are reported to be flexible in shifting learners and colleagues from being unwilling to implement holistic moral education. The unwillingness is best explained by the first two reasons (Input-Output and Traditional Philosophy). However, the weaknesses are addressed by the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) and the entire CBC Prospects. This CBC is a paradigmatic curriculum favoring extended and immediate outcomes and hinges on Progressive and pragmatic philosophies (Heto et al., 2020).

The discussion on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects for moral education brings to light a complex interplay of educational theories and philosophical perspectives. The notion that non-examinable subjects are ineffective for moral education, as indicated by most participants, reflects a broader discourse within educational philosophy.

One interpretation offered is the theory of compensation, which posits that the assessment of moral education oscillates between pedagogical input and output. This perspective suggests that learners, conditioned by traditional teaching approaches, tend to prioritize immediate cognitive outputs over the extended outputs required for moral development.

This aligns with critiques of education systems that heavily emphasize testing and immediate results, often neglecting the cultivation of moral virtues and habits (Dewey, 1897; Freire, 1970). The call for a paradigm shift towards valuing extended education outputs is a progressive stance that resonates with more contemporary educational philosophies advocating holistic development (Heto et al., 2020).

The preference for the cognitive philosophy of teaching, rooted in essentialism and perennialism, reflects the challenges of reconstructing deeply ingrained educational paradigms. Scholars like John Dewey (1897) and Paulo Freire (1970) have long argued against traditional teaching methods focusing solely on transmitting knowledge without facilitating deeper understanding and critical thinking. The resistance to change observed among teachers and learners is a common challenge in educational reform efforts (Gardiner, 2012). Overcoming this resistance requires intentionally shifting towards more progressive and student-centered approaches.

The third interpretation introduces the concept of volition, emphasizing the will to power and the desire to implement a course. This aligns with the idea that teacher attitudes and commitment play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of moral education (Kristjánsson et al., 2006). Scholars have explored the impact of teacher beliefs and values on their teaching practices, suggesting that well-trained and motivated teachers are more likely to successfully implement holistic moral education (Eikeland, 2008). The role of volition in teaching and learning highlights the need for professional development that fosters pedagogical skills and a commitment to moral and character formation.

The discussion on the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects for moral education reflects the multifaceted nature of educational systems and philosophies. The tensions between immediate cognitive outputs, traditional teaching philosophies, and the volition of teachers underscore the challenges in promoting holistic moral development within current educational frameworks. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to shift educational paradigms, empower teachers with the necessary skills and values, and reevaluate the assessment practices that may hinder the cultivation of moral virtues in learners.

4.2.11 Critical evaluation of lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, D4 and T1-T11 on the effectiveness of non –examinable subjects on moral education for character formation

The participants operate from a homogeneous worldview (ontology) in which a collective preference for cognitive education seems to exist. Whether by design or accidental, the phenomenological implication is the failure to bracket the 'cognitive belief' from teaching and learning. From the Eudaimotive tangent, there is an obvious breach of the principle of Excellence. Happiness and perfection in education are only achieved through education for its own sake and in its perfection. Cognitive bias closes the doors of further progression toward education for moral happiness.

4.2.12 Lived experience of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.

The study sought to find out the strategies in school for character formation among the learners. Participants were asked to mention the strategies used at school for character formation. They identified strategies such as the school culture(D2), punishment T9,

rewards (T11), guiding and counseling (T1, T3,T4, T5,T7, T8,T9, T10 and T11), human consciousness (D2), spiritual direction(D2), motivational talks (D1, D2 and D3), role modeling (T1), mentorship programs (D1 and D2), sacrament of confession and reconciliation D2, use of peer groups D2, teaching religious values (D2), pastoral care (T6) and (T10), clubs and societies (T3), debates (D1), games and sports (T3), inviting guest speakers (D1), going for benchmarking in other schools (D1), (D2) and (D3), parental meetings, (T1,T7), Class Meetings (T7), school rules (T2) Personal experiences (T4, T5), Leadership (D2, T6) , life skills (T1).

The findings of the study concur with Muthamba's (2017) strategies, which comprised accessing guidance and counselling services in schools, religious gatherings, life skills teachings, and involvement in communal services. However, the findings indicated that the strategies are not proactive and no seriousness is attached to moral education for character formation. The findings are also similar to those of Stephen (2021), who identified various strategies for moral education in Kenya. The strategies included Religious Education, Social Education Ethics, Life skill education, Guidance and counselling approach, Infusion and Integration, school rules and regulations, participation in Clubs and Societies, Charitable organizations, and voluntary community service. However, he pointed out that the strategies have faced numerous implementation challenges. He suggested that the government should develop a legal framework for implementing moral education for character formation.

4.2.13 Discussion of the lived experience of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.

It was established that out of 13 strategies as listed in section 4.2.12, only three are most likely to engage students at their existential level: class meetings, student leadership, clubs and societies. These three strategies allow students to express themselves more than the other ten top-down strategies. The top-down model of moral education tends to be more authoritarian, based on adult perspectives and less subjective. The phenomenological approach to morality calls for a more subjective and situational orientation to moralization. From a pedagogical perspective, moral education in Kenya is more teacher-centered than learner-centred, yet learners form moral habits more with each other than with teachers. Excessive presence of teachers in moral education is likely to lead to superficial assimilation of moral values, which are simultaneously temporary. Too much presence of adults in children's lives leads to artificial behaviours and excessive conventionalism (Kohlberg, Bandura).

The most popular strategy outside academics and religious education is guidance and counselling. This strategy presumes the authority of a teacher as a socializer and representative of wider society. It is not clear whether the counselling process is predominantly done by professional counsellors in school or regular teachers who are not sufficiently trained in guidance and counselling. Counselling for moral aims transcends conventional counselling rules that professional and regular counsellors might consider out of order, such as proactive counselling and metacognitive counselling.

In the discussion on strategies for moral education, the tension between top-down, authoritarian approaches and more student-centric, subjective methodologies becomes

evident. The acknowledgement that class meetings, student leadership, clubs, and societies are more likely to engage students at their existential level reflects the need for a more phenomenological approach to morality (Dewey, 1916; Bandura, 1977). Scholars such as John Dewey and Albert Bandura have emphasized the importance of experiential learning and student engagement in the moral development process. Dewey, in his seminal work "Democracy and Education," argued for an education that is life itself, echoing the sentiment that learning should extend beyond the confines of the classroom (Dewey, 1916). Bandura's social learning theory also underscores the influence of peer interactions on moral development (Bandura, 1977). The critique of the top-down model aligns with contemporary educational philosophies that advocate for learner-centered approaches.

On the other hand, the prevalence of guidance and counselling as a popular strategy indicates a reliance on authoritative figures, possibly teachers, as moral guides. This aligns with the views of scholars like Lawrence Kohlberg, who emphasized the role of authority figures in moral development (Kohlberg, 1971). However, the discussion raises questions about the qualifications of those conducting counselling for moral aims, as the conventional counselling rules might need adjustments. The tension between authoritative guidance and more participatory, student-engaged approaches highlights the ongoing struggle within education systems to find a balance between tradition and progressive pedagogies. A shift towards a more balanced and inclusive approach, incorporating both authoritative guidance and student engagement, seems imperative for effective moral education for character formation.

