

**A CRITIQUE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR MORAL
REASONING AMONG STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
KAKAMEGA CENTRAL, KENYA :APHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Samuel Owuor Odipo

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

July, 2025

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other university.

Signature..... Date.....

Samuel Owuor Odipo

EEP/G/01-53111/2018

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 "**A Critique of Christian Religious Education for Moral Reasoning among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega Central, Kenya: A phenomenological approach** "

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Prof. Joseph Nasongo Wamocho

Department of Educational Foundations

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Injendi Juma

Department of Educational Foundations

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

STUDENT DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I know that the incorporation of material from other works or a paraphrase of such material without as acknowledgement will be treated as plagiarism according to the Rules and Regulations of the Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

I understand that this thesis must be my own work.

I know that plagiarism is academic dishonesty and wrong, and that if I commit any act of plagiarism, my thesis can be assigned a fail grade ('F').

I further understand I may be suspended from the University for Academic Dishonesty.

Signature Date

Samuel Owuor Odipo

EEP/G/01-53111/2018

SUPERVISOR(S) DECLARATION

I/We hereby approve the examination of this thesis. The thesis has been subjected to plagiarism test and its similarity index is not above 20%.

Signature..... Date.....

Prof. Joseph Nasongo Wamocho

Department of Education Foundations, School of Education.

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

Dr. Injendi Juma

Department of Education Foundations, School of Education.

Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

Signature.....Date.....

DEDICATION

I am very grateful to my family , my wife Harriet and my sons Aidenn and Ainsley for always being there for me and supporting me during my entire period of my study . They were there for me during the tough times and long days, giving me their prayers, kind words and support whenever I needed it. Because of their love, patience and faith in me, I was able to keep going when things were tough. I am grateful for every little and big thing they did for me and I will always remember their kindness and support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am most grateful to God for always loving, caring for and protecting me. I owe my strength and success in reaching this milestone to His grace. He helped me find the strength and direction I needed to reach my goal and I am very thankful for that. I am grateful to my supervisors, Prof. J.W. Nasongo and Dr. Injendi Juma, for their support. They were there for me, patiently helped me and encouraged me throughout my studies. Their support, advice and guidance made it possible for me to finish this study successfully. I am grateful for their support and motivation all along the way.

I am grateful to the entire Masinde Muliro University community. I am thankful for all the support, care and academic assistance I got while I was at the university. Their help was very important for my education and personal development.

I am grateful to everyone who supported me during my time in this course. Your help, no matter how big or small, was meaningful and I am grateful for it. May God shower you with many blessings.

ABSTRACT

Educational institutions have long served as the foundation for developing moral character and ethical reasoning. Thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle emphasized that moral excellence emerges from habit-based learning and curriculum-guided development. In Kenya, Christian Religious Education (CRE) was introduced to play this formative role in shaping students' moral behavior. However, despite its moral aims, CRE has not consistently produced the expected transformation in students' conduct. Persistent cases of indiscipline, examination malpractice, and moral decline in public secondary schools in Kakamega Central Sub-County suggest a gap between curriculum intentions and actual outcomes. This study therefore offered a philosophical critique of Christian Religious Education and moral reasoning among students in Kakamega Central, Kenya, guided by three objectives: (1) to analyze the moral content of the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus, (2) to examine teachers lived experiences regarding pedagogical approaches used in teaching moral content, and (3) to investigate the implications of the syllabus and teaching approaches for students' moral reasoning. The study was grounded in Kantian deontology, which emphasizes duty and rational moral obligation, and employed both the phenomenological hermeneutical and critical methods. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used, drawing data from unstructured interviews with purposively selected CRE teachers and students in public secondary schools. Data were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-step framework to identify recurring themes on moral reasoning, ethical dilemmas, and teaching practices. Findings revealed that while teachers recognize CRE as essential for moral formation, its impact on students' moral reasoning remains limited by teacher-centered instruction, exam-oriented practices, and minimal use of interactive pedagogies such as role-playing, storytelling, and ethical debates. The study also found that societal and peer influences weaken the translation of CRE's moral content into daily behavior. The study concludes that CRE has the potential to enhance moral reasoning if taught through experiential and dialogical approaches that engage learners in reflective moral inquiry. It recommends curriculum reforms that integrate modern ethical concerns such as digital ethics, social justice, and environmental responsibility and a balance between Western philosophical ethics (Kantian, Aristotelian) and African communitarian ethics (Ubuntu). Strengthening teacher training on moral pedagogy is essential to align CRE instruction with the broader goal of nurturing ethical and responsible citizens.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
DECLARATION.....	ii
PLAGIARISM STATEMENT	iii
DEDICATION.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiii
OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS	xiv
CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	5
1.3 Purpose of the study	6
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	6
1.5 Research Questions.....	7
1.6 Justification	7
1.7 Significance of the study.....	8
1.8 Assumption of the study	9
1.9 Limitations of the study.	9
1.10 Delimitation	9

CHAPTER TWO:LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.1 Introduction.....	11
2.2 Moral Reasoning in Kenyan Secondary School CRE Syllabus.....	11
2.3 Moral ends of CRE instructional methods in secondary schools.	17
2.4 Implications of CRE Syllabus and Instructional Methods on Moral Reasoning among Secondary School Students.....	24
2.5 Theoretical framework of the study	29
2.6 Gaps in related literature reviewed	31
2.7 Conclusion	31
 CHAPTER THREE:RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	 33
3.1. Introduction.....	33
3.2 Research Design.....	33
3.3 Research methods	33
3.3.1 Phenomenological hermeneutical method	33
3.3.2 Critical method.....	34
3.4 Instruments of data collection.....	35
3.5 Location of the study	35
3.6 Target population	37
3.7 Sampling Procedure	37
3.7.1 Sample Size.....	38
3.8 Piloting.....	39
3.9 Validity	39
3.10 Reliability.....	40

3.11 Data collection procedure	40
3.12 Data analysis	40
3.13 Ethical considerations	41
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS.....	42
4.1 Objective 1: To analyze the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus in the light of moral content	42
4.1.1 Can you describe a specific moment during a CRE lesson when you felt personally challenged or inspired to reflect on your own moral decisions or behavior?	43
4.1.2 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses.....	43
4.1.3 Discussion of the findings.....	47
4.1.4 How do the topics you learn in CRE relate to the way you handle real-life situations, such as peer pressure, honesty, or respect?.....	52
4.1.5 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses.....	52
4.1.6 Discussion of the findings.....	54
4.1.7 In your experience, what parts of the CRE syllabus seem most helpful or unhelpful in shaping your values or sense of right and wrong?.....	57
4.1.8 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses.....	58
4.1.9 Discussion of the findings.....	60
4.2 Objective two: An examination of Kenyan secondary school teachers' pedagogical approaches in teaching moral content in the CRE syllabus.....	63
4.2.1 Can you describe a specific CRE lesson where your teacher's way of teaching helped you understand or reflect on a moral issue deeply?.....	63

4.2.2 Phenomenological interpretation of student responses	64
4.2.3 Discussion of the findings.....	66
4.2.4 How does your CRE teacher usually teach moral topics, and how do you personally experience or respond to that teaching style?	69
4.2.5 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses.....	70
4.2.6 Discussion of the findings.....	72
4.3 Objective three: To analyze the implications of CRE syllabus and pedagogical approaches on moral reasoning among secondary school students.	75
4.3.1 The philosophical nexus between CRE syllabus content and moral reasoning.....	75
4.3.2 A philosophical inquiry into the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches in teaching Christian religious education	77
4.3.3 Ontological and ethical implications of Christian religious education on moral reasoning.....	78
4.3.4 Epistemological and pedagogical foundations of Christian religious education in cultivating moral reasoning.....	82
4.3.5 Conclusion	85
CHAPTER FIVE:SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS. 87	
5.1 Introduction.....	87
5.2 Summary	87
5.3 Conclusion	89
5.4 Recommendations.....	90
5.5 Recommendations for Further Research.....	91

REFERENCES..... 92

APPENDICES..... 103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2. 1 Gaps in related literature reviewed	31
--	----

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Schedules For Students	103
Appendix B: Approval Letter	104
Appendix C: Nacosti Permit	105

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Christian Religious Education - is a subject taught in Kenyan secondary schools that focuses on the moral development of the students, their ability to make ethical decisions and their understanding of Christian values as taught in the bible and other ethical theories.

Critical Method – A philosophical approach entails scrutiny and analysis of ideas to determine their validity and applicability. This research uses the critical method to assess the impact of CRE in enhancing moral reasoning among students.

Curriculum Reform – The process of modifying educational content and teaching strategies to improve learning outcomes. This study suggests potential reforms in the CRE curriculum to better address contemporary moral challenges.

Ethical Decision-Making – The act of selecting between two or more courses of action with regard to ethical standards. It entails assessing the costs, responsibilities, and values that are attached to a particular decision.

Ethical Dilemmas – These are cases where an individual is faced with two or more moral dilemmas that he or she has to solve. In this study, ethical dilemmas are defined as the actual moral issues that students encounter and how they use CRE's teachings to address them.

Experiential Learning – A learning process involving the learner in the process of learning and using practical activities. In this study, experiential

learning encompasses role-play, discussions, and case studies applied in CRE to foster moral reasoning.

Interfaith Dialogue – A discussion between two or more people of different faiths to understand each other. This research aims to establish how CRE impacts the students’ perception of religious tolerance and diversity.

Kantian Deontology – A theory of morality that was formulated by Immanuel Kant, which holds that the principle of duty determines the moral worth of an action. This research uses Kantian deontology to analyze how CRE enhances the students’ understanding of duty and ethical reasoning.

Life Approach Pedagogy – A teaching method that incorporates the real-life experiences of the students into religious education so as to make the moral lessons more realistic. This paper aims at establishing the level of implementation of life approach pedagogy in teaching CRE.

Moral Development – The process of becoming better in terms of understanding and applying moral principles in decision making. This paper aims at evaluating the impact of CRE in the moral development of students over the years.

Moral Reasoning – Refers to the reflective process through which individuals determine what is right or wrong based on internalized moral principles rather than external authority. In this study, moral reasoning is understood through Kantian deontology as the exercise of rational moral duty and through phenomenology as the lived experience of ethical decision-making within the context of Christian Religious

Education. It denotes students' ability to justify moral choices, interpret ethical dilemmas, and act autonomously in line with moral principles emphasized in the CRE syllabus.

Phenomenological Method – A research methodology that is used to study people's experiences. In this study, it is used to examine how students perceive and incorporate moral lessons from CRE in their daily lives.

Societal Influences on Morality – External factors such as peer pressure, media, and cultural norms that impact students' moral reasoning. This study examines how these influences interact with CRE teachings to shape ethical decision-making.

Teaching Methods – The techniques employed by teachers in the process of transmitting knowledge to the learners. In the context of CRE, this entails the use of lectures, narratives, cases, role-plays, and discussions for the moral development of students.

Virtue Ethics – A moral theory that focuses on the person's character and the right way to act based on the virtues in place. The concept of eudaimonia, which Aristotle proposed as a way of understanding human beings, is useful in the assessment of moral education in this study.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, justifications of the study, assumptions of the study, significance of the study, study limitations and delimitations.

1.1 Background of the study

Educational institutions have traditionally represented the foundation for developing moral character and ethical thinking abilities. According to Plato and Aristotle, education is the foundation for virtue development. Aristotle stated that moral excellence emerges from habit-based learning and curriculum-guided development (Ross, 1999). Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Kenyan secondary schools serves this role.

The foundation for moral education through religious instruction stems from deontological ethics, as interpreted by Immanuel Kant when he developed his moral philosophy. According to Kant, moral actions focus on the categorical imperative since the duty and universal principles should dominate personal desires and consequences (Kant 1785). The perspective maintains that educational teachings should develop moral duty, which instructs people to obey universal ethical principles. Students in Christian Religious Education receive a structured moral education through biblical teachings included in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). The guidance presents absolute ethical principles about honesty combined with life respect as objective standards that ought to regulate human conduct. CRE aims to develop students who will follow divine commandments because this program teaches them essential values that counteract their natural subjective impulses and provides moral instruction to students.

Concerns continue to emerge about the ability of curricular inclusion to develop genuine moral reasoning processes within public secondary school students.

The main weakness of deontological methods stems from their emphasis on rule compliance instead of developing strong moral and intellectual capabilities. In Kantian ethics, rational agents should obey universal moral laws upon realization, yet opponents state that this fails to properly handle real-world ethical decision complexity. Under this system, students learn to follow ethical rules from moral commitments or out of fear of punishment instead of fully engaging in ethical thought processes. The moral theory of Aristotle's development is an alternative framework to other ethical approaches. The conceptual priority in deontology lies with following duties, yet virtue ethics centers itself on building moral character through frequent habit-driven virtuous conduct (Nicomachean Ethics, 350 BCE). The moral education curriculum should educate students concerning ethical principles and guide them in acquiring virtues based on real-life learning opportunities through virtuous practice. The practical success of CRE moral instruction depends on how well it combines ethical dilemma learning opportunities together with activities to develop decision-making skills and virtue acquisition that exceed rote moral law implementation.

The virtue ethics model developed by Aristotle directs moral education beyond rule ethics toward building virtues through ongoing practice and routines. The theory of virtue ethics differs from deontological ethics because it maintains individuals develop virtuous character through habitual practice of good deeds (Nicomachean Ethics, 350 BCE). According to Aristotle, human flourishing (eudaimonia) requires honesty as one virtue, courage, and temperance. The educational approach needs to provide authentic moral

practice experiences to students rather than just delivering ethical principles. Students gain capability to handle moral challenges through reflection while engaging with role-play and tackling actual ethical situations leading to virtuous everyday practices. Psychologically speaking moral knowledge for Aristotle extends beyond theory because it demands real-world ethical problem-solving in various daily experiences. A properly designed moral education program must include mentorship and community service combined with discussion-based learning since these educational approaches help students develop virtues by practicing instead of memorizing concepts.

Religious education shows an unclear link to genuine moral actions, causing individuals to question this situation. According to Durkheim (1912), in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* he demonstrated that religion maintains social unity and controls societal ethical conduct. Religious education in modern secular contexts fails to produce sufficient ethical conduct among the population. Students in Kakamega Central and other schools experience a moral crisis because traditional values face challenges from digital media, peer pressure, and globalization as modern forces. The existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre stressed personal accountability and moral decision freedom in existentialist decision-making according to his 1946 work *Existentialism is a Humanism*. Students need active moral engagement with dilemmas so they can critically assess their moral choices and become responsible for their decisions. Without this, students may receive CRE as an uninvolved lesson. Moral education requires transformation because students should learn to work through uncertain moral situations instead of merely following established teachings.