In this context, the inclusion of guidance and counselling in moral education strategies draws attention to the role of authoritative figures, aligning with Kohlberg's stages of moral

development, where external authority plays a crucial role in shaping moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1971). However, the discussion also underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of counselling for moral aims, challenging conventional counselling rules. The tension between authoritative guidance and participatory, student-engaged approaches reflects the broader educational discourse on finding a balance between traditional and progressive pedagogies (Dewey, 1916; Kohlberg, 1971). Heto et al. (2020) emphasizes extended outcomes and hinge on progressive and pragmatic philosophies (Biesta, 2010); there is a growing recognition of the need to adapt counselling approaches to suit the complexities of moral education in diverse educational settings.

4.2.14 Critical evaluation of the lived experience of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the strategies in school for moral education for character formation.

The majority of the participants appeal to the transmission model as the basis of their strategies. Transmission subsumes that authority can influence the learners' morals. This state of affairs leads to a breach of subjectivity, freedom and active transformation. The suffocation of subjectivity and freedom interfere with phenomenological existence and the natural inclination of eudaimonia happiness. Regarding eudaimonia, happiness is only achieved when the moral agent acts without coercion and can appraise his /her improvement.

4.2.15 Lived experiences of D1, D2, D3 and D4 on the effectiveness of the strategies in schools for moral education for character formation

Participant D1 noted that guidance and counselling have become more effective as disciplinary measures since corporal punishment was banned in schools. These methods

offer an alternative to traditional punitive approaches, which were once used to deter repeat offences among students. Although guidance and counselling are usually implemented after misconduct has been identified, they have shown significant benefits in addressing student behaviour.

Participant D2: says they are effective, though some contribute negatively; for instance, in sports such as rugby, students access drugs and believe it gives them the energy to play, which imparts negative attitudes and behaviours.

Participant D3: some approaches are effective, but not all of them are. The participant argued that academic issues are given more emphasis at the expense of moral values. Further, the participant posited that the strategies are handy, especially guidance and counselling when a problem has been identified. It's on the same note learners are referred to guidance and counselling.

Participant D4 expressed that moral education can only be effective if it is approached and implemented correctly. Despite the numerous strategies available in schools, the real challenge is executing them effectively. The participant further observed that schools often prioritize academic knowledge over moral development, which limits the time dedicated to implementing moral strategies.

4.2.16 Lived experiences of T1-T11 on the effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation

Participants T1-T11 evaluated various school strategies for moral education and character formation. They identified three approaches as especially impactful in engaging students on a deeper, existential level: class meetings, student leadership roles, and participation in clubs and societies. These methods were considered more effective due to their ability to

enhance student involvement and engagement by offering opportunities for active participation in their moral growth rather than relying on passive or top-down models. The participants' anecdotal reports are presented below.

Participant T1: The strategies are effective because they have facilitated and brought up learners with good character behaviours. However, they are given less time or emphasis.

Participant 2: They are effective if implemented correctly, and this depends on the policies that are in place by the implementers. Implementation and actualization depend on leaders of goodwill.

Participant 3: They are not effective because they are misplaced priorities (emphasis is on passing exams and individual performance).

Participant 4: They are effective when approached in the proper manner.

Participant 5: The strategies are effective when handled by professionals. For instance, professional counsellors have been able to shape the characters of some learners after taking them through several sessions. Despite the case, immoral behaviours are on the rise in schools due to numerous factors such as drug abuse, the permissiveness of society, poor parenting coupled with single parenthood, lack of role models and westernization, among others.

Participant 6: Guidance and counselling, and punishment seem to be effective. Punishment helps to deter learners from repeating mistakes; the current society is exposed to vices such as drug abuse, which have a great negative influence on discipline in school. To address the

issue of punishment effectively, the government is handy by instituting control measures on drug production in society and advertisements on social media.

Participant 7: They will only become effective when stakeholders come together to implement and actualize them. Society is changing quickly, and what is moral today might not be moral to the next generation. Therefore, guest speakers with a wide range of experience should be invited to talk to students. On the other hand, students should constantly be reminded of matters concerning morals as often as possible.

Participant 8: They are effective because moral principles are part of the discussion in guidance and counselling. To be sincere, the strategies will be more effective if all stakeholders play their roles. For instance, parents should play a role in raising morally upright children. In doing so, the school will have a humble time perpetuating moral principles. However, if one of the stakeholders fails, the whole process will be a mess.

Participant 9: They are effective, but they need improvement. For example, the same methods used during our time are still used among the current learners. Actually, there is a need to adopt the traditional strategies used by our grandmothers to instil morals in the current generations. Also, parents should not only rely on the school to guide their children on morals; instead, they should be taught the importance of bringing up children with good moral values in society.

Participant 10: The strategies are ineffective and need the support of other moral groups, such as pastors, parents and the community. Participant 10 further stated that;

> "They are not working; they are there, but their implementation is not there or usually runs short; we build on physical speech, character and academic

> formation, which are the four pillars of development. Even sports help to release tension. Football working a team brings out teamwork and rejects selfishness."

Due to their ineffectiveness, there is an increase in moral vices in schools, such as devil worshippers, among other immoral vices.

Participant 11: Only a few are effective. Most of them are on paper and are emphasized in case of an outbreak of an immoral tendency in schools or society.

4.2.17 Discussion of the lived experiences of D1-D4 and T1-T11 on the Effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation

It was established that guidance and counselling are the most effective approaches (D1, D3, T5, T6 and T8). The participants did not provide hard or solid evidence of the assessment that led to such conclusions. Instead, participants narrated anecdotal examples of students who said they had improved in discipline. These anecdotal examples are not necessarily replicas of the student's behaviour in the schools visited; neither can they be applied to third-party learners' sources. Historically, Punishment has been used to correct unwanted behaviour in any given society. They have worked, and they still work, especially in extreme cases. In an average school setup, immoralities usually are little activities that learners engage in that may not warrant punishment, yet they surmount hardened immoral dispositions in the long term.

While guidance counselling is the most mentioned strategy, participants indicated that normal traditional counselling strategies, which are more reactive, were applied. For ideal 21st-century counselling, there is a need for the counsellor to be guided by progressive, integrated, proactive and inclusive frameworks. This framework leads to effective

counselling strategies for 21st-century moral education. Failure to address the effectiveness of the strategies on moral education will likely lead to moral collapse and subsequent dysfunctions in social structures.

Many teachers subsequently express interest in more holistic strategies integrating moral education across subjects and experiences (Anam et al., 2019). This includes dilemmas, child-centered pedagogy, democratic school governance, co-curricular activities, service learning, peer modelling, and engaged community partnerships. Embodying moral ideals in day-to-day student experiences and relationships is viewed as crucial. As Cheng et al. (2021) summarize, teachers realize that “character and values are caught, not taught. The informal and hidden curriculum must align with the stated values in the formal curriculum. Scholars reinforce this need for a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to moral education.