One critical factor that determines the effectiveness of CRE implementation is the method through which it is taught. The Kenyan education system traditionally emphasizes rote memorization and content repetition instead of critical thinking skills and moral inquiry abilities. Instructional techniques to memorize information and repeat tasks follow the principles of behaviorist learning theory and B.F. Skinner's reinforcement-based teaching model. The evaluation approach within such an educational system depends on students' memory of religious doctrine instead of their ethical reasoning capabilities. Paulo Freire, along with other modern educational theorists, promotes learning that surpasses information transfer through processes of critical thinking and educational debates (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1970). According to Freire's teaching philosophy, students need to participate actively in moral studies because it combines education with student-led critical discussions that match ethics to personal experiences. The adoption of passive memorization methodology instead of moral dilemma analysis for CRE education transforms this subject into theoretical content with limited moral power. In order to overcome this challenge educators, need to use Socratic questioning and case studies and experiential learning along with other participatory teaching methods which help students both understand moral values and learn practical application in everyday life

Nyangaresi et al. (2024) noted that moral education in secondary schools in Kakamega County is a challenge because of the teaching methods and strategies used in teaching and delivering the curriculum that do not encourage moral reasoning. Therefore, students cannot apply moral teachings in their daily life. This research established that inappropriate pedagogies on CRE content has led to high cases of school fires, substance use, and other vices in the public secondary schools in the county.

In the same regard, Githaiga et al. (2024) sought to determine the extent to which CRE influences the ethical reasoning of students in selected secondary schools in Kakamega County. They discovered that although CRE was supposed to enhance moral development among students, their moral judgments were still low since they treated the subject as just another course to study and pass through exams. The study also observed that the lack of interactivity and practical learning in the CRE lessons meant that the students could not fully grasp moral values and apply them in their daily practice.

Furthermore, Othoo and Aseu (2023) examined the correlation between CRE instruction and students' behavior in public secondary schools in Kakamega Central. They found out that the students who completed their secondary school education in the region did not display the right moral behavior, implying that the values taught in CRE were not being imparted. The study attributed this to the rosy academic performance where teachers ensured that the students memorized the biblical teachings for examinations rather than engaging them in critical thinking on moral issues. This disconnection between teaching morality and practicing it has elicited concern among educators and policymakers on the efficiency of CRE in tackling modern moral issues. Hence, given the concerns surrounding CRE, there is a need to critically examine its role in fostering moral reasoning among secondary school students in Kakamega Central, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the problem

CRE is one of the core subjects taught in Kenyan secondary schools with the aim of inculcating moral values, ethical standards and responsible citizenship. However, implementing the policy has not eradicated student unrest, examination malpractice, drug abuse, and other acts of indiscipline in public secondary schools in Kakamega Central. This

raises questions about CRE's ability to positively influence students' moral reasoning and ethical behavior.

Studies indicate that the current syllabus is more theoretical than practical, hindering students from making sound ethical decisions in their day-to-day activities. Moral reasoning involves critical thinking, ethical discourse, and practical learning, while CRE instruction is mainly based on teacher-centered approaches and not on interactive ones.

Students tend to view CRE as an academic subject, not a means of moral development. The lack of philosophical and interactive approaches, such as Kantian deontology, makes it difficult for students to apply moral principles in real-life situations. To achieve this, there is a need to review the educational content and teaching methodologies of CRE to ensure that they foster ethical reasoning and decision-making.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The study's purpose is to critique Christian religious education for moral reasoning among students in public secondary schools in Kakamega central, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To evaluate the extent to which moral reasoning content is embedded in the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus.
- ii. To examine the pedagogical approaches used by CRE teachers in delivering moral content in secondary schools in Kakamega Central.
- iii. To determine the influence of the CRE syllabus and teaching approaches on students' moral reasoning in public secondary schools in Kakamega Central.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. To what extent is moral reasoning content embedded in Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus?
- ii. Are the CRE instructional methods used by secondary school teachers effective?
- iii. What are the implications of the CRE syllabus and instructional methods on moral reasoning among secondary school students?

1.6 Justification

There is a need to evaluate Christian Religious Education's (CRE) capability to develop ethical reasoning skills among Kenyan public secondary school students. The rising numbers of ethical and moral issues among young people cause widespread apprehension about evaluating the CRE curriculum's effectiveness at teaching essential moral values and critical thinking abilities to handle ethical situations. The study evaluates moral reasoning in students due to CRE education to deliver crucial findings about the current educational technique for educators, policymakers and curriculum designers.

This study is unique in that it aims to establish the extent to which CRE enhances moral reasoning among students in Kakamega Central as opposed to previous research that has explored moral education in more general settings. Unlike previous studies that focused on the moral actions of students and did not directly relate them to CRE instruction, this study examines how certain teaching strategies in CRE affect students' ethical reasoning.

Furthermore, there is inadequate phenomenological and critical research on how students embrace and practice CRE teachings in their daily lives. This study extends prior research

by including teachers' opinions, and curriculum review to provide a more holistic assessment of CRE's impact on moral formation.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study significantly contributes by examining Christian Religious Education (CRE) teaching practices, which form student moral judgment in Kenyan public secondary institutions. The study analyzes CRE teaching effectiveness toward ethical decision-making, thus aiding professionals and policymakers in evaluating how well the curriculum addresses moral learning needs. The research findings will provide essential guidance because the current moral and ethical crisis within youth populations challenges CRE educators to find methods for enhancing teaching effectiveness. Through this study, a comprehensive evaluation can be achieved to determine necessary improvements for curriculum developers in terms of teaching methods, content delivery methods, and moral education approach.

Further, the research findings will benefit teachers and parents collaborating with religious institutions because they reveal both successful and ineffective aspects of CRE's impact on students' behavior decisions. The findings will also provide teachers with ways to enhance their educational methods to create better CRE programs that link to real-life applications. Religious leaders and parents can benefit from learning about the academic values that match their home-based and church-based ethical education. The study's research outcomes will serve as foundational material in advancing discussions about religious education relevance in multicultural societies and they will guide future academic studies into secular and religious educational integration within Kenya's education system.

1.8 Assumption of the study

- i. Public secondary education uses CRE teaching as a fundamental method to develop students' ethical thinking while improving their capacity for moral decision-making.
- ii. The present study acknowledges that while CRE supports student moral reasoning development, multiple other conditions including genetic and cultural origins, peer influences, and societal platforms, influence their ethical outlook.
- iii. Teachers who deliver CRE instruction through three different methods will impact students' ability to reason morally and make daily ethical decisions.

1.9 Limitations of the study.

- i. The test results from selected schools and region might not apply across all Kenyan public secondary institutions because diverse cultural, religious and socio-economic conditions exist. The process of reasoning with moral values is a subjective concept that is difficult to measure.
- ii. The study recognizes moral development in students as a result of several outside influences besides the content in Christian Religious Education since it depends on parental instruction, peer influence, and media sources. Researchers encounter difficulties in determining the direct effect of Christian Religious Education on educational participants' moral growth.

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, a Critique of Christian Religious Education for Moral Reasoning among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega Central, Kenya: A

phenomenological approach "was investigated. Further, the study is confined to Kantian Deontological theory. The chosen scope makes it possible to conduct a complete and in-depth analysis of teachers' lived experiences and perspectives, offering insights on the role of Christian Religious Education for moral reasoning among students in public secondary schools in Kakamega Central .

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature concerning the critique of Christian Religious Education (CRE) for moral reasoning among students in public secondary schools in Kenya. The review is structured around three major themes: moral reasoning within the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus, pedagogical approaches used in teaching moral content in CRE, and the implications of the CRE syllabus and instructional methods on students' moral reasoning. The chapter integrates phenomenological method, critical method, and the Kantian deontological theory. These approaches provide a deeper analysis of moral reasoning as experienced by learners, critically assess the effectiveness of CRE pedagogy, and ground the discussion in a structured ethical framework.

2.2 Moral Reasoning in Kenyan Secondary School CRE Syllabus.

Education worldwide requires moral reasoning; scholars stress that it allows students to distinguish between right and wrong. The main purpose of education is to exceed the transfer of information because it establishes essential moral values that teach students to serve as active contributors in building an ethical society, according to Trurkkahraman (2012). The study presented by You and Penny (2011) shows that moral education creates skills that enable people to make appropriate ethical choices and follow their decisions. The researchers examine how learners perceive their moral reasoning activities within CRE through the phenomenological approach.

The Kenyan secondary school CRE curriculum includes learning objectives to develop spiritual values, ethical behaviors, and morality. The missionaries first introduced CRE as evangelization material during colonial times before Kenya gained its independence which led to its transformation into an academic area. By 1964 the Ominde Commission promoted an inclusive ecumenical technique for CRE programs that welcomed students from various Christian backgrounds. CRE curriculum underwent three iterations starting from 1968 with the main goal of advancing student moral reasoning abilities (KIE, 2002). The influence of CRE content on student moral value acquisition depends on each student's lived experiences and social environment, as well as their unique ways of interpreting ethics according to phenomenological analysis.

The success of CRE programs in modifying student moral development remains under skeptical evaluation by critical academic researchers. Kowino Agak and Kochung (2012) demonstrate that CRE develops ethical awareness but doubts if it proves effective in stopping moral degradation. The intended educational achievements of the CRE curriculum appear unclear based on observed cases of student misbehavior and ethical issues, including exam cheating by students (Omiya, 2015). The critical method outlines the separation between theoretical educational morality and practical behavior, thus showing the need for renewed teaching approaches.

According to Trurkkahraman (2012), the primary aim of education is to equip students with knowledge and skills, enabling them to procure employment, adjust better to the society and acquire virtues so they could be responsible and moral citizens. Moral Education aims to equip learners with knowledge and skills to determine right and wrong

in a given situation (You & Penny, 2011). Moral reasoning is provided to the schools because it makes learners aware of what is socially acceptable when dealing with other people and provides them with a sense of politeness and lawfulness (Sober, 2009). An excellent moral reasoning education initiates students into cultural traditions that shape their moral identities (Nord & Haynes, 2013).

According to Myyry (2003), a morally mature and correct student should possess four key moral components: sensitivity, judgment, motivation, and implementation. Moral sensitivity is concerned with what actions are possible in a situation, while moral judgment focuses on what is morally right and fair. Moral motivation is the drive to do what is morally right, while moral implementation has the courage and skills to carry out a line of action even under pressure. All four components work together to influence a person's moral behavior (Gardiner, 2000). All the moral elements form the basis for moral reasoning among students in secondary schools. Thus, students who have been exposed to moral education are expected to be morally upright and should demonstrate high moral reasoning standards.

According to Gathaiga et al. (2018), CRE was introduced in Kenya by missionaries to evangelize the local people. It was taught according to the religion of the group sponsoring the schools. After independence, the Ominde commission (GoK, 1964) recommended that CRE be treated as an academic subject and an ecumenical syllabus be applied during instruction. The recommendation was implemented in 1968 through an Act of Parliament. Since then, the CRE curriculum has been reviewed twice; in 1992 and 2002. The CRE curriculum aims to stimulate students' feelings, enabling them to have good morals and

ethical behavior (KIE, 2002). Students who interact with CRE content should acquire social, spiritual, and moral insights to make moral decisions and think critically.

In the Kenyan secondary school CRE curriculum, the role of education is to develop good character, and the formation of high moral standards among the youth (Oanda, 1995). Indeed, one of the goals of education has been to promote sound moral and religious values (KIE, 2006). According to Chesaro (2003), CRE seeks to fulfill this by inculcating a positive attitude in the learner about God, self, others, and the environment. This, he notes, helps children grow into self-disciplined, self-reliant, and integrated citizens.

Barret et al. (1973) argue that religious education contributes to the production of good citizens through character building and fostering high moral standards. This prepares the learners to take their rightful place in society. Ocharid (2008) similarly observes that the community does not need an education that prepares learners only for academic excellence and demonstration of skills. Rather the society needs an education that makes learners morally upright for useful and purposeful services to themselves and the community around them. CRE, as a tool for moral reasoning, therefore, becomes essential in the secondary school curriculum.

The Koech (1999) report supports this view by recommending that religious organizations consider religious education, not just another academic subject but also behavioral changes among learners. Koech report further stipulates that religious education should be taught by committed and qualified teachers who practice the faith in which they offer instruction. According to Mbiti (1969), the most significant value of religion is to teach people to be humble because of their limitations. Human beings hence have limitations because they are created beings. Gichaga et al. (2003) note that CRE provides students with morals that play

a dominant role in molding attitudes and approaches in their lives.

Itolondo (2012) stipulates that CRE secondary school curriculum in Kenya stipulates that learners who interact with the CRE content are expected to Gain insights into the unfolding of God's self-revelation to humankind through personal experience, African religious heritage, Use the acquired social, spiritual and moral insights to think critically; Appreciate and respect their own and other people's cultural; Acquire the basic principle of Christian Living and develop a sense of self-respect and respect for others; Promote international consciousness through the understanding of universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

Studies have revealed that CRE is essential to the Kenyan secondary school curriculum, which seeks to impart moral values and improve students' ethical understanding. However, the extent to which CRE has been effective in character formation is still questionable. Despite this, students continue to practice vices that are contrary to the moral lessons taught in school, thus questioning the effectiveness of the curriculum. The conventional teaching and learning methods used in teaching CRE have been more of cramming and examination passing techniques, which have not allowed the subject to impact the moral development of the students as they practice. This requires a critical analysis of the curriculum and teaching approaches in order to ensure that CRE achieves its intended goal of producing ethical and responsible citizens.

This study focuses on the challenges of moral education in Kenyan schools with a special reference to Kakamega County. As for the benefits of CRE in character development, there are several challenges that may affect its effectiveness, including the outdated content of the curriculum and the poor teaching methods. Studies also revealed that CRE is taught with an emphasis on the cognitive aspects and tests instead of moral application. As a

result, students fail to see the relevance of what they are taught in class to real life ethical issues. This misalignment is evident in the rising cases of school unrest, drug abuse and other forms of indiscipline among students, which show a disconnect between moral education and the behavior of students (KIE, 2002). There is a need to move from a theoretical perspective of teaching CRE to a more practical one to address these challenges.

Another study done in Nakuru County sought to establish the effect of the CRE curriculum on students' moral reasoning. The results showed that, overall, students' moral reasoning skills were relatively low, and this was the case even after they had interacted with CRE content. This implies that although CRE offers basic ethical information, it does not necessarily enhance ethical reasoning. The study also noted that there is a lack of interactive and reflective activities that would enable the students to reason out ethical issues and apply moral values in their everyday life. Consequently, many students approach CRE as just another subject to study and not as a manual for moral living (Githaiga et al., 2018). These findings suggest that there is a need to reform the curriculum to incorporate more practical and ethical approaches rather than memorization.

Further, the study of the CRE textbooks showed that content-related issues also affected the efficiency of the subject. Among the challenges that were noted was the lack of proper incorporation of core areas of learning that are deemed to play a crucial role in the moral and social development of the students including HIV/AIDS education. The study also revealed that many CRE textbooks are disorganized and do not adequately address modern ethical issues that learners face in their daily lives. This gap makes it difficult for the subject to offer students practical and relevant moral direction (Wangai Report, 2001). In order to

solve this problem, curriculum developers need to update CRE materials to reflect current ethical issues, so that students are prepared for ethical dilemmas in society.