However, teachers also note substantial barriers to implementing holistic approaches, including academic pressures, large classes, limited resources, and low prioritization of character development in policy versus exam performance (Simatwa, 2012). Despite valuing comprehensive moral education, teachers report struggling to integrate it into practice. This reflects a critical gap between ideals and school realities that must be addressed through improved support.

Linked to the above implementation barriers, studies find many teachers lack training in ethical instruction and approaches to facilitate character growth (Fafunwa & Aisiku, 2022). They rely mainly on traditional vocational and academic content teaching without pedagogical strategies to develop values. As Hidayati (2011) concludes, "The teacher merely pays lip service to the character development of the learners. This suggests a need

for enhanced pre-service and in-service professional development focused on philosophy, methods and assessment of moral education (Carbone, 2023). Equipping teachers to move beyond transmissive pedagogy and integrate values acquisition across diverse learning experiences is critical for effectiveness. Additionally, as Constantinescu & Dascalu (2021) discuss, teachers must be supported to embody the moral qualities they are meant to instil in students through mentoring and ongoing ethical training. Teacher conduct serves as a powerful moral model.

Based on this explication, it is recommended that value acquisition be made an explicit goal across policies and inspection frameworks to prioritize character development aims. Providing curriculum guidelines and models for embedding ethics instruction across diverse subjects can help facilitate implementation. Additionally, offering professional development focused on the philosophy and psychology of moral growth is needed to equip teachers with strategies that move beyond rote knowledge transmission. Specific training in discussion facilitation, use of moral dilemmas, and service learning would build teacher capacity for active student-centred learning. Fostering teacher self-reflection further enhances their ability to serve as moral role models through their conduct. Teachers can shift from didactic teaching to facilitating students' moral learning and character development with appropriate training and support. However, this requires addressing systemic resource barriers and prioritizing character education. Further research should explore the impacts of specific interventions on enhancing students' ethical thinking skills and behaviour. A holistic approach to moral education that engages both teachers and the broader school culture can fulfil the aims of nurturing ethical citizenship.

4.2.18 Critical evaluation of lived experiences of D1, D2, D3, D4 and T1-T11 on the Effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation

One of the interviewed participants revealed that the approaches are inactive and their implementations are wanting. His response states,

> **"***They are not working; they are there, but their implementation is not there or usually runs short; here, we build on physical speech, character, and academic formation are the four pillars of development. Even sports help to release tension. Football working a team brings out teamwork and rejects selfishness."*

On the other hand, other participants agreed that guiding, counselling and corporal punishment are effective approaches, but the challenge is that punishment is legally forbidden. Their response stated that

> "G*uiding and counselling is effective where caning is not allowed. Punishment helps to prevent the pupils from repeating the same. They are effective though some contribute negatively, e.g., through sports like rugby, students access drugs and believe it gives the energy to play, this imparts negative attitudes and values"*.

Other participants felt that the effectiveness of the strategies was a bit wanting, and in responding to that question, they gave the following Thoughts:

> "*Like once in a while, we have professionals in pastoral programs; there are no frequency only that, to some extent, they matter, when you take them out in matters of guide and counselling, we have some differences."*

Regarding the effectiveness of the strategies, out of 15 participants who gave their thoughts, 11 teachers accepted that strategies have been effective, and four opposed the idea of their effectiveness.

These findings concur with the findings by Muthamba (2017), who said that CRE teaching strategies applied by the CRE teachers, such as the lecturing method, discussion method

and project work method, determined change of behaviour and contributed to learner's moral development, religious and spiritual character formation. These findings differ from the findings by Moore & Kuol (2007), who found that teaching methods do not positively impact students‟ behaviour change. Thus, the researcher agrees with the findings from the minority teachers who observed that the listed strategies are ineffective.

The three categories of appraisals indicate that moral strategies are not effective at all (category one), Mixed reaction to counselling (category two) and punishment-oriented appraisers (category three). Category one exhibits nihilist tendencies, which does not lead to excellence and finality of eudaimonia. Category two reveals actual lived experiences, and they are able to contextualize the effectiveness of the strategies from their practice. The belief that counselling can be done better is typical of eudaimonia Excellency; Category 3 is purely deontologist and locates experience and happiness at the level of enforcing duty through punishment, yet the effectiveness of corporal punishment, even if it was legal, does not evoke free assimilation on happiness.

4.2.19 Gaps retrieved from the lived experiences of the participants

In summary, several gaps were identified when analyzing teachers' lived experiences. These gaps include: Lived experience disconnected from national educational policies and frameworks for moral education, teachers are masters of content rather than moral methods, moral education for character education is confined to the classroom, teachers' views on moral education for character education are limited to personal experiences without national guidelines and policies, the study of C.R.E for cognitive skills and titrated

moral lessons (the pursuit of formative assessment as part of cumulative assessment as part of cumulative achievement, three out of thirteen moral education for character education strategies have a bottom-up approach, moral education for character education uses reactive guidance procedures without proactive and metacognitive guidance, the addressed effectiveness of guidance and punishment in moral character education is not supported by evidence or rubrics, moral character education is based on a generalization of anecdotal evidence, and moral character education lacks a holistic and humanizing moral pedagogical orientation.

The gaps identified make it clear that there is a significant gap between the lived experience of moral education in schools and the wider national education policies and frameworks. A key issue is the lack of coherent national policies aligned with the role of teachers and parents in character education and the lack of a comprehensive approach to the effective implementation of moral education. Thus, while teachers are well-versed in subject content, they often lack training in moral pedagogy and methods necessary to promote character education, which limits their ability to effectively apply moral education beyond theoretical instruction. Furthermore, moral education remains confined to the classroom and fails to include other agents of moralization, such as family, community, and religious organizations, where character education could be reinforced.

This discrepancy is exacerbated by teachers' individual perspectives on moral education, which tend to be oriented toward personal values rather than a nationally consistent approach to character education. These gaps underscore the need for a national policy that supports a collaborative, structured approach to moral education that can unify the efforts of teachers, parents, and communities to achieve lasting impact.

Furthermore, current approaches to moral education are inappropriate as they are reactive. For example, counselling and punishment are the main strategies in moral education. Moreover, there were no documented records or reliable checklists to show how effective the strategies are in building students' character. In addition, only three of the thirteen identified strategies in moral education are bottom-up, so moral education is generally top-down because teachers and students have little control over how it is taught and learned. The lack of formative assessments and the availability of moral education data based on anecdotal evidence undermine the effectiveness of moral education because critical approaches are not aligned with actual outcomes. Due to the lack of general metacognitive guidance and comprehensive, person-centred approaches to teaching, moral education cannot address the values and thinking skills that define character. These gaps call for educational policies that emphasise structured approaches in moral education, evidence-based practices, and holistic approaches for character development in and out of school.

4.3 Research objective 3: effective approaches on moral education for character formation

This objective begins with a reflection on the gaps identified in the lived experience of teachers. The gaps collectively point out the need for effective approaches on moral education for character formation. On the way forward, this study adopts the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia and phenomenological theory as the effective approaches on moral education for character formation because the theories are holistic; they emphasize structured approaches such as evidence-based practices, values-based approach, a reflective approach, among others on the pursuit of virtue and happiness as an ideal purpose of moral education for character formation in and out of school.

This objective attempts to answer the third research question: What are the effective approaches to moral education for character formation? In discussing the above questions, this section has the following subheadings: Philosophical Foundations as effective approaches to moral education for character formation: Appeal to phenomenological theory and Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia, Phenomenological theory and moral education: A philosophical lens, Intentionality and moral engagement, suspension of judgment (Epoché) and moral reflection, Aristotelian eudaimonia: The role of virtue in character formation, virtue and habituation, the doctrine of the mean, subjectivity and objectivity, action and reflection, moral identity formation, the way forward on moral education for character formation; dialogical learning, practical learning, holistic learning, experiential learning, integrated curriculum approach, virtue-based approach, Reflective approach.

4.3.1 Philosophical foundations as effective approaches to moral education for character formation: Appeal to phenomenological theory and Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia

Moral education for character formation in schools requires the approach of phenomenological theory and Aristotelian eudaimonia theory. The two philosophical foundations outline a new worldview that creates a coherent structure of moral education for character education. The phenomenological approach addressed here, with its emphasis on the concept of intentionality, shows how students purposefully engage with moral values through reflexivity and interaction with their world (Valavi et al., 2022). All that phenomenology allows teachers to do is create environments where learners seek norms and reflect on ethical issues through their practice.

Aristotelian eudaimonia provides a clear, appropriate function for human beings in relation to courage, justice, and temperance, among other things. Aristotle's theory of eudaimonia indicates that these virtues are cultivated through habituation, whereby a particular moral activity becomes second nature to a particular person (Paul, 2022). In this structural development, moral education is not just an idea about ethical knowledge to be passed on to children; it is also about children becoming ethical by always doing good. In combination, phenomenological reflection enhances students' moral analysis, while Aristotelian eudaimonia influences the creation of routines for practising virtues. Phenomenological theory and Aristotelian eudaimonia are more paradigmatic when it comes to explaining moral education for character formation, for they promote reflective moral thinking and teach appropriate ethical action, which produces morally responsible and fully developed human beings.

4.3.2 Phenomenological theory and moral education: A philosophical lens

Edmund Husserl pioneered phenomenological theory, which analyzes human consciousness and existential experience. It aims to capture the view of the participants of reality and not construct a view about it based on other people's judgment. Intentionality, which is Husserl's central concept, is the thesis that every consciousness is the consciousness of something (Husserl, 1859-1938). This concept is vital in moral education, where students interact with moral values instead of moral reasoning. In addition, phenomenology also promotes an examination of students' experiences with moral ideas and ethical issues, pointing out that such experiences define those students' moral lives.

Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty further developed Husserl's phenomenology by focusing on the role of the body and context in experience (Heidegger, 2002). For instance, Merleau-Ponty pointed out how perception and the body act in moral worlds. Phenomenology also aids instructors in understanding the students' meaning horizon, hence increasing teaching engagement with moral concepts in the classroom. More than presenting abstract ethical values, it helps in thinking about personal ethical actions (Smith, 2005). This gives one a more realistic and holistic approach toward the formation of one's character as opposed to a mechanical method of building character.

4.3.3 Intentionality and Moral Engagement

According to phenomenology, individuals undergo moral teaching and struggle to digest morals. This is an active process where learners must deploy their experiences to think through moralities. This is done by having the students identify examples from such moral concepts as justice, responsibility, and empathy, thus trying to make sense of it (Churchill

and Wertz, 2003). In this way, moral values are better imparted to students as a result of the relationship developed between these concepts and the individual's knowledge.

The phenomenological approach poses a certain threat to the predefined education model within which moral education as a mere inculcation of values or norms. On the other hand, phenomenology suggests a process through which students participate in their development. The drive concept is that meaning is inherent in experience; thus, students are likely to understand ethical values if they are free to think, reason, and assess such values in the frame work of their experience (Silby, 1998). Therefore, their environments should be fashioned so that students are compelled to reflect on what they are doing, on issues going around society for questioning, on right or wrong things to be done. Students should not be told what is right or wrong, but they should be given chances to learn to question these as learners critically.

4.3.4 Suspension of Judgment (Epoché) and Moral Reflection

The concept of *epoché*, central to phenomenology, refers to the suspension of judgment, where individuals set aside their preconceived notions, biases, and habitual ways of thinking to gain a clearer, more objective understanding of experiences. For instance, when teaching moral education, epoché helps the students enter into moral decision-making and moral issues with an untainted perspective free from cultural, social, or religious conditioning (Robbins, 2006). This setting aside of prejudice promotes rationality; students are able to reason about morality rather than discern morality a priori. Philosophically, this resonates with the goal of moral education: to enable students to analyze their own and others' values and moral behaviour, develop their moral reasoning, and make moral

judgments. Epoché provides a setting that enables the student to become aware of moral dilemmas and respect more perspectives of ethical questions (Kemerling 2011). Simplifying this process increases moral sophistication while fostering conviction-based moral character instead of mindless adherence to societal norms. In doing so, such reflective capacities enable students to meet assumed moral dilemmas in the context of pluralism, thereby promoting ethical and reflective self-governance and social appreciation.

4.3.5 Aristotelian Eudaimonia: The Role of Virtue in Character Formation

Aristotle's theory of *eudaimonia* forms the core of his ethical philosophy, emphasizing human flourishing as the highest goal of life. *Eudaimonia* is often translated as "happiness," but Aristotle defines it more broadly as living a life of virtue in accordance with reason (Curren, 2016). In his work, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle posits that all human actions aim toward some perceived good, with *eudaimonia* being the ultimate good that gives life its purpose and meaning (Stephen 2021). Aristotle argues that to be in such a state, one has to lead a virtuous life, that is, to make rational and moral decisions. According to Aristotle's virtue ethics, virtues are the moral character in individuals that enable one to live a pleasant life and make the right choices. Such virtues include boldness, self-control, fairness, and the ability to use knowledge to make the right decision since they are learned behaviour (Stephen, 2021).

Aristotle is very categorical in that virtues are not inborn but developed through practice and occurrences, so moral training should steer people into such practices. In this way, the person gets trained to become courageous when he behaves courageously, temperate when he practices moderation or self-control, and just when he learns to be fair with his fellow

men. Ethical training is essential as it gives the surroundings in which people succeed and the information that allows their development in terms of virtues. Virtue is developed in moral education by practising it; thus, by exercising virtues, moral education leads to the striving and instantiation of eudaimonia (Lall, 2016). Consequently, Aristotle has it that character formation requires practice, reciprocal to the fact that people ought to be made to be good and develop to their full potential.