The following strategies should be implemented to improve the effectiveness of CRE in promoting moral values. First, there is a need to review the curriculum to ensure that the content of CRE is relevant to the current moral issues. This includes the contemporary ethical issues like digital ethics, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Second, the use of practical teaching methods is crucial in enhancing the effectiveness of moral education. Teachers should not only teach moral lessons in the abstract but also use examples from practice, including case studies, role-playing, and ethical dilemmas, to make the lessons more engaging to students. Finally, teacher training is important in a way that will enable the teachers to effectively teach CRE. Teachers should be trained on how to use the interactive and student-centered teaching methods that focus on the character development of the learners rather than the content.

By so doing, Christian Religious Education can effectively play the intended role of nurturing the moral character of the youths in Kenya. A well-developed and structured CRE program that focuses on the practical aspect of moral reasoning and ethical decision making will enable students to make sound moral decisions hence creating an ethical society.

2.3 Moral ends of CRE instructional methods in secondary schools.

CRE achieves its objectives by developing students' moral reasoning by selecting appropriate teaching approaches. Research shows that traditional lecture methods control Kenyan educational institutions while blocking student intellectual participation and critical thinking abilities (Kowino, Agak, & Owino, 2011). According to the

phenomenological framework students need to experience reflection combined with personal engagement in order to take moral values into their personal lives.

According to Myyry (2003), moral education needs to combine interactive procedures targeting four essential units: sensitivity, judgment, motivation, and implementation. The scholarly community supports learning styles that focus on students through storytelling, Socratic questioning, role-playing, and case studies to promote active learning experiences. Teachers who employ interactive educational approaches discover they achieve both better student involvement and enhanced ethical consciousness Jebungei (2020) verifies through his research. Implementing such teaching approaches remains difficult because of three primary factors: large student populations, insufficient teacher training, and religious differences within the student body (Itolondo, 2011).

The examination-focused approach of the Kenyan education system as well as the specific curriculum structure of CRE stifle ethical teaching into book-based knowledge instead of enabling hands-on moral learning. Life approach pedagogy represents the most popular method for teaching CRE because it uses practical experiences to instill moral education. Religion should be taught through lived experiences of students as Grimmit (1982) suggests. Through this approach students learn to think about ethical situations they face in their daily lives and establish stronger relationships between classroom teachings and actual life situations. The application of CRE is inconsistent between schools because teachers face various challenges while dealing with curriculum conditions.

According to Jebungei (2013), the teacher is expected to apply appropriate teaching methods based on the learners' experiences in teaching CRE. The teacher should be

equipped with relevant skills to enable him/her to deliver the subject content effectively through the selection of methods that aim to make teaching learner-centered and bring about positive behavior change. The teacher should use creativity and innovativeness in whatever methods or techniques to help promote and sustain the positive change. In her study on the use of the life approach method in teaching CRE in secondary schools, Onsongo (2001) defined life approach as starting to teach with the real and concrete and the present situation of the learners and letting them arrive at a religious understanding of those experiences. The approach implies that God speaks to people through their situations and experience and emphasizes the use of the learners' day-to-day experiences as the basis of teaching CRE. Religious beliefs cannot be taught as if they were facts; they are, by nature, experiential (Grimmit, 1973). Findings from developmental psychology presuppose a developmental approach in all teaching. This calls for an emphasis on the students' experiences, needs, and interests and the need to encourage the learners to look more deeply into their feelings, acts, and knowledge and express what they discover in everyday language. The pluralistic and materialistic nature of the present-society cannot allow for the use of traditional methods of teaching religion. To some extent, religion has become a private affair, so the approach in teaching it should be one that can help the students to make his/her own free choice, particularly in matters relating to value acquisition (Onsongo, 2008).

Life approach (also referred to as life themes pedagogy) is a method of teaching and learning CRE which begins the lesson using the actual day to day experiences of the learners and moving through a reflection of these experiences to a religious understanding of them (Shitoli, Kerre & Gichaga, 2008). It means starting to teach from learners' real,

concrete, and present experiences. The approach aims at guiding the learner to see his/her experiences as a way in which God manifests Himself. The last 30 years have seen Religious Education educators trying to accommodate at least two different sets of educational concerns and techniques. The first set of concerns is an attempt to relate Religious Education to mankind's daily experiences of mankind, thus enabling learners to interpret and understand such experiences from a theological and a sociological perspective. As Grimmit (1982) puts it: The first set of concerns arose from insights from developmental psychology and child-centered theories of education. These concerns were accommodated in the 1960s by defining religion in terms of a natural theology of experience with strongly Christian affinities and seeing CRE as promoting among pupils an activity of theological reflection, which would lead them to a Christian interpretation of human experience.

According to Situma (2016), Christian Religious Education in secondary schools in Kenya occupies a key position in the 8- 4-4 curriculum. This is so because it enables the learner to integrate all curriculum subjects into a more mature view of self and their relationship with the physical and cultural environment, other people, and God (KIE, 2000). Christian Religious Education in Kenya helps learners acquire social, spiritual, and moral insights to help them make appropriate moral decisions in a rapidly changing society (KIE, 2000). Yet, as one of the objectives of CRE, the students lack morals indicate that this objective is not being achieved. This could be attributed to the way the subject is taught or the contents of the curriculum. Like any other subject, CRE should be taught using methods that are more relevant to the evolving society to suit the needs of the students and make it relevant.

The Wangai Committee (2001) acknowledges that the decay in moral values and norms of society greatly influences the behavior and character of students. Despite acknowledging moral decay, the Wangai Committee (2001) never investigated whether or not CRE as a subject achieved its intended purpose of teaching moral values in learners. The Committee also never looked at an instructional approach that would help more effectively impart skills, knowledge and attitude to students which would help them during and after school life.

Situma (2016) posits that with modern technology development, teachers should no longer have to rely solely on mere lectures to deliver their teaching content. An excellent variety of materials and methods can be used to make learning more vivid and enjoyable. These materials are often referred to as instructional aids, devices used to supplement or complement the teachers' task. Like any other subject, CRE content can be made more transparent, more exciting, and relevant better learning methods are used in teaching.

The Kenya Film Corporation provides useful films that could be used to teach CRE. Moreover, the Christian Churches Educational Association (CCEA) and the Kenya Catholic Secretariat also have good catalogs that can be used for teaching CRE. Similarly, the Keswick Bookshop, the Catholic Bookshop in Nairobi, and all the Catholic Diocesan Bookshops in Kenya sell a variety of CRE teaching aids, slides filmstrips, and posters. These audiovisual resources can enhance understanding of CRE content and make teaching and learning useful and relevant to learners' lives.

Learner-centered approaches are emphasized in all subjects, under which fall under heuristic or discovery methods (Twoli et al., 2007; Callahan & Clark; 1982; Aggarwal,

2001). However, given the subjectivity of religion, it is impossible to use learner-centered methods without giving students the freedom to critically explore all versions of "truths" about an aspect of life that is being studied (Cooling, 2003). Life themes are an example of a learner-centered approach. The teacher makes up his/her mind to advance what students should discover (Cox, 1983). The constructivist approach allows more openness to be religious, moral, and pedagogical issues (Maani & Kenyi, 2005; Groenwegen, 1993). In addition to effective approaches to teaching, teachers and students need up-to-date instructional materials – textbooks inclusive, (Clegg, 2009). However, Goldman (1965) observes that the life experience approach as a learner-centered approach makes children integrate all they are learning and doing in all subjects within a world view of God as a creator and as the person who cares about his people. Hence, this so-called learner-centered approach remained confessional or dogmatic in both outlook and approach. Like the earlier Bible-based syllabuses, the aim of Religious Education teaching was to lead the learner towards a faith-based commitment to Christianity. According to Goldman (1965), Christianity should always be taught in the so-called learner-centered approach because it is "true" and answers the deepest needs of human nature. Without knowledge of the love of God and a relationship with Him, humankind will live impoverished. Learners should, therefore, be taught Christian oriented Religious Education because it primarily centers on the needs of human nature (Goldman, 1965).

Although the studies identifies some challenges like large student enrollment, lack of qualified teachers, and religious differences among the students, the study does not delve into these issues. Little has been said about how these barriers affect lesson delivery or how teachers manage them in actual classrooms. However, the studies fails to explain the

various factors that are involved in the process of adopting interactive teaching methods. Also, studies reveal that the Kenyan education system is examination-oriented, which hinders the use of more engaging teaching methods in CRE. This is because many teachers are under pressure to teach to the test and, therefore, spend most of their time drilling their students in ways that do not encourage moral reasoning, such as discussions, role-play or case studies. However, the study fails to present quantitative or qualitative information on how this examination-driven culture impacts on the teaching of CRE in secondary schools. A more detailed study would have examined how teachers are caught between the imperative to teach the syllabi in their entirety and the desire to foster moral reasoning. A major gap in the reviewed studies is the general suggestion that teachers employ creativity and innovation in their teaching approaches. Although this is a good suggestion, it does not consider the challenges that teachers encounter in their daily practice, including lack of time, set curriculum and limited resources. The recommendation seems to be more of a pipe dream without pointing out these challenges. It would have been helpful to include real-life examples of teachers' experiences or institutional limitations to support this argument.

In addition, while the study decries the use of lecture methods as unproductive in developing critical thinking and moral reasoning, it fails to address the challenges teachers face when implementing change from passive to active teaching. Some educators may not have adequate training or materials to properly apply student-centered practices. It would have been useful to provide more examples of these challenges by including the teachers' interviews, case studies, or quantitative data.

To enhance this , the studies above could have provided a more detailed analysis of the current state of CRE instruction. This could involve conducting interviews with teachers to get their perspective, a survey of policies that prevent interactivity in the classroom, and suggestions for effective training programs or policy adjustments. In filling these gaps, the study would offer a more detailed and practical analysis of the difficulties of using interactive teaching techniques in CRE.

2.4 Implications of CRE Syllabus and Instructional Methods on Moral Reasoning among Secondary School Students.

Research shows that the CRE curriculum and educational methods produce mixed results on students' moral thinking abilities. Students who interact with CRE material show better capabilities in ethical decision-making and moral judgment according to Japhet (2020). Students can evaluate social importance and ethical roles through CRE's teaching of biblical stories, ethical dilemma examples, and present-day ethical issue topics. A disconnect between theoretical information and its use in real-life situations weakens the effects of CRE on moral reasoning in the eyes of its critics. According to Kant (1959) moral instruction must consist of both ethical principle acquisition and their subsequent application in actual situations. According to deontological framework of Kant students need to perform based on their moral responsibility to uphold unchanging ethical principles that transcend their personal choices and external forces. A considerable number of Kenyan students perceive CRE as a subject that counts toward exams instead of its intended purpose of ethical growth. Students' perception of CRE reduces its ability to develop ethical conduct outside academic settings.

Studies indicate that CRE helps some students improve their moral reasoning abilities yet demonstrates no significant change or indifference towards morals in other students. Kiambi, Kinoti, and Mwangi (2019) emphasize that comprehensive moral education should use mentorship programs, community service, and extracurricular activities to become effective. According to these strategies, teachers reinforce ethical teachings through real-world contexts that allow students to practice their acquired knowledge.

The CRE syllabus faces a major limitation because it fails to include comprehensive valuation of ethical problems that extend past Christian beliefs. Students from various religious backgrounds face significant difficulties understanding some aspects of the curriculum because Kenya is a multi-religious society. Githaiga et al. (2018) suggest that implementing interfaith dialogues together with comparative religious studies will strengthen the moral reasoning aspect of CRE so it becomes more appropriate for diverse student demographics.

According to KIE (2002), one of CRE's functions is to equip learners with moral reasoning skills to foster ethical behavior. Githaiga et al. (2018) posit that significant changes in the school curriculum in 2002 left CRE with almost the exclusive responsibility of promoting moral development among the youth which was effected following a recommendation by the Wangai commission on causes of indiscipline in secondary schools in Kenya (GoK, 2001). The Basic Education Curriculum Framework in Kenya (GoK, 2016), also stressed on moral and ethical values that Christian Religious Education is taught in a more detailed way both in junior and senior secondary school. Through this, learners will be provided with opportunities to practice their faith by applying Biblical principles to daily living, such as love for

God, self, and others. This will hence enable the learner to cope with the shortcomings of life.

According to Githaiga et al. (2018), the CRE curriculum stipulates that students who interact with CRE content should acquire social, spiritual and moral insights to think critically, and make appropriate ethical decisions in a rapidly changing society, appreciate and respect their own; promote international consciousness; and contribute positively to the transformation of self and society. On the contrary, majority of secondary school students are at the stage of learning by experimenting and not following regulations set by the school. This makes most of the students become victims of moral decadency. Students often engage in common immoral behaviours in secondary schools such as; alcohol and drug abuse, bullying, cheating in examination, stealing, raping, truancy and teenage pregnancy. Kenya National Examination council [KNEC] (2014) reported that cheating and other examination irregularities during the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) increased significantly from 2,927 cases in 2011 to 5,101 in 2016. The KNEC report states that in 2016, numerous reported cases of examination cheating led to the arrest of twenty university students and three principals in 2015. Ndarwa (2007) noted that there is little or no emphasis on moral education enhanced through CRE in most schools despite the moral role that CRE is expected to play as a subject.

The CRE curriculum is expected to expose learners to critical thinking which is essential for moral reasoning (Githaiga et.al, 2018). However, despite exposure to the curriculum, many secondary school graduates are still unable make responsible moral choices (Kowino, Agak and Kochung, 2012). Oyaró (2009) states that Kenyan reform institutions are full of the students who should belong to secondary schools rather than penitentiary.

Mwalulu (2007) adds that politicians normally use the school leavers to cause mayhem in the society. Therefore, many problems in schools are attributed to students' bad behaviour, negative attitudes and lack of morals (Ming'yue, 2013). The Wangai led commission of 2001 report on causes of indiscipline in schools in Kenya observed that problems plaguing schools were mainly due to lack of the teaching of moral reasoning skills. Sahu (2013) attributes lack of moral reasoning skills to poor instructional methods used in hing mora Achola and Pillai (2001) observed that most students concentrate on CRE not because of its moral benefits Itolondo (2011) noted that ineffectiveness of moral Education was due de-motivated teachers who felt that the government does not give them recognition. The teachers accused the government of undermining implementation of the CRE curriculum and where responsible for the escalation of moral decadence in the country because it places more emphasis on and science subjects.

CRE is a compulsory subject in Christian Religious inclined public secondary schools in Kenya in the first two years and an elective in the third and fourth years (Kenya National Examination Council [KNEC], 2016). This implies that all in Christian Religious inclined secondary school students have been exposed to some moral education. Despite this, most students' moral reasoning level is relatively low, which is reflected in the unbecoming behavior observed in schools and society. The low moral reasoning level may be due to inappropriate CRE curriculum, inadequate instructional materials, and lack of qualified and experienced teachers (Sahu, 2013; Kowino, Agak & Kochung, 2012; Rao,2008). Teaching methods may also be a possible cause as they affect learning outcomes. Felder & Brent (2005) assert that the use of appropriate teaching methods helps learners develop their ability to analyze issues and situations besides gathering knowledge and skills. Ming'yue

(2013) demonstrated that moral education is influenced by the instructional methods used in the classrooms.