4.3.6 Virtue and Habituation

Aristotle's claim, “we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, and brave by doing brave actions,” underscores his belief that moral virtues are not innate but developed through practice. This principle of habituation is key to his philosophy of moral education. Aristotle raises objections against the Platonic idea that moral virtues can be taught as knowledge, in that virtues have to be ‘second nature,’ which are habits of deliberately chosen actions (Lai, 2016). A virtue, for Aristotle, is a quality that develops over time as an individual practices virtuous actions to become disposition.

In regard to moral education, this philosophy means that a teacher should not simply teach students about virtues. They have to prepare contexts that facilitate students’ virtuous actions in daily practice. Habits of the heart are works in progress, and through the practices of courage, justice, and moderation, students come to digest them as truths, which are traditions of their being(Stephen,2021). This emphasis on habituation aligns with the broader goal of moral education: to cultivate honest people who know what they need to avoid and what they ought to do and those who will do it in the first place. This one is critical for Aristotle in attaining the good life the ancient Greek philosopher conceived.

Eudaimonia is thus possible if people always choose the right things, shaping them into stable, virtuous persons (Bowditch, 2008). Therefore, the acquisition of character, which is formed by means of habituation, is the need for a worthwhile and satisfying moral life. In this regard, moral education shifts from programming the minds to programming moral beings.

4.3.7 The Doctrine of the Mean

Aristotle's *Doctrine of the Mean* is a central concept in his virtue ethics, which posits that moral virtues lie between extremes of excess and deficiency. For Aristotle, every virtue represents a balance between two vices: excess and deficiency. For example, courage is the virtuous mean between the extremes of rashness (excess) and cowardice (deficiency) (Nyabul, 2002). Similarly, temperance is the virtue between indulgence (excess) and insensibility (deficiency). The *Doctrine of the Mean* emphasizes that achieving moral virtue requires finding this balanced middle ground, allowing individuals to act appropriately according to the circumstances. For instance, courage is the mean state between the two vicious propensities: rashness, which is the extreme, and cowardice, which is the deficiency state. Likewise, temperance is the mean between greed, voraciousness (overabundance), and overload (insensitivity).

According to the Doctrine of the Mean, moral virtue is finding this middle ground and permitting a person to act according to the conditions in a society. This insight is especially valuable for moral education as the balanced approach is possibly the best way to proceed, rather than attempting to stick to a set of rules. Often, it becomes difficult for students to

discern right and wrong because of the differentiated concept of prohibitions, especially the difference between excess and deficiency and the virtues, where the goal is to achieve the mean. This approach fosters critical thinking and self-metacognition because students must analyze their actions to attain virtue.

Applying the Doctrine of the Mean helps educators provide students with a means of striking a moral compass. This approach is also consistent with phenomenological philosophical paradigms of moral education, which are based on reflection, self-awareness, and intentional awareness. Through self-reflection and meta-cognition, students of the subject gain the element of praxis or practical wisdom and ethical judgment, according to Boss (2005). Finally, by means of Aristotle's integrative wheel, we promote the interpretation that morality is more complex and contextual than formal and dogmatic.

4.3.9 Subjectivity and Objectivity

Phenomenology focuses on how individuals experience moral values personally, emphasizing the subjective nature of morality. It prompts students to answer moral questions from within the experience of their own lives, thus making it very personal. This approach considers how people approach morality and what they think about moral things and affirms their perception (Odhiambo, 2013). Unlike examining moral behaviour from the Aristotelian virtue ethics, virtue education offers a sound method that enlightens morality and is rooted in timeless qualities of courage, temperance, and justice.

Aristotle's theory focuses on teaching students how to perform good actions regarding those virtues while ignoring bad ones so that right virtue prevails over personal opinion

(Curren, 2016). While the two frameworks present nuanced directions on moral education, they represent a very balanced method. Canonical moral models provide examples of behaviours students should follow, while students as individuals are expected to express themselves based on their personal (subjective experience). Integrating moral and ethical beliefs guarantees that moral education has a good sense, which is an objective satisfactorily located in ethical constants that cultivates theoretical and practical moral reason.

4.3.10 Action and Reflection

The idea of habituation, particularly the formation of virtues through the practise of virtuous action, is in harmony with phenomenology, an empirical actualisation of existence that posits that its meaning and understanding is achieved through an engagement with actual practice (Bowditch, 2008). Both theories dispute that moral development is an activity of the mind only. Aristotle insists that people attain virtues, such as courage and temperance, through performing what is proper, not through knowledge.

Likewise, phenomenology holds that genuine moral understanding can only be obtained through the reflections of practical experiences, where people rehearse moral issues. In moral education, this integration means that for a student to be moral, he must reason morally and be able to act out the moral way. Moral activity in and through service learning, ethical decision, and moral modelling enhance the integration process within institutions and helps reinforce virtues leading to effective moral transformation. Philosophically, habituation and lived experience complement each other in that there is a need to blend reason with commitment to practice to have a balanced character.

4.3.11 Moral Identity Formation

Moral experiences assume critical importance in phenomena, and, therefore, phenomenology, by focusing on intentionality and reflection, inspires the students into meaningful participation. Using phenomenology that highlights purposeful attention to and controls over thoughts and behaviour to achieve ethical goals, students incorporate reflection into their moral processes, which enhances morale and self-organization (Robbins, 2006). This reflection makes moral education personal and authentic since students relate their actions to their beliefs.

However, following similar thinking, Aristotle offers the final end for the moral formations for which perfection has been stated as eudaimonia for human excellence. Eudaimonia also means a life worthy of being lived where people do what is reasonable and good. Aristotle's theory of eudaimonia instructs students on how to be good not just occasionally or in single acts but also gives direction as to how to initiate procedures for being good habitually and, therefore, to reach the state of real happiness. Together, phenomenology and Aristotelian eudaimonia lead the student in search of meaning and moral values to properly exercise virtues to achieve the best life.

4.3.12 The paradigm shift on moral education for character formation

The philosophical analysis of objective three reveals that there is a need for educational practices to be anchored on phenomenological and eudaimonia approaches. The research was prompted to identify seven approaches towards moral education for character formation: dialogical learning, practical learning, holistic learning, experiential learning, integrated curriculum approach, virtue-based approach, and reflective approach, as discussed below.

4.3.13 Dialogical Learning

Drawing from phenomenology, teachers should create a dialogical space where students can reflect on their experiences and engage in moral discussions with others. Phenomenology emphasizes the importance of subjective experience, suggesting that learning happens when individuals examine the meaning of their encounters. In such spaces, students can bring their preconceptions, biases, and values to the surface for critical reflection. By engaging in reflective dialogue, students interact with diverse perspectives, allowing them to reconsider their viewpoints and assumptions (Valavi, Harouni, & Moghadam, 2022). This process is crucial for moral development, enabling students to explore ethical issues more deeply rather than accepting moral principles at face value. They can challenge each other's reasoning and expand their understanding of morality through dialogue. This fosters critical thinking and ethical awareness, helping students build a more thoughtful, nuanced approach to moral questions in their lives and communities.