Moral and intercultural dilemmas are often inextricably entwined with one another during the teaching of moral reasoning (Cushman & Young, 2009). Cultures and ethics involve multidimensional frameworks of values, beliefs, epistemological orientations, and expectations (Vangronsvelt & Manchal, 2009). According to Corm et al. (2012), intercultural moral reasoning skills help students live and work with others from very different cultural backgrounds. Moral reasoning enables one to adjust behavior as he/ she moves in and out of cultures to meet the implicit and explicit expectations of each culture's framework (Githaiga et al. 2018). Due to increasing cultural diversity within many countries, people are regularly called upon to make personal decisions on ethical issues that can potentially harm or help others, whether directly or indirectly. For example, the life-and-death encounters are typically considered moral dilemmas such as euthanasia and abortion, among others (KIE, 2002; Endicott, Bock & Narvaez, 2003). Therefore, given the sensitivity of discussions in today's classrooms, teachers should be willing to invest time to train their students in discussion techniques and encourage them to participate whenever needed to develop moral reasoning skills.

Awan (2014) states that it is necessary to actively draw all students into the discussion to achieve a balanced participation level during a lesson. An excellent way to promote discussion is to provide opportunities for various kinds of group discussions, such as pairs, conversation circles, panels, fishbowls, and cooperative learning (Barton & Levstik, 2011). In teaching moral reasoning skills in students, the teacher should facilitate discussion of controversial social issues arising from the topic being taught. According to Kruger (2012),

a controversial issue is any topic of public debate in which there is an argument, agreement or disagreement, and in which values and emotions are invested. It creates a reflective dialogue between students having opposing points of view. Controversial issues are highly disputable as they are viewed as a vehicle for preparing students to avoid and resolve conflict peacefully (Hedley & Markowitz, 2001). However, Mikhail (2007) notes that differences may occur in moral grammar, that is, the framing of dilemmas which can lead to different moral evaluations by students.

2.5 Theoretical framework of the study

The study is grounded on Kantian deontology. Deontology, derived from the Greek word *deon* meaning duty, posits that moral actions should be guided by a set of universal principles and rules, independent of their consequences. Kantian deontology, formulated by Immanuel Kant, emphasizes the role of human reason in establishing moral obligations rather than relying on divine commandments. Kant argues that moral laws should be derived from rationality and should be adhered to as a duty, making it a suitable philosophical foundation for moral education in Kenyan secondary schools.

Kant asserts that moral judgments are fundamental experiences of obligation inherent in human reasoning. He explores how individuals determine right and wrong, emphasizing that reason operates both speculatively and practically (Kant, 1959). This study aligns with Kant's perspective, proposing that secondary school students should act morally because they possess an inherent duty to uphold ethical principles. Their ability to reason and make moral judgments should be cultivated through structured education that fosters moral uprightness as an intrinsic duty.

A key principle in Kantian ethics is that actions have moral worth only when performed out of duty rather than inclination. Kant (1959) maintains that an action lacks true moral value if motivated purely by personal desires or external pressures. Instead, moral worth arises when individuals act solely based on their rational recognition of duty.

Furthermore, Kant's moral theory underscores the unique rational capacity of human beings. Unlike other animals that rely on instinct, humans are endowed with the ability to think critically and make reasoned moral choices. This rationality obligates individuals to act in accordance with universal moral laws. Applying this to Kenyan secondary education, students must be guided to use reason when making ethical decisions, rather than acting on impulse or societal pressures. By emphasizing rational moral decision-making, CRE can serve as a crucial tool for addressing moral decay in schools.

The Kantian deontological theory provides a robust foundation for understanding and enhancing moral education within the Kenyan secondary school system. By fostering a sense of duty, rational reflection, and adherence to universal moral principles, students can develop a strong ethical foundation essential for responsible citizenship and moral integrity.

2.6 Gaps in related literature reviewed

Table 2. 1 indicates gaps in the reviewed literature

The table below highlights gaps in the reviewed literature

Gap in Literature	Description
Lack of Empirical Studies on Long-Term Impact	No studies track how CRE influences students' moral reasoning after secondary school. Most research focuses only on classroom experiences.
Limited Examination of Pedagogical Approaches	Studies highlight rote memorization but do not explore alternative teaching methods like experiential learning, case studies, and Socratic questioning.
Cultural and Contextual Influences on Moral Reasoning	The role of family, peer groups, and socio-economic factors in shaping students' moral reasoning is not fully explored.
Comparative Analysis with Secular Moral Education	No in-depth comparison between CRE-based moral education and secular ethical instruction to assess effectiveness.
Application of Ethical Theories in CRE Curriculum	Limited discussion on how Kantian deontology, virtue ethics, or other philosophical frameworks are practically applied in CRE teaching.
Evaluation of CRE's Effectiveness on Emerging Moral Issues	Lack of research on how CRE addresses modern moral dilemmas like digital ethics, environmental responsibility, and social justice.

2.7 Conclusion

Christian Religious Education plays a critical role in fostering moral reasoning among Kenyan secondary school students. However, its effectiveness is hindered by outdated

pedagogical approaches, limited student engagement, and a lack of real-world application. From a phenomenological perspective, students' personal experiences significantly influence their moral reasoning, which suggests the need for a more reflective and experiential approach to teaching CRE. The critical method reveals the shortcomings in current pedagogical strategies, advocating for curriculum reforms that focus on applied moral learning.

Kantian deontology provides a structured ethical framework emphasizing duty and rational moral decision-making in education. To enhance CRE's impact, schools should adopt interactive teaching methods, integrate moral education into extracurricular activities, and review the syllabus to address ethical issues beyond Christian perspectives. Future research should explore alternative moral education strategies and assess their long-term influence on students' ethical development. By addressing these challenges, CRE can fulfill its intended purpose of nurturing morally upright and responsible citizens.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that guided the study. It examines the research design, research methods, instruments of data collection, location of the study, target population, sampling procedure, sample size, piloting, validity, reliability, data collection procedure, data analysis 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).

3.3 Research methods

The study employed phenomenological hermeneutical method and critical method.

3.3.1 Phenomenological hermeneutical method

Phenomenology is a type of qualitative research method that focuses on the individual's lived experience. Phenomenology can be traced to Edmund Husserl as the founder. It tries to answer what and how the phenomenon was experienced. The research utilized hermeneutical phenomenological method because it helps in understanding people's meanings; through direct responses, it can be used to gather data which is natural rather than artificial, and lastly, the researcher's motivation and personal interest (Maxwell, 2013). Hermeneutical phenomenology examines human behavior as consciously experienced. According to Husserl, the founder of phenomenology lived experience is what an individual experience from the first-person point of view (Dall'Alba, 2009). This method

was appropriate since it helped the researcher compare the research findings with what other researchers have done . It therefore, helped the researcher to ascertain what others have done . The third reason for using phenomenological hermeneutic was to enhance reliability, valid, and comprehensiveness . Reliability, valid, and comprehensiveness were achieved through several interactions with the co-researchers enabling the researcher to make adjustments; triangulation ,hence the research was holistic.

In objective one, the study used a phenomenological hermeneutic method to establish the extent of moral reasoning among students in secondary school. In objective two, phenomenology was used to understand CRE teachers' lived experiences with their instructional methods. Lastly, the phenomenological approach was used to assess the reliability of the instructional method in relation to the comprehensiveness of the syllabus's moral reasoning content.

3.3.2 Critical method

Critical method is derived from the Greek verb *krinein*, which means to judge (Njoroge & Bennaars, 1986). To provide a philosophical critique is not a matter of addressing something negatively; instead, it involves evaluating a problem through careful reflection based on different criteria. The study uses critical method because this method of inquiry encourages honesty of thought and seeks to protect people from fanaticism and dogmatism; it involves evaluating a problem after a careful reflection and serious study and always relies on facts that are critically analyzed (Njoroge and Bennaars, 1986). This helps the researcher avoid the fact that that is not true in the research on the relationship between CRE and moral reasoning by learners in Kenyan secondary schools.

According to Paul & Elder (2010), elements of reasoning include purpose, questions, points of view, information, assumptions, inferences, concepts, and implementations. In objective

one, critical method was used to comment on the issues and problems in the moral reasoning content in the CRE syllabus. Critical method was used in objective two to question the instructional methods used by the teachers in schools. The study also critically assessed through questioning and make inferences on the instructional methods of CRE and the moral contents in the syllabus.

The critical method complements phenomenology hermeneutical method in the study of students' moral reasoning by offering a more systematic way of evaluating how morality is taught and incorporated. While phenomenology focuses on teachers s' experiences and their actual interactions with moral issues, the critical method questions the efficiency of the CRE syllabus and the teaching-learning strategies, asking whether they promote ethical reasoning or memorization. This two-pronged approach provides a more comprehensive picture by getting the students' perspective and assessing the philosophical and educational paradigms that underlie their moral reasoning.

3.4 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, while secondary data was gathered from 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.

3.5 Location of the study

The study was carried out in Kakamega Central Sub-County, which has 25 public secondary schools. This region was selected due to its metropolitan nature, encompassing

both rural and urban populations, making it an ideal setting for analyzing diverse moral reasoning influences among students. Additionally, Kakamega Central has witnessed a significant rise in moral and ethical challenges among students, necessitating a critical examination of the role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in shaping moral reasoning.

Recent statistics highlight the urgency of addressing moral issues among students in Kakamega County. According to a report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2022), the county recorded an alarming 6,000 cases of teenage pregnancies within five months, reflecting the growing concerns about students' moral decision-making and ethical awareness. Furthermore, the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC, 2021) reported a 17% increase in examination malpractice cases in secondary schools across Kakamega County, pointing to ethical dilemmas students face in academic settings.

Moreover, a study by Nyangaresi et al. (2024) found that over 35% of secondary school students in Kakamega County had engaged in at least one form of indiscipline, including substance abuse, bullying, or absenteeism, indicating an urgent need for moral guidance. Reports from the Ministry of Education (2023) also noted that Kakamega Central, as the county's administrative hub, has experienced increased student unrest, with five major school strikes recorded between 2022 and 2023, highlighting gaps in moral education.

Given these concerns, Kakamega Central presents a relevant and critical context for evaluating the effectiveness of CRE in fostering moral reasoning among secondary school students.

3.6 Target population

The target population is the entire population from which the study sampled its participants. This research targeted students in the public secondary schools with emphasis on the CRE students who were in form four. The selection of CRE students was based on their experiences in the phenomenon under study to ensure that they are aware of the phenomenon. In this way, the study obtained detailed and context-sensitive information on moral reasoning among Students.

3.7 Sampling Procedure

This study used purposive sampling to ensure that only participants with adequate knowledge and experience in CRE and moral reasoning were selected. Purposeful sampling is one of the most common non-probability sampling techniques used in qualitative research, especially in phenomenological studies because it enables the researcher to intentionally select participants who have first-hand experience of the phenomenon of interest (Krathwohl, 2009). Kruger et al. (1988) have noted that purposive sampling is the most appropriate approach to selecting primary participants in a study that aims to explore subjective experiences because it is more important to go deep rather than wide.

In relation to phenomenology, sampling should not be done to achieve generalization but rather to get thick descriptions that will help the researcher capture the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). The aim is not to have a big sample size but to have a few participants who can give detailed accounts of their moral reasoning as influenced by CRE teachings. This is in line with Husserl's (1970) assertion that phenomenology aims to

describe the structures of consciousness and meaning, which can only be done by selecting participants who have encountered the phenomenon.

Furthermore, in phenomenological studies, participants are considered co-researchers since they play a crucial role in producing knowledge (van Manen, 1990). Thus, the study enlists participants who are involved in CRE teachings and have experienced ethical issues that demand ethical decision-making to obtain contextually valid data.

3.7.1 Sample Size

The sample size in phenomenological research is not determined by statistical means but by data saturation, which means that no new information is obtained from the data collected (Creswell, 2013). This study intended to sample fifteen participants, but data saturation reached at participant five. Atieno (2013) notes that sample size in phenomenological studies is not restricted, and no fixed number of participants can be used. Some of the researchers recommend a minimum of five (McMillan, 2008), while others recommend between ten and thirty participants depending on the nature of the phenomenon under study (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2006; Groenewald, 2004). Groenewald (2004) notes that a sample size of ten is considered to be used to eliminate the saturation points, but even if the numbers are smaller, they are still acceptable if they offer enough experience. A small but purposive sample enables the researcher to conduct several interviews, interviews follow-up, and reflective analysis without compromising the validity of the data.

From a phenomenological perspective, fewer participants allow the researcher to interview them and explore their moral experiences. The selection of five participants aligns with the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition that focuses more on depth than width (van

Manen, 1990). phenomenological research is interested in the participants' perceptions rather than the general population.

3.8 Piloting

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.

3.9 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. 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 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 participants and revisiting them several times to confirm the truthfulness of the early information given by the same participants.

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 two weeks before the data collection exercise to give them ample time to prepare well and make appropriate arrangements for the day. Interviews were administered to students over five eight to gather lived. Once the data collection exercise ended, the interviews were subjected to phenomenological and critical analysis.

3.12 Data analysis

The qualitative data analysis method, known as thematic analysis, was used by the researcher discover meaningful patterns and themes in text-based data. The analysis technique proposed by Braun and Clarke (2017) was too adopted to establish an organized framework that offers flexibility for understanding qualitative data, making it highly suitable for phenomenological studies. The explored phenomenon demanded thematic analysis as its research approach since it enabled the identification of recurring patterns

regarding moral education and ethical decision-making alongside the impact of Christian Religious Education on students' values.

3.13 Ethical considerations

All participants received ethical protections concerning their safety, privacy, and study integrity during research execution. Before data collection, the researcher obtained permission from NACOSTI and the County Education Director. The research obtained voluntary consent from all participants to explain the research objectives and procedures, along with the fact that participation was strictly voluntary. Study participants received strong protection through the use of coded identifiers instead of personal details because all data had secure storage methods to prevent unauthorized access. The study protected participant confidentiality by using survey results solely for academic research and allowed participants to leave at any time with no resulting consequences. The research protected participants from psychological, emotional, or social damage through its commitment to ethical principles of non-maleficence and beneficence. The research adhered to strict objectivity standards and integrity principles through complete transparency about the results that maintain academic research integrity.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents, interprets, and discusses the research findings based on the study objectives. The purpose of this study was a critique of Christian religious education for moral reasoning among students in public secondary schools in Kakamega Central, Kenya: A phenomenological approach . The findings are organized thematically according to the study's three main objectives ; to analyze the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus in the light of moral content, to examine Kenyan secondary school teachers' pedagogical approaches in teaching moral content in the CRE syllabus and to analyze the implications of CRE syllabus and pedagogical approaches on moral reasoning among secondary school students.

Findings are categorized and discussed according to the themes that emerged from participants' responses. Verbatim excerpts from the interviews are included to highlight the perspectives of the respondents and to ensure authenticity in representing their experiences. Additionally, the findings are interpreted in relation to existing literature , Phenomenological hermeneutical method and theoretical frameworks, particularly Kantian Deontology, which underpinned this study.