4.3.14 Practical learning

According to Aristotle, moral education emphasizes cultivating practical wisdom (phronesis), which enables individuals to make sound moral judgments in varied, real-life situations. Practical wisdom is the ability to navigate moral convolutions by applying virtues like courage, honesty, and temperance in context-specific ways rather than following rigid knowledge rules (Curren, 1991). Aristotle believed that moral virtues are developed through habitual practice rather than theoretical. This requires teachers to provide students with real-life opportunities to engage in virtuous behaviour, helping them internalize these values. Students gradually form stable character traits by repeatedly

practising virtuous actions in various situations, shaping their moral judgment. For Aristotle, the goal of moral education is not merely to impart rules but to foster the capacity to act virtuously across different circumstances. This habituation process helps students learn how to balance competing values, respond ethically to complex challenges, and live a flourishing life marked by moral excellence.

4.3.15 Holistic learning

Moral education should encompass both intellectual understanding and practical application in shaping character. It's not enough to merely teach students what is right or wrong in a theoretical sense; they must also learn how to put moral principles into action. This is where integrating phenomenological reflection with Aristotelian habituation becomes valuable. Phenomenological reflection encourages deep introspection into one's experiences, emotions, and values (Odhiambo, 2013). It helps students to be morally reflective and understand the why behind their actions. On the other hand, Aristotelian habituation focuses on the practical aspect of virtue, where individuals repeatedly practice good behaviours until they become ingrained habits (Stephen, 2021). By combining these approaches, teachers can cultivate individuals who are intellectually aware of moral principles and capable of consistently acting on them. Such integration creates balanced individuals with the critical thinking to reflect on ethical dilemmas and the disciplined will to act virtuously in everyday life.

4.3.16 Experiential learning

The experiential learning approach to moral education has a clear connection with eudaimonia theory and phenomenological theory, as it enables the development of moral

character based on shaping learners into experiential beings who undergo interactions with proximal real moral situations. Echoing Aristotle's theory of eudaimonia, this approach ensures that students develop moral virtues such as empathy, responsibility, or integrity and then internalize them through practice in real-life moral situations, thus improving their character. Eudaimonia rejects character education as a rigid process of reforming or striving for character but rather as a lifelong process of becoming that develops from the habitualization of virtues, which promotes experiential learning because it exposes students to real-life moral dilemmas. Based on phenomenological theory, phenomenology engagingly honours students' perceptions of ethical issues and prompts them to link their actions to moral values. Such an activity enriches students' sense of identity as ethical beings while contributing to their benevolent conviction to remain ethical practitioners in the practical world.

4.3.17 Integrated curriculum approach

In conjunction with eudaimonia and phenomenological theory, the integrated curriculum approach establishes a moral education framework in each subject so that each learning activity forms a comprehensive environment that can enhance the student's moral and intellectual development. Based on the ideas of Aristotle and with reference to eudaimonia, this approach presents moral education as part of personal development so that by the end of each course, students not only know something but also possess virtues in relation to all areas of life. Students are encouraged to explore ethical issues from different subject areas, such as history, literature, science, social studies, and others so that by the end of the process, they are able to acquire what Aristotle called phronesis, the ability to make

informed ethical decisions in specific situations. Such integration can help students understand moral values as something beyond mere theory and develop their ethical standards in responsibility, integrity, and compassion.

According to phenomenology, the integrated curriculum approach combines the presentation of real-life experiences with the study of moral concepts as experienced by students. In this way, students can link moral values to their views and thus learn to consciously address ethical issues as they arise in different subjects.

4.3.18 Virtue-based approach

The virtue-based approach to moral education can thus be likened to the Aristotelian ethical vision in that eudaimonia emerges when people intentionally practice virtues such as courage, dishonesty, and compassion over time. When understood in this way, Aristotle claims that virtues are not innate but are acquired through performance, which, over time, becomes a part of character by becoming a habit that guides the ability to make moral choices. In this case, students approach virtues in some way, and virtues such as tolerance, respect, joy, and perseverance are seen as valuable after learners have experienced them. This last facet also has a phenomenological rationale, as phenomenology assumes it is important to experience oneself and the environment to understand it. Therefore, because of the self-critical activities that encourage students to recognize how virtues affect their behaviour and interpersonal relationships, the virtue-based approach builds interpersonal and ethical skills and ensures that students acquire virtues corresponding to their psychological and character achievements and life experiences.

4.3 .19 Reflective approach

The reflective approach to teaching morality encourages students to become more involved in reflecting on ethical issues to establish a vital link between society's values and moral principles. This approach is based on the theory of phenomenology, where individuals are encouraged to pay attention to their experiences. Using the ideas of guided self-study, students thus gain a greater awareness of the thoughts, choices, and values that form a predisposition for creating the moral personality system.

Epoché is helpful here because it enables students to look at their values and judgments in a new light, free of preconceptions about themselves and the world, and helps them to look at ethical choices in a way that relates to their practical lives. This process is consistent with Husserl's concept of phenomenology as a method of gaining pure understanding through investigating perceptions without outside interference. It lays the foundation for students' moral development, which can become integral to the learner's personality and work.

Moreover, the reflective approach mirrors Aristotle's theory of eudaimonia in the sense that the approach provides a path through which students can develop virtues and achieve personal moral development in the process. Ethics come into play when students look at themselves and evaluate their behaviour in light of these virtues. They go beyond simple compliance and act in ways that are now reasonable, rational, and virtuous. In essence, students learn to practice practical wisdom (phronesis) by applying ethical principles in practical situations. This type of reflective practice develops a dual focus of student behaviour that moves toward a vision of student character, which directs students toward a life of true happiness that benefits both the individual and the community. Thus, the

reflective approach not only facilitates moral awareness but also helps students build a moral life in harmony with the inner self as they create a virtuous life, for it helps them develop as ethical beings in their actions.

In summary, the philosophical analysis of research objective 3 highlights the importance of integrating phenomenological theory and Aristotelian eudaimonia in moral education for character formation. By combining the reflective, subjective approach of phenomenology with Aristotle's action-oriented, virtue-centered framework, teachers develop a comprehensive strategy for fostering moral growth in students. This integration will help students understand moral principles and equip them with the practical tools to lead virtuous, fulfilling lives. CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study, entitled, *the Efficacy of Moral Education for Character Formation in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya: A phenomenological approach,* is grounded in phenomenology's emphasis on intentionality and lived experience and the Aristotelian theory of eudaimonia. The theories emphasize that moral education is not merely teaching ethical rules but an experiential and developmental process that shapes individuals' identities and moral reasoning capacities. Through intentional, reflective experiences, students do not simply understand moral concepts abstractly; they internalize them through lived practice, which enables character formation.