4.1 Objective 1: To analyze the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus in the light of moral content

This objective was guided by three questions as discussed below.

4.1.1 Can you describe a specific moment during a CRE lesson when you felt personally challenged or inspired to reflect on your own moral decisions or behavior?

The following are the actual responses of the students

P1"Yes, I remember during a lesson on forgiveness when we were learning about Joseph forgiving his brothers. It made me think deeply about how I had held a grudge against my cousin for something small. After that lesson, I went home and apologized for how I had been treating him. It really challenged me to be better."

P2"When we learnt about the Ten Commandments, especially the one about honoring parents, I felt guilty because I had been ignoring my mother's advise and being rude. The teacher even gave examples that matched exactly what I was doing. That day I decided to change and try to listen to my parents more."

P3"There was a time we were discussing the story of the Good Samaritan, and the teacher asked us if we really help others or just pretend to be good. I felt attacked honestly, because I usually avoid people who are suffering, thinking someone else will help. It made me feel like I need to do more when I see someone in need."

P4"In our lesson on choices and consequences, we talked about peer pressure and drug abuse. I remembered a weekend when I almost followed my friends to a party where bad things happen. That lesson helped me see how serious the consequences could be, and I was glad I didn't go."

P5"When we learnt about Jesus refusing to bow to temptation, I thought about the time I lied to my teacher to escape punishment. I felt very ashamed and wished I had told the truth. That lesson stayed with me, and I have tried to be honest since then even when it's hard."

4.1.2 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses

One of the most significant patterns emerging from the students' responses is the development of moral self-awareness through the Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabus. Students described feeling personally convicted after lessons on forgiveness, the Ten Commandments, and resisting temptation. For instance, one student recounted how the story of Joseph forgiving his brothers compelled him to reflect on his own grudges and led him to reconcile with a family member. Another shared how the lesson on honoring

one's parents brought about guilt and prompted a change in behavior toward her mother. These examples show that CRE has the potential to facilitate moral introspection among learners. However, a critical gap in the curriculum is the absence of structured opportunities for reflection. While students are clearly making moral connections, these appear to occur more by chance or through the initiative of individual teachers. Therefore, it is vital that the syllabus incorporates intentional reflection activities such as personal journals, guided self-assessment forms, or class discussions that regularly encourage students to relate content to their real-life ethical experiences.

Beyond awareness, some students also indicated that CRE lessons inspired actual changes in behavior. The findings shows that exposure to moral narratives such as Jesus' resistance to temptation and the call to forgive can move students to reconsider and even correct their actions. A student shared that after reflecting on a lesson about temptation, he decided to stop lying to teachers a shift from moral knowledge to moral action. Such testimonies highlight that when CRE is taught in a relatable and engaging way, it can lead to transformative outcomes. Yet, the syllabus does not currently provide mechanisms to track or reinforce this transformation over time. Assessments in CRE often focus on factual recall of biblical content rather than on how students are applying these lessons. To close this gap, the curriculum could include project-based moral learning where students set personal ethical goals and report on them over time. Schools may also organise peer accountability groups or teachers urged to hold teachers accountable to their morality promises in the lesson.

The third theme that can be identified in the responses of the students is the development of empathy and social responsibility with the help of biblical stories. One of the students

commented on the lesson on the Good Samaritan and said that it settled in badly with him because he knew he was also so indifferent to needy people. This incident of uneasiness is indicative of the moral engagement, which CRE can elicit when the stories are presented in manner that compels students to question their own social behavior. The present-day curriculum however lacks both emphasis on experiential learning or service based activities that would enable the students to manifest this moral growth elsewhere physically. Establishing community service programs or associating lessons with school-wide community service may aid in the reinforcement of the values taught. Additionally, other aspects such as integration of empathy-building activities like storytelling, role-play, and simulations, have the potential to enhance the abilities of the students to internalize the moral concepts and perceive the worldviews of other people.

The other central theme that can be identified is the significance of CRE in helping the student to make real life moral choices especially during the adolescence stage. One of the learners explained how the peer pressure and the outcomes of decisions led to a lesson helped her confirm a thoughtful yet good decision to not join a risky social situation. This example shows that the CRE syllabus can create the role of a moral compass which will provide fellow students with instruments to make ethically correct decisions. Most of the time, however, curricula being taught really focus on biblical or historical case studies, without taking care to make these transitions to modern moral conflicts like the conflict in social media, cyberbullying, sexual integrity, and substance abuse. Make CRE more responsive. The lesson should also contain localized and current scenarios, which should be based on real lives of the Kenyan youth. In service training should be used to enable teachers to establish links between the Scripture and the socio-cultural issues affecting the

students in their day to day lives. There is also the possibility of an improved critical thinking and moral reasoning through the well-organized sessions of moral dilemma discussions and classroom debates.

One of the common denominators among all the student responses is the acknowledgment that though CRE has the power to influence moral character, the effect this has is highly determined by the way this syllabus is interpreted and presented. A case in point would be that students can certainly gain but the inculcation of moral content using relational, reflective and real-life practical lessons does not always benefit them as official curriculum usually presents moral concepts as purely memorizable facts. This is contrary to developmental aim of religious education. Hence, there is the necessity in shifting paradigm, for instance shifting the content-based conveyance to a values-oriented communication. This is possible by way of imaginative ways of teaching that prioritise experience in the senses rather than memorisation. As an example, reflective essays can be set by the teacher, ethical project work can be done in the classroom, and parents can discuss the results of moral development with their children. Moral content, in essence, should be transformative and accessible, thus should be formed rather than informed on CRE.

The students feedbacks analyzed through the prism of phenomenology implies that, should it be well taught, the Kenyan secondary school CRE course can affect the moral consciousness and decision-making in a particularly effective way. The stories narrated by students about their experience of interaction with the Bible show that stories and moral teachings are important when they are related to their reality and individual experiences. Nonetheless, this possibility can be inhibited by the prevailing curriculum design, where

the doctrinal knowledge prevails over the ethical action. CRE should be re-conceptualized as a vehicle of character development, moral thinking and social awareness in order to live out to its ethical mandate. This needs not only curriculum change, but also pedagogical renewal in which the moral journey of the learner is the key product. In the end, to make the CRE syllabus relevant in the fast-swerving society, there has to be a transformation to be dynamic, reflective, and experience-based instrument in the education of morality-based citizens.

4.1.3 Discussion of the findings

It was found in the answers provided by the students that the synthesis of CRE curriculum frequently acts as a speculative mirror that invites students to evaluate their own ethical behavior. Such lessons were based on forgiveness, Ten Commandments and so on and they motivated the students to review their relationships with other people and reconsider their moral obligations. This is not only a high pedagogical result, it is also a critical objective of values education, namely, the mobilization of moral self-awareness.

The finding is consistent with the one of Wambugu and Barasa (2017), who observed that studying CRE in open conversation and encouraged reflection assist students in building ethical awareness and allows them to self-divulge morally. They stress that such results depend on the instructional strategy of the teacher-as though the CRE syllabus in itself does not necessarily foster this self-awareness unless followed through by reflective teaching style. In the same way, it is possible to consider the critical remarks stated by Itolondo (2012) who stressed the excessive focus on rote memorization in CRE and added that its ability to act as the moral compass is achieved only in case the instruction opens some room to the personal interpretation and moral reasoning.

The Kantian viewpoint beholds this theme to be a powerful correspondence to the concept of the moral autonomy. Instead, Immanuel Kant had mentioned that true morality is not provided by outside pressure or mindless obedience but by an ability of reasons and awareness of duty (Kant, 2002). In this perception, moral self-awareness will be a requirement to the moral action. The idea of Kant of the moral law within, promotes an education that fosters reflective thinking in that, moral laws are acquired freely by students since rational wisdom guides them. Consequently, by encouraging personal reflection, CRE lessons correlate with the Kantian action to shape rational moral agents able to take action in their duty.

The second prominent theme identified in student narratives was moral transformation ,tangible changes in behavior after CRE lessons. One student, for example, recounted choosing honesty over deceit after a lesson on Jesus' rejection of temptation. These moments exemplify how CRE can influence students' ethical behavior beyond the classroom. Githaiga, Kariuki, and Wambua (2018) confirm this potential in their qualitative study, they established that when moral teachings are grounded in real-life contexts, they can lead to meaningful behavioral change.

However, both literature and your findings reveal that these changes are often sporadic and poorly reinforced. Itonga (2011) argues that without co-curricular programs and institutional support, the moral gains made during CRE instruction often dissipate over time. The lack of continuity limits long-term ethical development and suggests the need for follow-up structures such as mentorship programs or reflective portfolios.

Kantian ethics adds depth to this observation. For Kant, moral transformation is only genuine when it emerges from adherence to universal moral laws chosen through rational

deliberation, not just emotional appeal or social conformity. The example of choosing honesty reflects Kant's categorical imperative, which demands that individuals act only according to principles they would will as universal laws (Kant, 2002). Thus, CRE instruction that enables such principled choices supports the Kantian aim of nurturing duty-based morality rather than consequence-based or obedience-driven conduct.

Another key finding was the development of empathy and social responsibility. Students expressed emotional resonance with stories like the Good Samaritan and reflected on how such lessons urged them to reconsider their treatment of the marginalized. This shows the affective potential of CRE when biblical narratives are made relevant to contemporary social issues. Nawose and Chege (2023) support this, noting that empathy and prosocial behavior increase when teachers employ participatory methods like storytelling and drama. Bwire (2016) also stresses that religious education should promote civic virtues and moral imagination, recommending service-learning as a way to deepen empathy.

Kant's ethical theory contributes an important dimension here. While often viewed as emotion-neutral, Kant does not reject compassion, he simply insists that it must be expressed through rational moral commitment rather than sentimentality. For Kant, helping others is morally praiseworthy only when it is grounded in duty to humanity, not pity or impulse. The CRE syllabus, therefore, should not only evoke emotional responses but must encourage learners to translate compassion into principled action acting out of duty to uphold human dignity. When students act with empathy because they recognize a universal moral obligation, this reflects Kant's ideal of respect for persons as ends in themselves.

Students demonstrated the ability to apply CRE teachings in real-life ethical decisions, such as resisting peer pressure or choosing integrity in difficult situations. One student, for

example, described how a lesson on consequences shaped her decision to avoid a risky social situation. This validates the relevance of CRE in cultivating ethical reasoning beyond religious dogma. Wanjiku and Karimi (2020) observed similar trends in their study, found out that students often use moral principles learned in CRE to navigate complex life choices, especially when the curriculum is contextualized to their lived realities.

Nevertheless, much of the existing syllabus remains tied to biblical history, which students struggle to connect with modern dilemmas. Kariuki (2019) suggests that CRE should integrate case studies and simulations to develop students' moral reasoning and problem-solving skills. Kantian ethics directly supports this pedagogical direction. According to Kant, ethical decision-making should be governed by universalizability, the test of whether one's actions could serve as moral law for all. This principle requires learners to evaluate choices through reasoned judgment, not tradition or authority alone. Therefore, CRE that cultivates independent moral reasoning empowers students to apply ethical principles universally and autonomously, a core tenet of Kantian moral education.

One of the major insights that lies in the student narratives is the disjuncture between CRE as something that can and is tested, and CRE as a formative moral experience. Although students mentioned about experiences of real ethical development, the latter could not be seen as structurally facilitated by the curriculum. This criticism resembles the argument of Nyaga (2022), who claims the given syllabus, as well as curriculum, is based more on cognitive results than emotional and behavioral ones. The suppressing nature of CRE with its over-emphasis on the written forms of assessment is similarly cautioned by Kafu and

Simiyu (2017) as arduous to the transformative power of subjects. They recommend ongoing evaluation methods which include values-based portfolio and reflective journals. This is a remark that appeals strongly with the Kants criticism of heteronomous morality, that one did something at the compulsion of others rather than a personal belief. By concentrating on the exam performance, CRE runs the risk of lowering morality to the level of compliance instead of rational commitment to duty. Kant had dreamt of education as a means to enable the moral autonomy of people being a free willer of the good utilising the reasoning. A CRE-curriculum based on Kantian ethics would also focus more on the taught reality of morality than recitations that retain only memorized principles, so that the development of morality were not a by-product, but rather a major an assessable objective of the teaching.

The findings of this study affirm that Kenyan Secondary School CRE curriculum can instigate moral self knowledge, behavior change, empathy and ethical conduct among the learners. Nonetheless, these ethical results are rather unequal and are frequently accidental because the organizations of the syllabus are content-centered and examination-driven. The themes of the study are consistent with the existing literature in academia, which also requests a tendency towards a new form of pedagogy, learner-centred moral education. Crucially, Kantian ethics provides a powerful framework for understanding and improving the moral aims of CRE. Kant's principles of duty, autonomy, and universality suggest that moral education must cultivate rational agents who choose the good not out of habit or fear but from reasoned commitment to universal moral law. To achieve this, the CRE curriculum must integrate reflective practices, participatory pedagogy, and authentic moral assessment strategies. Doing so would help transform CRE from a theoretical subject

into a lived moral journey, fulfilling both its religious mission and its philosophical potential.

4.1.4 How do the topics you learn in CRE relate to the way you handle real-life situations, such as peer pressure, honesty, or respect?

The following are the actual responses of the students

P1 "In CRE we learnt about the Ten Commandments and the importance of obeying God's laws. I remember one time when my friends wanted me to lie to the teacher about being late, I remembered the lesson about honesty and chose to tell the truth. It wasn't easy, but I felt at peace knowing I did the right thing."

P2 "The story of Joseph really spoke to me, especially how he resisted temptation with Potiphar's wife. It made me reflect on peer pressure. There are times my friends pressure me to do things like skip school or cheat in exams, but remembering Joseph helps me to stay firm and make better choices."

P3 "CRE lessons about respect for others, especially when we learnt about Jesus and how he treated the poor and sinners, changed how I treat my classmates. I used to ignore some people who were different, but now I try to be kind and respectful even if we don't get along."

P4 "When we studied the teachings of Jesus about forgiveness, it really helped me. I used to hold grudges, especially when someone wronged me. But after that topic, I decided to forgive a friend who had insulted me. It helped us become close again. I realized forgiveness is powerful."

P5 "I connect with the topic on human dignity. Our teacher asked us to think about how we treat others, especially people with disabilities. Since then, I became more conscious of how I behave in public and even stood up for a classmate who was being bullied. It made me feel responsible."

4.1.5 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses

Lived experiences of students learning Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Kenyan secondary schools reveal the process of internalization and embodiment of the moral material into people lives in terms of making day to day choices. In a phenomenological perspective, which focuses on meaning making by examining lived experience, students

expose that CRE is more than instructional but existential, as it influences the interaction, thinking, and ethical decisions, which they make in the real world.

Participant 1 explained that the life story of Joseph acted as a personal anchor in resisting peer pressure. When Joseph decided to escape the temptation, this piece of history became closer to such a student, as she found a relatable example of integrity. This supports the fact that learners have a tendency in acquiring moral orientation through storied traditions which form inner moral maps in dealing with complex social environments as portrayed by Van Manen (1990).

Participant 2 reported having difficulty in figuring out whether or not to lie to a teacher and after doing so he decided to lie because of the lesson on Ten Commandments of the CRE that he remembered. That is how the student experienced a sense of inner peace after speaking the truth and this sums up what Merleau-Ponty (1962) or embodied cognition is all about, moral cognition should not be one dimensional in terms of intellectualism but in an aspect of emotional and physical congruency. This case demonstrates how the CRE moral teachings get applied in actual life ethical dilemma and shaping action.

Participant 3 stated that his behavior towards classmates was changed after he heard about teachings about love, given by Jesus. The student said that he avoided exclusionary actions and was being nicer to marginalized peers. This correlates with the ethical philosophy of Levinas (1969) which held the values of responsibility to the other. The lesson experienced in CRE helped produce a moral change that is based on empathy and encompassing nature implying that moral education with the help of CRE helps create relational morality.

Fourth participant narrated about a story, when she decided to forgive a peer that engaged in a conflict with her because of the teachings of Jesus about forgiveness. This point of

ethical deliberation signifies the appearing of ethical intentionality as to Husserl (1970), the cognizant or deliberate guiding of the mind and behaviour towards a significant moral goal. The act of forgiveness demonstrates an internalized sense of good intentions, which indicates how CRE can be used to help raise self-consciousness and reparation.

Participant 5 reported acting to protect another student against bullying out of what he had learned about the respect of human dignity in CRE classes. Reflecting moral agency, this student presents the quality of facing injustice in the world and safeguarding the weak, which demonstrate how ethical content in CRE leads to positive action. This instance echoes with the statement made by Vagle (2014) that meaning in moral learning is not only discovered during reflection but also due to action and involvement with real-life situations.

The narrations indicate that students do not passively acquire moral contents during CRE lessons but rather incorporate and apply those values in the real-life in solving moral dilemmas. The answers given by the students, showing that they are resisting peer pressure, forgiveness and the ability to stand up in support of others prove the point that CRE molds ethical terrain in them. The experiences are in line with the main phenomenological notions of intentionality, embodiment, and relationality. By so doing, CRE does not only serve as curriculum content but as a living tradition that students learn to implement moral clarity, empathy and responsibility in their daily lives.

4.1.6 Discussion of the findings

Phenomenological accounts of students of the influence that concepts taught by the Christian Religious Education (CRE) educational programme have on their own decision making in real life are of interest as an expression of the interface between formal values education and personal choice. These are the revelations of the transformative prospects of

moral learning once internalized to learners, and they correspond greatly with the existing studies and also with the moral theory of Immanuel Kant, which is called deontological.

Participant 1 was able to oppose peer pressure using Biblical story of Joseph reaffirms the ethical guiding role played by religious narratives. Narvaez and Lapsley (2005) believe that the teaching of morals is most effective when it involves the activation of inner schemas that direct ethical behavior. In this case, it can be seen that the story of Joseph is a template of moral gut and moderation. This too can be based on the term duty by Kant- Joseph did not have any ulterior motives in regard to that, but carried out the deed, based on his moral duty, indicating such an equivalent behaviour in the student. According to Kant (1993) moral worth depends on a person doing the right action on grounds other than inclination which is seen in the student deliberately choosing to pursue a clean path even when there was a temptation to succumb to social pressure.

In Participant 2's case, the choice to tell the truth despite initial temptation aligns with Kant's categorical imperative, which demands that one act only on maxims that could be willed as universal law. Telling the truth, even when it may be inconvenient, demonstrates a respect for the moral law within and an understanding of universalizability "What if everyone lied to their teacher?" This moral reflection supports the idea that students are not merely absorbing religious content but engaging in what Berkowitz and Bier (2005) term "moral functioning" the application of moral knowledge to real-life decisions.

Participant 3's behavioral change toward marginalized classmates illustrates empathy and respect for human dignity, key themes in both religious ethics and secular moral education. Noddings (2002) emphasizes the role of *caring relationships* in moral development, noting

that genuine moral action arises from seeing the other as worthy of moral concern. This aligns with Kant's second formulation of the categorical imperative: treating humanity, whether in oneself or another, always as an end and never merely as a means. The participant's shift reflects a Kantian disposition where each person's intrinsic worth is recognized and honored.

The forgiveness extended by Participant 4 further reinforces this ethical stance. In religious terms, forgiveness is a central theme; in educational psychology, it's increasingly seen as a social-emotional skill that strengthens moral resilience (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). While Kant's framework is often viewed as rigid, he acknowledges the importance of moral virtue including the virtue of forgiveness when rooted in a recognition of shared moral humanity. In this case, the student's action is not a sign of weakness but a moral victory anchored in duty and ethical maturity.

The fact that Participant 5 is ready to contribute to defending a victim of bullying is a sign of moral courage and the element of active justice, which moral philosophers and educators alike focus on. Such an act describes post-conventional moral reasoning according to the moral development theory by Kohlberg (1984), which recognizes the practice of justice even at personal expense. Kantian standpoint-wise, this move is in line with the moral obligation to enhance the respect of other people and abide by the moral law everywhere. The student is doing what can be generalized on all people by opposing the bully and acknowledging the other as a fellow moral agent.

The above responses indicate that the CRE syllabus, when meaningfully engaged with, has a deep impact on the moral development of learners. The students' decisions mirror Kant's foundational idea that morality is grounded in autonomy the ability to act according

to principles one gives oneself, in respect of universal moral law. This shows a significant overlap between Christian moral teachings and Kantian ethics: both emphasize duty, respect for persons, and acting from moral principle rather than mere consequence.

The detailed lived experiences of these five participants confirm that Christian Religious Education in Kenyan secondary schools has significant moral utility beyond the classroom. The students' actions, ranging from truth-telling and resisting peer pressure to forgiveness and justice-seeking resonate with Kantian ethics and echo findings in contemporary moral education . They reveal that CRE fosters not only knowledge acquisition but also moral agency, where learners see themselves as responsible moral subjects acting in accordance with universal principles. This underscores the importance of retaining and enriching morally grounded syllabi like CRE in formal education systems.

4.1.7 In your experience, what parts of the CRE syllabus seem most helpful or unhelpful in shaping your values or sense of right and wrong?

The following are the actual responses of the students

P1: "I think the topic on the Ten Commandments really helped me. It gave me a clear guide of what is right and wrong, especially about things like stealing or lying. Whenever I am in a tough situation, like when I am tempted to copy during exams, I remember those commandments. But sometimes, I feel like other parts, like the long genealogy stories, are not so helpful. They don't connect to my daily life."

P2: "The teachings of Jesus, especially the Sermon on the Mount, really changed how I view people. I used to judge others a lot, but now I try to be more kind and forgiving. Those parts made me think deeply. But honestly, some Old Testament lessons feel distant. I don't always see how they apply to my life today."

P 3: "What helped me the most was the topic on Christian approaches to contemporary social issues. We talked about things like corruption and drug abuse, which are real issues we face in society. It made me reflect on how I can be responsible. But some of the historical topics, like the division of the kingdom of Israel, were confusing and I didn't find them helpful morally."

P4: "I really connected with the unit on the teachings about human dignity and equality. It helped me to treat others better, even those from different backgrounds or religions. I used to be biased without knowing it. But some parts that just repeat stories from the Bible without explaining their meaning felt less helpful."

P5: "The topic on Christian ethics opened my eyes. It helped me understand why values like honesty, hard work, and respect are important. I now make decisions more carefully. But when the teacher just rushes through content for exams, I feel we miss the point of how it's supposed to help us become better people."

4.1.8 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses

Students' reflections on the Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabus were examined not just for content comprehension but for how they experienced moral learning in their real lives. The participants' voices offered deeply insightful understandings of how certain elements of the syllabus influenced their values, sense of right and wrong, and everyday behavior. Several students identified practical, moral-focused topics such as the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and lessons on moral decision-making as especially helpful. One participant explained that after learning the Ten Commandments, they began thinking twice before cheating in exams. This highlights how such teachings are not just memorized but become internalized frameworks for ethical behavior. From a phenomenological standpoint, this speaks to the notion of intentionality, how consciousness is always directed at something. In this case, the student's moral consciousness was intentionally reoriented by the content of CRE, suggesting that the syllabus facilitated real moral deliberation and self-regulation.

Another important theme was the relevance of certain topics to students' lived experiences. For instance, one participant stated that issues like corruption, justice, and peace were more impactful than historical content about ancient kings. This comment underscores the phenomenological concept of the lifeworld, or the immediate world of lived experience.

The student found moral and intellectual engagement in themes that mirrored the societal problems they see around them. Therefore, content that aligns with students' social realities enables more meaningful reflection and moral identity formation. When students can see the direct relevance of a lesson to their life or future, the moral impact deepens.

The findings also produced the intersubjective transformation. Another student (noting that the topics of equality and human dignity) also reported that learning about these topical issues taught the student not to pass judgment on other people, especially those whose status they regarded as being inferior to their own. This reflection shows how the student changed his/her understanding of relational identity. Phenomenologically, this would be on the level of intersubjective co-constitutive of self and other. It demonstrates how an involvement in the values-based learning such as CRE has the potential to transform not only the way learners act, but the value and dignity they learn to assign to individuals in their social context. The fact that the participant can identify self and act on removal of prejudice becomes a moment of strong moral vision produced by the curriculum.

All the anecdotes were not positive. Participants argued that the CRE teaching was too controversial oriented with minimal space left to think or talk about the values. According to one of the students they were taught in a way that required them to memorize, as opposed to internalizing what they were taught. Such disconnect is an indication of a fundamental mismatch between how curriculum should be as outlined in the curriculum-as-intended, and experienced as curriculum-as-experienced. Although the syllabus might be very rich in morally rich material, the transformative potential may be lost when teachers limit it to exam leading material. This observation forms a phenomenological contradiction between

the ideal of moral learning and the experience of moral learning as it is lived by the student. In the absence of reflective and dialogic classroom atmosphere, the students cannot gain the personal and transformative experience aiming to explore the ethical meanings.

In general, the phenomenological interpretation of these student responses reveals that the impact of the CRE syllabus is strongest when the content is morally grounded, socially relevant, and pedagogically engaging. Students are most affected when the syllabus touches on real-life moral challenges, gives space for reflective thinking, and encourages ethical self-awareness. Conversely, when instruction is disconnected from students' lifeworlds or overly focused on exams, the moral lessons become abstract and ineffectual. For educators and curriculum designers, the implication is clear: CRE must be taught in a way that fosters moral becoming, not just knowledge transmission. When this is achieved, students do not merely learn about values they live them.

4.1.9 Discussion of the findings

The responses of those interviewed indicate the sense of complexity regarding how particular elements of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) contributes to their moral growth. Among the themes, students found justice, equality, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount and lessons on integrity and respect to be very powerful. Such findings are consistent with research that views Religious Education as an important agent of moral and character building, in culturally diverse and morally pluralistic society such as Kenya (Wamahiu, 1999; Muthoni, 2015). On the one hand, teaching CRE with a values-based focus, Mburu (2020) notes, fosters the skills of learners navigating the tricky ethical landscapes of peer pressure, corruptive tendencies, and discrimination learners have to all these issues and more as they are mentioned by the participants, too.

The reflection of students also confirms what the existing literature mentions as the relationship between curriculum contents and ethical agency. According to Oketch and Asiachi (1992), moral education would be most effectual when it is correlated to the lived reality of learners. For instance, one participant claimed that he or she learnt about the importance of integrity and not letting negative influences corrupt him or her through lessons on corruption. How this reflects the Commission Report of Koech (1999) is the fact that the focus of education in Kenya should aim at producing ethically based citizens. Further, Ominde (1964) suggested the teachings of education to inculcate values that have the potential to sustain national growth and harmony which CRE can attain, when based on pedagogical sensitivity.

Phenomenologically, the findings emphasize students lived moral encounters instances where curricular content transcended academic learning and shaped behavior, choices, and interpersonal relationships. For instance, students shared experiences where lessons in CRE inspired them to reconsider cheating, gossiping, or judging others. This aligns with Njogu (2021), who found that learners' exposure to moral education facilitated greater introspection and ethical consciousness when the teaching methods allowed for open discussion and reflection.

From the perspective of Kantian ethics, the students' experiences can be interpreted through the lens of *duty*, autonomy, and the moral law. Kant posits that moral action arises not from external consequences but from adherence to duty and universal moral principles determined by reason (Kant, 1993). When students reported refraining from cheating or judging others due to lessons from the Ten Commandments or teachings on equality, they

were effectively acting out of recognition of universal moral duties, rather than fear of punishment or desire for approval. This reflects Kant's concept of the categorical imperative, acting only on that maxim which one can will to become a universal law.

Moreover, the emphasis on personal responsibility in the responses supports Kant's notion of autonomy. The learners described moral transformation that was self-directed after engaging with CRE topics, such as equality or justice. These are not passive internalizations of teacher instruction but active moral deliberations. Such moral reasoning is central to Kantian ethics, which values the capacity of the rational being to legislate moral law unto oneself.

However, some participants expressed dissatisfaction with how CRE is taught, particularly its exam-focused delivery that discourages deep ethical reflection. This critique echoes warnings about the dangers of reducing moral education to mechanical content delivery (Mutua & Barasa, 2013; Wamahiu, 1999). Kant himself would likely view such an approach as contrary to genuine moral development, which requires critical thinking and reflection rather than indoctrination. According to Kant, moral maturity arises when individuals are treated as ends in themselves, capable of reasoning and moral judgment not merely as vessels to be filled with doctrinal knowledge.

Therefore, the findings illustrate that CRE has strong potential to support moral formation in students, but only when the content is taught in a way that honors students' moral agency, fosters critical reflection, and connects with real-life ethical dilemmas. In doing so, it not only aligns with educational policy goals and phenomenological insights but also fulfills the Kantian vision of moral education: nurturing autonomous, principled individuals who act from duty and uphold the dignity of others.

4.2 Objective two: An examination of Kenyan secondary school teachers' pedagogical approaches in teaching moral content in the CRE syllabus.

This objective was guided by two questions as discussed below.

4.2.1 Can you describe a specific CRE lesson where your teacher's way of teaching helped you understand or reflect on a moral issue deeply?

The following are the actual responses of the students

P1: "Yes, I remember a lesson on forgiveness from the topic 'Jesus' Teachings on Forgiveness'. Our teacher told us a real-life story about someone in our community who forgave the person who caused them serious harm. After that, we were asked to write letters to someone we were struggling to forgive. That lesson made me realize I was holding on to anger. It really helped me to let go of a grudge I had with a friend."

P2: "One lesson that really stood out was about sexual purity and self-control. The teacher used group discussions and case studies where we had to give advice to a fictional student facing peer pressure. The way the teacher guided us made it feel like a real-life situation. It made me think seriously about the decisions I make and how to say no when under pressure."

P3: "There was a day we learned about honesty using the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Instead of just reading the Bible, the teacher acted out the story and involved us in a short drama. It was both funny and deep. It stuck with me because it showed how lying might look small but can have serious consequences. I started becoming more truthful even in small things."