The following objectives guided the research, namely: to examine the value of moral aims of education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya, to investigate teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya and to establish effective approaches on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya.

5.1 Summary of the study

Tied to the first objective, on the value of moral aims of education for character formation, all participants agreed that moral education focuses on instilling moral values such as respect, empathy, responsibility, and integrity, which are essential for developing well-rounded, ethical individuals capable of handling the challenges they may face in their personal and social lives. These aims align closely with Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, wherein true happiness or flourishing is not defined by momentary pleasure or material success but rather by a life led through reasoned choices and virtuous action.

For Aristotle, virtues such as courage, temperance, and justice are essential to achieving eudaimonia. Similarly, the study found that imparting moral values and encouraging students to practice virtues aligns with Aristotle's view that moral education is a practical endeavour. Teachers who participated in the study underscored that by fostering such values, moral education enables students to approach life's dilemmas thoughtfully, helping them develop a stable moral compass.

On the other hand, most participants argued that moral education for character formation fosters good relationships between teachers and students, helps students make the right decisions, and promotes good academic performance in school because it is assumed that, morally students are responsible for their obligations.

On the role of the school in promoting the value of moral aims of education for character formation, the study established that the school forms the basis of moral education for character formation. It teaches most values such as discipline, obedience, respect and sharing with Christian/religious teachings, which build the character of the learners.

Participants indicated that different teachers explore different moral values. Further, it was noted that parents who are supposed to impart moral values to learners are too busy, and others don't have the courage to impart moral virtues to their children.

It was also established that all C.R.E. topics focus on the moral aims of education for character formation. They were established to be critical on moral education for character formation among the learners. Participants identified topics that predominantly foster moral education, such as African heritage, Christian Ethics, contemporary issues, marriage, diseases, and sexuality, which are key in moral aspects. Further, one of the participants alluded that the Bible in Form Two, the life and teachings of Jesus in Book Two, the call of Nehemiah and other prophets in Book Three, and leadership is a service to God that renders learners morally upright.

Tied to objective two, teachers offered valuable insights into the positive impact of moral education on students and the practical limitations encountered in its implementation. They noted that students exposed to moral education show improved behaviour, increased self-regulation, and a stronger sense of empathy. According to the teachers, moral education helps students make better decisions, understanding that their actions have consequences for themselves and others.

For example, some teachers observed that students who participated in ethical discussions or engaged in role-playing exercises that explored moral dilemmas developed a more reflective approach to their interactions. This indicates that moral education encourages students to internalize values beyond mere rule-following, leading them to consider the wider social impact of their actions.

Despite these positive effects, teachers also noted significant challenges in implementing moral education. Societal pressures, curriculum constraints, and the emphasis on academic achievement were all highlighted as obstacles. The influence of media and certain societal behaviours sometimes conflicts with the moral values taught in school, creating inconsistencies that make it difficult for students to maintain a cohesive ethical perspective. Furthermore, teachers noted that due to a highly structured curriculum, time dedicated to moral education is often limited, potentially weakening its impact. The study emphasizes that overcoming these challenges requires a holistic approach supported by educators, families, communities, and policymakers.

There were two groups' views on the formative and summative assessment of C.R.E. on moral education for character formation. Among them, a group valued C.R.E. being examined on moral education for character formation. However, others didn’t hold to the same view. Most of the participants in this study emphasized that C.R.E. should be taken seriously in secondary schools since it helps them to be in a position to make the right judgments with an informed and formed conscience. Further, most participants agreed that C.R.E moulds learners on how to behave and helps them distinguish what is right and wrong.

On the strategies in school for moral education for character formation, it was fou nd out that out of the 13 strategies established, only three were engaging students, and they comprise class meetings, student leadership, and clubs and societies that are most likely to engage students at their existential level. These three approaches allow students to express themselves more than the other ten top-down approaches. The top-down model of moral education tends to be more authoritarian, based on adult perspectives, and less subjective.

On the effectiveness of the strategies in school for moral education for character formation, it was noted that the implementation is wanting, and most of the approaches are short of action except for guidance and counselling. The participants did not provide hard or solid evidence of the assessment that led to such conclusions. Respondents instead narrated anecdotal examples of students who said they had improved in discipline.

The third objective focused on identifying effective strategies on moral education for character formation. The study identified seven approaches towards moral education for character formation: dialogical learning, practical learning, holistic learning, experiential learning, integrated curriculum approach, virtue-based approach, and reflective approach, which are highly effective in fostering moral development and character formation. Drawing on phenomenological insights, which stress the significance of lived experience and personal reflection, the study suggests that moral education should be designed to encourage students to reflect deeply on their values and consider how these values shape their actions. Phenomenology's emphasis on intentionality,the idea that consciousness is always directed toward something implies that moral education should guide students to focus their attention intentionally on ethical questions, personal beliefs, and the consequences of their actions. Reflecting on Aristotle's concept of habituation, the idea that moral virtues are developed through repeated actions by engaging in ethical practices, students build habits of character that gradually become second nature, making it more likely that they will act virtuously in future situations.

The synthesis of phenomenological and Aristotelian insights presents a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing moral education. Phenomenology encourages a reflective and intentional approach on moral education, guiding students to

engage with their values and beliefs on a personal level. This reflective process helps students internalize ethical concepts and develop a strong moral identity based on lived experience.

On the other hand, Aristotle's theory of eudaimonia offers a teleological perspective, framing moral education as a process aimed at achieving a flourishing life through the cultivation of virtues. Aristotle emphasized the importance of practical wisdom (phronesis), which involves knowing what is good and how to achieve it in particular situations. By cultivating practical wisdom, students learn to navigate ethical intricacies, making decisions that are not only morally sound but also contextually appropriate.

The combined approach of phenomenology and eudaimonia addresses moral development's cognitive and experiential aspects, preparing students to engage with ethical challenges thoughtfully and responsibly. Through reflective practice, intentional engagement and habituation, students are equipped to internalize moral values and make decisions aligned with their understanding of a virtuous life.

5.2 Conclusion

The study made three major conclusions in an attempt to respond to the three research questions. It was noted that moral education for character formation plays a critical role in moulding learners. To a greater extent, it determines the moral uprightness of the future generation. Although other social agents are charged with moral education's responsibility for character formation, this study established that the school remains a vital agent of moralization.

In response to the second objective, it's inferred that there was mixed reaction on the effectiveness of strategies used in moral education. The minority of the participants observed that all the strategies were ineffective, while the majority indicated that guidance and counselling, although less proactive, is the best strategy for moral education. The few who mentioned punishment indicated it was the best method, although illegal and illicit in the current Kenyan schooling context.

Further, the study concluded that there is a direct correlation between exam inability of subjects and moral commitment. The non-examinable subjects were found not to have an illicit commitment to moral education.

The third objective was to develop effective approaches on moral education for character formation. Moral education for character formation is most effective when it is dialogical , practical , holistic , experiential , integrated in curriculum , virtue-based and reflective . Phenomenology emphasizes the importance of *intentionality* and *lived experience*, suggesting that students should engage in self-reflective practices and ethical decision-making that resonate with their real-life experiences. This approach enables students to internalize moral values through personal reflection and active engagement with ethical situations rather than merely memorizing rules.