P4: "Our teacher once taught about justice and fairness using examples from current events, like corruption in Kenya. We debated about what leaders should do and how people suffer from injustice. It made me reflect on how I treat others, even in school. I now try to be more fair and not take sides unfairly with friends."

P5: "I remember the topic on love and care for others. Our teacher brought in a former student who now helps street children. Hearing that person's journey and how they were inspired by CRE was powerful. It made me realize that CRE is not just for exams, it can guide how I live my life. Since then, I started helping a younger neighbor who struggles in school."

4.2.2 Phenomenological interpretation of student responses

The student's recollection of a CRE lesson on forgiveness illustrates a powerful moment of moral awakening. Through a story shared by the teacher about a victim of injustice who chose to forgive, the student was not merely a passive recipient of information but was invited into a deeply reflective space. The act of writing a letter to someone they had struggled to forgive transformed the abstract value into a lived experience. Phenomenologically, this captures the notion of intentionality where consciousness is directed toward meaningful moral reflection. The emotional engagement and self-directed moral processing suggest that the lesson fostered a genuine encounter with one's inner values, moving beyond rote learning to personal transformation.

One participant reported on a CRE lesson in which fictional case studies were connected to anti-peer pressure. The teacher made students live through the moral dilemmas by inviting the students to provide advice to a character stuck with moral dilemmas, which is how the teacher built a dialogic and participatory environment, where the students could live through ethical dilemmas in a secure environment. This approach is consistent with the phenomenological pedagogical approach that focuses on situated meaning-making and empathetic comprehension. This sense of a moral epiphany emerges in the reflection of the student who did not develop this moral insight through didactic teachings, but rather through simulation and perspective-taking that are vital in the development of moral sensitivity. This richness of reflection arose exactly because the student was able to enter morally into the moral situation imaginatively, something phenomenology describes as basic to learning ethically.

One participant had a bright memory of a dramatization of the Biblical story of Ananias and Sapphira with an emphasis on the results of dishonesty. Not only because it involved humor but also because it allowed students to internalize moral stakes of actions and see it, the lesson was memorable. Phenomenology embodiment in phenomenology, embodiment plays a central role meaning is not merely a cognitive realization, but lived through the body, the emotional and the interpersonal. The moral impact of the dramatization that the student felt so strongly implies that affective learning contributed to moral reflection. This procedure introduced moral content to the lived world of the student and given the strength of participatory pedagogic acts in the development of internalized values.

The fourth participant's engagement with corruption and justice through discussions of real-world events reflects a pedagogical approach that locates moral education within the student's socio-political context. Here, the teacher's strategy of connecting CRE themes with current affairs allowed students to reflect on justice as a lived and contested value, not just a Biblical ideal. This approach resonates with phenomenology's insistence on situated consciousness that meaning arises from one's experience of the world, including social and political realities. The student's ability to critique injustice and contemplate moral courage signals that when CRE is contextualized, it fosters ethical agency and socio-moral awareness.

The last response of the participant was about how he was affected by a CRE lesson following which a former student who was invited to speak about how he made a decision between love and service as well as academic success alone. Meeting this moral mentor caused what phenomenologists would describe as an existential change or transformation

to which a subject reevaluates their values and aspirations in relation to a forceful moral force. The testimony brought the intangible floating concept of a loving your neighbor into a tangible and real-life program where it appealed to the student not to consider CRE as a subject to be examined but as a way of looking at life. This is an expression of intersubjectivity as a basic idea of phenomenology, in which the true moral learning is achieved in the relations with other persons. The testament of the former student was like a mirror, it encourages personal reflection and response.

From the participants accounts, it is clear that CRE needs to ensure that lessons are well experienced by learners since this determines the effectiveness of CRE in moral development. Phenomenology teaches us the most powerful internalization of morality takes place when it appeals to the personal feelings, the current environment, the sense of association and to the desire of the person in question. These indicates how effective moral pedagogy is not just something that is settled in the delivery of a content but in the practical experience of learning. CRE teachers can take their lessons beyond abstractive teaching by grounding it in real-life applications, participatory practices, embodied simulations, and authentic role models to bring in transformative moral education.

4.2.3 Discussion of the findings

The first participant's response, involving the act of writing a letter to someone they had wronged or struggled to forgive, illustrates a powerful instance of moral transformation. Studies on moral education emphasizes that moral development is most effective when learning is experiential and personally relevant. Scholars such as Nucci (2001) and Narvaez (2006) highlight the role of reflective practices in developing moral agency. This aligns well with values education strategies that engage learners in active moral reasoning rather

than passive absorption of rules. From a Kantian ethical standpoint, the act of forgiving becomes an expression of rational moral duty rather than emotional impulse. Kant (1785) held that moral acts must stem from a sense of obligation to uphold human dignity and autonomy. By initiating forgiveness, the student acts according to a universal moral law, embodying Kant's principle that humans should be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means.

The second participant's appreciation of the use of case studies and peer discussions to handle peer pressure reflects best practices in moral pedagogy. Studies supports the idea that dialogical and participatory methods foster deeper moral reasoning and empathy (Rest, 1986; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Case-based learning encourages students to consider multiple perspectives, evaluate consequences, and reason through moral dilemmas. This fosters the kind of autonomous decision-making Kant emphasized in his ethical theory. Kant believed that moral maturity involves acting not out of fear or approval but from self-imposed rational principles. By engaging in reasoned dialogue about moral challenges, students learn to respect others' autonomy while building their own capacity to apply the categorical imperative, acting only on maxims that could be universally applied.

The third participant recalled a dramatized lesson on honesty that left a lasting impression on them. Educational theorists such as Lickona (1991) and Jackson et al. (1993) have long emphasized the value of role-play and dramatization in helping students internalize moral concepts. These methods activate emotional engagement, which supports long-term moral memory and deepens understanding. Although Kant's ethics is primarily rational, he acknowledged the role of educational practices in shaping moral understanding. Importantly, Kant insisted that moral actions must be done from the right motive namely,

duty. If the dramatization effectively clarified why honesty is a moral imperative rather than merely dramatizing punishment for lying, then it complements Kantian ethics by helping students grasp and internalize the form of duty behind moral rules.

The fourth participant connected CRE lessons to real-life examples of corruption and injustice in Kenya. This reflects the essence of critical pedagogy, as advocated by Freire (1970), which holds that education should be grounded in the learner's social context to foster a critical awareness of justice and power. Bringing real-world issues into the classroom enables students to see the relevance of moral values in their own society. This approach also resonates with Kantian ethics, which emphasizes the need for impartial moral reasoning and respect for the moral law. Kant would argue that corruption violates the principle of universality and the imperative to treat others with equal respect and fairness. Discussing such injustices allows students to critique systems that reduce people to mere tools for personal or political gain, directly opposing Kant's imperative to treat each person as an end.

Finally, the fifth participant recalled a visit from a former student who had chosen to live a life of selfless service. Colby & Damon, (1992) underscores the significant influence that real-life models of virtue can have on students. Personal stories often resonate more deeply than abstract principles, giving students tangible illustrations of moral integrity. Although Kant cautioned against blind imitation, he recognized the role of moral examples in awakening a sense of moral duty. The former student's decision to serve others, even when more prestigious or profitable paths were available, embodies the Kantian ideal of the "good will", acting rightly not for reward, but because it is morally required. Such

encounters help students visualize what it means to live by principles and offer inspiration for developing their own moral reasoning.

The responses demonstrate that moral education in CRE can be profoundly impactful when it integrates experiential, reflective, and contextually relevant teaching strategies. The students' reflections align with key findings in the literature on moral pedagogy, particularly the importance of active engagement, empathy, moral exemplars, and real-world relevance. Through the lens of Kantian ethics, these pedagogical approaches foster the cultivation of moral autonomy, rational decision-making, and principled action. In this way, CRE education not only conveys religious or ethical doctrines but also nurtures the capacity for universal moral reasoning and respect for human dignity, key pillars of Kant's moral philosophy.

4.2.4 How does your CRE teacher usually teach moral topics, and how do you personally experience or respond to that teaching style?

The following are the actual responses of the students

P1: *“Our CRE teacher uses real-life situations and then brings in Bible stories to show how people in the Bible dealt with similar problems. I find that very helpful because I can relate it to what we go through every day. It makes me think twice about how I act, especially when facing peer pressure.”*

P2: *“My teacher mostly explains moral topics by asking questions and letting us give our opinions. Sometimes we even have debates in class. It makes me feel involved and makes the lessons more interesting. I have started thinking critically about issues like corruption and honesty.”*

P3: *“She prefers storytelling. She ‘will tell us a story about someone facing a tough choice, then ask us what we would do. That style really speaks to me because I can imagine being in that position. It’s changed how I respond to situations, especially at home and with friends.”*

P4: *“ She teaches moral topics through role-playing. We act out scenes from our daily lives, like being tempted to lie or help someone in need. It’s fun and memorable. After*

doing a role-play about kindness, I started helping my younger siblings more at home.”

P5: “Our teacher mostly uses lecture style, but when it comes to moral topics, she gives us reflection questions to think about on our own. I usually write down my answers in my book. That private reflection helps me connect the lesson to my personal life.”

4.2.5 Phenomenological Interpretation of Student Responses

The response given by the first participant portrays the issue of the meaning of moral instruction with reference to the real-life experiences. The fact that the teacher incorporates the modern example into the Biblical teachings enables the student to understand how the moral concepts apply to the daily life. This is consistent with the phenomenology set of ideas centered on lived experience, which refers to the way people think and experience the world. Moral awareness in the student can be achieved by the deliberate association between Bible and the personal issues. Morality in this sense is not an abstraction, rather it is lived; it is exercised through the decision-making that is about peer pressure, truth-telling, and being nice. The student not only learns values in a theoretically abstract manner but is also led to believe that he or she is morally directed in real life conduct, a very internalized and contextual conception of ethics.

Participant two emphasized the role of interactive instructional mode that includes questioning, discussion, and group session. Such pedagogical processes affect intersubjectivity, which is a key phenomenology concept stressing the significance of meaning amid other people. Dialogicality of the lessons allows students to experiment, describe, and develop their moral argumentation through the collaborative process. The student feels that he is taken through the process of learning morals and not taught the

values. Such communal area stimulates the growth of a critical moral conscience, and students become enquirers, not the passive recipients of dogma, in ethical matters.

The third participant identifies storytelling as an effective pedagogical tool. By employing the vivid narrations, the student is welcomed to project themselves into the discussed moral situations. This relates to the sense of eidetic imagination, which is a phenomenological approach in which people consider various available experiences and possible conclusions by visualizing alternatives of a theme. Morality as experienced by the student happens through empathy and imaginative participation in the characters and thus increases the student capacities of reflection of moral consequences. Storytelling is again, in this context, a mediator between theory and lived morality, a way of students internalizing moral principles in an intensively personal and emotional manner.

The narration of the fourth participant highlights the importance of the role-play as a means of acquiring morality through experience. In this case, students do not only learn about virtues such as honesty or respect; they carry them out. This is echoed in the concept of Merleau-Ponty of the body as the main locus of knowing and experiencing the world. As students assume moral roles, they experience the burden and consequences of moral choices in an analogous yet practically emotional environment. It is an experiential form of learning that makes morality to be performed and practiced rather than talked about. The classroom is a place of transformation into ensuring the translation of abstract values into somatic sensations and behavioral inclinations.

The fifth participants reported on how reflection that are promoted by the teacher results in individual growth in morals. Such reflective activity is a reflection of phenomenological

reduction, a practice of setting aside assumptions and returning inward in order to study the nature of personal experiences. The student learns satisfaction in some self-placing contemplation and demonstrates that it is by reflection as well as dialogue that moral realization can be discovered. This is done because this process promotes a contemplative moral self who can not only reflect on the acts they have done, but who can also anticipate future moral situations. The teacher model enables the student to become the architect of his/her moral growth.

Collectively, these responses provide an insight about the richness and diversity of lived experiences of students in CRE classrooms. All the themes of intentionality, intersubjectivity, embodiment, temporality and authentic reflection come into focus. Students are made to encounter moral education not as content to be imbibed but as values to be lived, problematized, sensed and contemplated upon. Phenomenologically, this affirms that, strong moral pedagogy should also be tied to the inner lives, social engagements and embodied practices of the students.

4.2.6 Discussion of the findings

The responses of participants are varied and overlapping experiences in the manner of dealing with Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers with moral issues, a matter that revolves around pedagogical and philosophical principles. The first participant said that her teacher applies the real-life experience in instilling morals in her so that she could solve problems like pressure of peers and lying. This methodology is based on the concept of experiential learning, as it was suggested by Dewey (1938) who adhered to the idea that education has to appeal to the reality experienced by learners. When based on everyday life, moral education is more understandable and closer to practice. According to Kantian

argument, the approach will enable students to reflect and critically analyze their behavior regarding universal moral principles-to make truth and kindness their choice as much as a part of them, not because of external reward but because willing certainly principles as binding on others is possible.

The second participant argued about the more volunteering kind of teaching, where there is a discussion and group work involved. Such dialogic system appeals to Vygotsky (1978) who argued that social interaction was constructive of knowledge. It also concurs with a thought of Narvaez and Lapsley (2005) that moral growth is best when carried out in the form of peer exchange and critical reflection. In the perspective of Kantian ethics, this approach is critical since this perspective equips students with the qualities of evaluating moral assertions in a rational way. The basic conviction about morality of Kant was that morality is not conformity or emotion but reasoned autonomy. By means of dialogue learners demonstrate their ability to be morally mature by doing ethical reasoning in testing moral principles, exercising their ability to distinguish between the right and wrong, among others which is the characteristics of Kantian ethical theory of morality.

The third participant stressed the importance of story-telling as one of the major tools their teacher employs in their teaching morals and making students walk in the shoes of biblical heroes or just of the moral beings. Through storytelling, Nussbaum (1990) suggests that we engage the so-called moral imagination and can, therefore, make learners empathize and feel deep about moral matters. Though Kant can be thought of in terms of focusing more on the rational side of humanity rather than the emotional one, researchers such as Barbara Herman (1993) state that the imagination serves a purpose in bringing moral

principles about various circumstances. Therefore, with the help of stories teachers will allow students to analyze, whether the actions of characters can be taken as such universal laws of morality and contribute to the Kantian ideal of duty-driven morality in the context of imaginative contemplation.

Another participant stated that role-playing activities were employed to act out moral dilemmas. This aligns with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, where students learn by doing and reflecting on their actions. Such immersive experiences help internalize moral lessons. Though Kantian ethics prioritizes reason over emotion or performance, role-play remains relevant if it supports learners in choosing actions from duty rather than personal gain. In role-play, students may simulate situations where they must act justly or truthfully, not for reward but because such actions are morally right echoing Kant's vision of moral worth rooted in good will.

The fifth participant spoke of reflective writing assignments where they assessed their actions and values. This method supports transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991), fostering self-awareness and personal moral accountability. Reflective practice encourages students to examine whether their choices align with principles of justice, honesty, or respect. For Kant, such introspection is vital for cultivating a good will, which he regarded as the only thing good without qualification. Journaling, then, is not just an academic task it is a moral act, where the student becomes an autonomous ethical agent evaluating their conformity to moral law.