At the same time, Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia frames the purpose of moral education as achieving a state of flourishing through the cultivation of virtues such as empathy, respect, responsibility, and integrity. This perspective highlights the importance of *practical wisdom (phronesis)* or the ability to make sound ethical decisions that benefit the individual and society. By focusing on habitual virtuous actions, students develop a

consistent moral character that aligns with a life of reason and virtue, ultimately contributing to their well-being and personal fulfilment.

The study concludes that effective moral education strategies must include experiential methods such as role-playing, community service, and reflective discussions, which allow students to practice ethical decision-making and develop moral reasoning. Furthermore, achieving cohesive character formation requires a collaborative effort among educators, families, and communities to consistently reinforce moral values. By combining phenomenological and Aristotelian insights, the study presents a holistic framework for moral education that prepares students to become ethically grounded, reflective, and socially responsible citizens.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, three recommendations were made for enhancing the efficacy of moral education for character formation.

Promoting awareness on the value of moral education for character formation. All stakeholders, including educators, parents and policymakers, should be sensitized to the crucial role of moral education in character formation. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars and publications that emphasize the societal benefits of promoting moral values in schools.

Further, moral education should be embedded across all subjects rather than confined to specific courses or discussions. Embedding ethical themes within various subjects (e.g., discussing historical figures' ethical decisions in history or exploring environmental ethics in science) can give students broader contexts for understanding and applying moral

principles. This approach aligns with phenomenological principles, emphasizing lived experience and contextual learning, and Aristotle's notion of habitual practice in developing virtues, as students regularly engage with ethical questions in diverse scenarios.

2. Creating feedback mechanisms for educators. Create structured platforms such as regular teacher forums, surveys and focus group discussions where educators can share their experiences, challenges and recommendations on moral education. The insights gained should inform policies and practices aimed at improving the implementation of moral education. These hands-on activities help in applying moral principles in real-world situations, facilitating deeper learning and the cultivation of *practical wisdom* (*phronesis*), as Aristotle proposed. This recommendation aligns with the phenomenological focus on intentionality and lived experience, helping students internalize values through direct engagement with ethical challenges.

3. Use diverse and participatory teaching methods. Schools should provide professional development opportunities that focus on effective approaches such as dialogical learning, practical learning, holistic learning, experiential learning, integrated curriculum approach, virtue-based approach, and reflective approach. Training should cover effective methods for guiding ethical discussions, fostering reflective thinking, and managing experiential learning activities. By equipping teachers with these skills, schools can ensure that moral education is delivered consistently and effectively, helping students build a solid foundation of ethical values and reflective capacities crucial for character formation.

5.3.1 Recommendations for further study

1. The impact of experiential learning on moral development and ethical decision-making in adolescents: Aphenomelogical approach. This study could investigate how experiential learning methods such as role-playing, service learning, and ethical simulations affect adolescents' abilities to internalize moral values and make ethical decisions. This research could identify best practices for integrating experiential learning into moral education programs by exploring specific experiential techniques and evaluating their influence on students' moral reasoning and character development.

2. Assessing the role of community and family involvement in reinforcing moral education in schools: A phenomenological approach. This research could examine how the involvement of families and communities supports or hinders moral education in schools. Focusing on the influence of external factors, such as parental values, community ethics, and extracurricular environments, this study would assess the effectiveness of a collaborative approach in achieving cohesive moral and character development in students.

3. Exploring lived experience of teachers' perspectives and preparedness in facilitating moral education for character formation: Challenges and Opportunities. This topic would investigate the lived experience of teachers on moral education, their preparedness to facilitate ethical discussions, and the challenges they face in integrating moral values into their teaching practices. In assessing teachers' attitudes and training needs, this study could offer recommendations for targeted professional development programs to enhance teachers' ability to effectively support character formation in diverse educational settings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology P.O. Box 190

Kakamega

2nd November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

A LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology student pursuing doctoral studies in Philosophy of education.

Your school has been selected from the schools in Kakamega County for the purpose of data collection. I am conducting academic research on a phenomenological investigation into the efficacy of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya: The lived experiences of practising teachers**.**

Therefore, I request your permission to collect the required data. I promise that all the information collected from your school will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

I would really appreciate any help you can provide.

Yours Faithfully,

John Nyangaresi

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS

This questionnaire seeks to gather the lived experiences of Christian education teachers on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya. You are one of the respondents identified to give your views concerning the topic of study voluntarily. All information provided will be treated with confidentiality, and you will remain anonymous throughout the study.

1. What is the value of moral aims of education for character formation?

2. What is the role of the School in promoting moral aims of education for character formation?

3. Which CRE topics predominantly focus on the moral aims of education for character formation**?**

4. How effective is CRE assessment for moral education for character formation?

5. What is the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation?

6. a)Which strategies are used in school for moral education for character formation?

b). Are the strategies effective?

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Interview Questions

This questionnaire seeks to gather the lived experiences of the deputy principal on moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya. You are one of the respondents identified to give your views concerning the topic of study voluntarily. All information provided will be treated with confidentiality, and you will remain anonymous throughout the study.

1. What is the value of moral aims of education for character formation?

2. What is the role of the School in promoting moral aims of education for character formation?

3. How effective is CRE assessment for moral education for character formation?

4. What is the effectiveness of non-examinable subjects on moral education for character formation?

5. a) Which strategies are used in school for moral education for character formation?

b). Are the strategies effective?

APPENDIX IV: APPROVAL LETTER FROM DPS

MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

Tel: 056-30870
Fax: 056-30153
E-mail: directordps@mmust.ac.ke
Website: www.mmust.ac.ke

P.O Box 190
Kakamega – 50100
Kenya

Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

Ref: MMU/COR: 509099

1st November 2022

John Kibwage Nyangaresi
EEP/H/01-70133/2021,
P.O. Box 190-50100,
KAKAMEGA.

Dear Mr. Nyangaresi,,

RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your PhD proposal entitled: ***"A Phenomenological Study of the Prospective Teachers on the Efficacy of Moral Education for Character Formation in Kenyan Secondary Schools ."*** and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. Prof. Joseph W. Nasongo SEDU MMUST
2. Rev. Dr. Juma Injendi SEDU MMUST

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Education Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department of Educational Foundations. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of three years from the date of registration to complete your PhD thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.

We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.

Yours sincerely,

MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
P.O. Box 190 - 50100, KAKAMEGA (K)
Date:..... Sign:.....

Prof. Stephen O. Odebero, PhD, FIEEP
DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

APPENDIX V: NACOSTI PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **357657**

Date of Issue: **16/December/2022**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Mr.. John Kibwage Nyangaresi of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kakamega on the topic: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS ON THE EFFICACY OF MORAL EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER FORMATION IN KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS for the period ending : 16/December/2023.

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