The participants' reflections highlight pedagogical approaches real-life application, discussion, storytelling, role-play, and reflection that align well with both educational theory and Kantian moral philosophy. From a phenomenological lens, their responses show

how moral learning is experienced subjectively through context, interaction, and self-awareness. While Kant's emphasis on duty, reason, and universality may seem abstract, these teaching strategies effectively bring his ethical ideals to life by fostering autonomous, reflective, and rational moral agents in the classroom.

4.3 Objective three: To analyze the implications of CRE syllabus and pedagogical approaches on moral reasoning among secondary school students.

The third objective sought to seek inquiry to deconstruct the epistemological and axiological dimensions of the CRE syllabus and pedagogical methodologies, examining their dialectical interplay in shaping moral reasoning. It interrogates whether CRE, as an ethical didactic framework, transcends rote doctrinal transmission to cultivate autonomous moral agents capable of navigating ethical dilemmas. By exploring the ontological weight of pedagogy in moral formation, the study aims to illuminate how curriculum content and instructional praxis foster genuine ethical transformation in secondary school learners.

4.3.1 The philosophical nexus between CRE syllabus content and moral reasoning

The CRE syllabus content serves as an epistemological foundation for moral reasoning, shaping the ethical consciousness of students through structured engagement with divine principles, human virtues, and existential inquiries. Based on deontological and virtue ethics, its principles provide a dialogical relationship between the moral principles and ethical issues, helping learners to distinguish between right and wrong. Through the use of scriptural reasoning, ethical reasoning, and reflective practice, the syllabus goes beyond the teaching of doctrine and the cultivation of moral reasoning. Therefore, when philosophically positioned, CRE is not only a discipline of study but a process of ontological development of ethical beings.

CRE content enables the students to reason ethically by teaching them the Bible on ethical values and moral principles. The syllabus enables the students to make ethical decisions by learning from the bible and doctrines which are essential in developing ethical skills for individual and community transformation. Some of the educational areas in the syllabi have unique potential to develop moral thinking skills. The “Leadership in Israel” the theme teaches students about the biblical leaders such as King David and King Solomon and how integrity and humility in leadership and the consequences of ethical leadership decisions.

The subject helps the students understand ethical governance as they develop applications for their educational leadership roles. Likewise, “Christian Approaches to Leisure” helps students learn proper leisure conduct that will not involve substance use and abuse, time wastage, and irresponsible social behaviors. The lesson helps students to make choices regarding their leisure activities that would help them develop their moral character. The instruction “The Call of Moses and Abraham” also contains qualities of faith, obedience, and perseverance because moral integrity generally requires ethical principle devotion and endurance. The students who engage in CRE material and apply the knowledge gained in their daily activities are able to develop good moral standards such as honesty responsibility and discipline as stated by Githaiga et al. (2018). Such virtues produce moral students who in turn become positive role models in their societies. In its content, the syllabus provides religious and moral lessons and motivates students to adopt these lessons that enhance their capacity to address ethical issues and practice values for the promotion of peace in the society.

The link between the CRE syllabus content and moral reasoning is based on ethical theories such as Kantian deontology and Aristotelian virtue ethics that focus on the moral obligation

and character development (Kant, 1785; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*). According to the literature, although CRE offers basic ethical principles, its implementation is contingent on the students' capacity to embrace and practice them daily (Githaiga et al., 2018). However, critics have argued that traditional CRE instruction is more of a memorization process that does not allow students to engage in moral reasoning (Jebungei, 2013; Ocholla, 2018). This critique is supported by the study findings where students claimed that CRE content impacted their ethical choices, but they were limited by peer pressure and passive teaching approaches in applying these ethical lessons in practice.

4.3.2 A philosophical inquiry into the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches in teaching Christian religious education

Educational strategies used for teaching Christian religious education (CRE) serve as central elements that form students' ability to reason morally and grow ethically. This section demonstrates pedagogical approaches teachers employ for their students to grasp moral principles better. Students benefit from four main teaching procedures: storytelling alongside discussions, case studies, and Socratic questioning methods. Through biblical storytelling, students experience moral dilemmas creatively and reflectively, enabling them to understand ethical lessons through their imagination. The discussions about honesty begin with the analysis of typical scenarios of truthful behavior and dishonesty and then relate these scenarios to the biblical concepts of integrity. The educational approach makes learning more effective because it relates what is taught in the bible to real life situations that the students are familiar with.

Teachers play a central role in helping students develop their life skills during CRE lessons. Self-discipline becomes a major concern since teachers assist students in developing

personal responsibility and self-control skills in decision-making. Teachers incorporate virtue ethics into the content of their lessons to nurture honesty in students and teach them to respect others because these aspects are part of the moral curriculum. The practical application of biblical principles is useful because teachers model how religious principles guide students' actions in real-life situations. Love and forgiveness instruction activities involve the use of lessons that require students to reflect on their past conflicts and come up with Christian ways of solving them. The approaches used in CRE go beyond the traditional academic learning to equip the students with spiritual judgment skills as well as practical skills in handling moral issues in real life.

The literature also notes that the teaching strategies in CRE should not be limited to the rote learning but should encourage critical thinking and moral reasoning (Freire, 1970). However, the findings of the study show that many CRE lessons are still in the form of lectures and tests, which hampers students' capacity to solve ethical problems (Ocholla, 2018). According to Jebungei (2013), the use of interactive techniques like storytelling, role-play, and discussions help students to develop moral principles and also helps them to apply the principles learnt in their day to day life. These arguments are supported by the study findings where students who underwent experiential learning were found to have grasped moral teachings better than those taught through passive methods but had difficulties applying moral lessons in real life.

4.3.3 Ontological and ethical implications of Christian religious education on moral reasoning

CRE provides both ontological and moral epistemological perspectives that enable learners to understand who they are and how they can be as well as gain knowledge on the right

conduct and moral actions. CRE is an ontological approach to being that situates human life within a theological-moral framework that sets moral parameters. Education enhances the understanding of personal ethics since it guides students toward ethical responsibility. In its implementation of deontological and virtue ethics, CRE provides a set of guidelines for ethical behavior and nurtures the learners' practical wisdom in their decision-making processes. This method helps people attain moral autonomy, which in turn makes them graduate from mere acceptance of ethical thinking.

Research findings show that students who attend Christian Religious Education classes and apply the knowledge daily exhibit better moral character. CRE serves its educational function in the Kenyan secondary school syllabi because it prepares students to make ethical decisions by distinguishing between right and wrong. It includes subjects of biblical wisdom, ethical dilemmas, virtue such as honesty, integrity, kindness, self-discipline, and Christian perspective for analyzing contemporary issues. School lessons assist students in developing an ethical compass that guides their conduct in school and other aspects of life. The findings indicate that students who embrace and practice CRE teachings' principles are more respectful, responsible, and obey the law. Students have credited their ability to avoid the vices and their ability to make the right moral decisions to what they learn in CRE lessons. Faculty members supplement moral education values by using examples from their experiences and discussing how they relate to the Bible and students' daily experiences.

Moral instruction finds place within CRE yet its presence does not stop specific pupils from participating in counter-ideological conduct including examination cheating, drug use, bullying, and overall misconduct at educational institutions. The study shows that

moral reasoning develops through various aspects which exceed standard school teaching. The study reveals peer influence is a main factor that strongly influences students' choices. Social acceptance from peers leads most adolescents toward behavior conformity even though their choices violate the moral values taught by CRE. Students whose peer group performs immoral acts tend to develop similar unethical practices even though they recognize correct behavior. The research demonstrated how social customs along with cultural prescription determine students' process of moral thinking. Unethical behaviours like corruption, aggression, and dishonesty become common practices in certain communities that challenge students to maintain the ethics they learn at school. Students observe bribery and favouritism practices in adults which creates difficulties for them when trying to implement honesty and fairness principles learned in CRE.

Students' moral reasoning is influenced significantly by the media in addition to other external determinants. Social media, television, and internet usage expose students to various worldviews that oppose CRE's ethical teachings. According to research some students choose behaviours shown in movies and music videos with trends from the internet even if they go against the moral instruction taught in school sessions. Student commitment to ethical principles becomes weaker because an excessive number of media outlets promote materialistic messages combined with individualistic values and rebellion-themed content. Students who spend prolonged time watching screens and encounter unregulated digital content tend to develop lowered reactions to moral challenges, leading to increased risk of performing actions they would have considered immoral before.

The research confirms that effective moral instruction depends on a proper execution of well-designed CRE curriculum together with student involvement throughout the

educational process. A large number of students consider CRE to be an academic discipline instead of recognizing it as a transformative moral guide. Student views of CRE depend on their learning experience and evaluation approach. Students lack real-life decision-making connection when CRE classes deliver information in strict lecture-style instruction while requiring memorized information for exam preparation. Teachers who avoid student engagement and discussions in combination with theoretical teaching will fail to develop moral reasoning capabilities in their students. Some schools allocate inadequate time and resources to CRE learning even though they prioritize mathematics and sciences more heavily. Such an approach weakens the capability of CRE to shape student moral development.

The lack of proper integration between classroom lessons and real-life tasks reduces the effectiveness of CRE. Students disengage from values learning during formal education because they lack practical opportunities to practice their learned virtues such as honesty and self-discipline in everyday circumstances. Establishments with inadequate mentorship programs, extracurricular activities, and practical moral reasoning opportunities become less likely to develop robust ethical education. Educational programs need specialized systems that permit students to conduct social service activities while engaging in ethical problem-solving exercises and peer-led discussions to improve moral understanding. Research evidence indicates the effectiveness of CRE in moral reasoning growth when students have mentoring programs combined with guidance counseling and parent and teaching staff involvement.

The ontological and ethical implications of Christian Religious Education (CRE) on moral reasoning revolve around its role in shaping students' understanding of morality as a

fundamental aspect of human existence. Scholars argue that CRE provides a moral framework based on divine law and universal ethical principles, aligning with Kantian deontology and Aristotelian virtue ethics, which emphasize duty and character formation in ethical decision-making (Kant, 1785; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*). However, research suggests that students often struggle to bridge the gap between theoretical moral teachings and real-life application, with many memorizing CRE principles for exams rather than internalizing them for ethical reasoning (Kowino, Agak & Kochung, 2012). This study confirms these concerns, as students reported that external influences such as peer pressure and societal norms often override their moral choices, reinforcing literature critiques that CRE alone is insufficient for fostering deep moral reasoning without experiential and discussion-based learning approaches (Jebungei, 2013; Ocholla, 2018)

4.3.4 Epistemological and pedagogical foundations of Christian religious education in cultivating moral reasoning

The Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabus needs modernization because it must include instruction about present-day moral concerns involving cyber ethics, environmental stewardship, and social justice teachings. Modern students require cyber ethics training through digital platforms to develop responsible online behavior in order to handle the dual issues of cyber bullying and digital privacy protection. Environmental responsibility teaching will empower people with responsible stewardship that promotes actions to fight against climate change. Students will learn social justice concepts about human rights and gender equality through the curriculum to analyze treatment equity and inclusion. The current educational system requires an upgrade from memory learning to active critical thinking because it allows students to understand biblical lessons which they can apply in real-world scenarios. Combining case studies and interactive debates into CRE

enables this topic to grow into an educational system which develops students' moral thought abilities to manage modern social issues.

Effective Christian Religious Education (CRE) requires teachers to use modern teaching approaches which involve direct student participation. CRE lessons require a combination of lectures, case studies, moral dilemma discussions, role-playing activities, and experiential learning experiences. Through case studies, students can analyze ethical dilemmas from reality, enhancing their critical analysis and moral understanding. The discussion of moral dilemmas allows students to take part in ethical discussions about various viewpoints. Through role-play, students gain hands-on moral decision experience, developing their empathy alongside ethical consciousness. When students engage in experiential learning through community service projects, CRE becomes more meaningful in their everyday experience because these projects allow them to apply theoretical knowledge in a practical way.

Christian religious education (CRE) needs enhanced effectiveness, which teachers can achieve through ongoing professional development through instructional approaches that deliver more powerful and practical lessons. Modern training programs should teach contemporary teaching methods such as interactive open discussions, real-life moral dilemma integration, and reflective learning practices. Educational staff need training to address delicate moral topics and develop their capacity for critical thinking while establishing classrooms that welcome student opinions. Mentorship programs, workshops, and peer-learning sessions must be introduced to provide sustained support, guaranteeing CRE educators' ongoing motivation and training success.

Christian Religious Education (CRE) effectiveness can be strengthened through the implementation of its teachings into practical co-curricular activities where students have opportunities to practice moral values in their daily lives. Through well-organized mentorship programs, students can receive ethical guidance from teachers and community mentors. Students benefit from peer counseling sessions because they receive support when discussing moral issues while building their good behavior patterns. Religious clubs become communal spaces where students practice faith with discussions, prayers, and community-based activities that build ethical and religious knowledge. The practice of community service through elderly visits and environmental projects at schools allows students to build internal values of both compassion and social responsibility and environmental ethics sustained outside academic settings.

Christian religious education (CRE) receives its ethical content from teaching, but parents and the community need to join forces to build upon these educational values. Parents should exhibit ethical values by maintaining honesty through everyday conduct and demonstrating integrity along with compassion toward others. The home environment becomes vital for developing moral foundations through discussions about ethics and decision-making experiences about controversies. Religious figures, alongside mentors, have the potential to assist in ethical education by running youth programs and mentorship projects and conducting moral education study sessions. Developing students' moral character through collaboration creates an ethical framework that guides their actions inside and outside of educational settings.

The crucial role of media literacy education in CRE emerges because television, social media, and the internet have substantial power over students' values and choices.

Educating students through media literacy training enables them to separate valuable ethical information from misleading material they encounter online. The curriculum must teach students how to use media correctly together with methods to protect themselves from social media's effects on moral decision-making while also instructing them how to fight against cyberbullying and digital deception. The development of students' critical thinking capabilities becomes possible through media ethics discussions about fake news and the protection of privacy and media stance transparency.

The epistemological and pedagogical foundations of Christian Religious Education (CRE) are rooted in moral philosophy and educational theory, aiming to cultivate ethical reasoning among students. Scholars argue that Kantian deontology emphasizes duty-based morality, while Aristotelian virtue ethics stresses moral character development through practice, both of which influence CRE instruction (Kant, 1785; Ross, 1999). However, research critiques traditional CRE teaching methods, which often focus on rote memorization rather than experiential learning, limiting students' ability to apply moral principles in real-life situations (Jebungei, 2013; Ocholla, 2018). The study findings confirm these concerns, as students demonstrated better moral reasoning when exposed to interactive teaching methods like role-playing and ethical discussions, reinforcing literature calls for pedagogical reforms in CRE to enhance its practical effectiveness.

4.3.5 Conclusion

Christian Religious Education (CRE)'s essential role in developing secondary school students' moral reasoning through teaching values such as honesty, integrity and responsibility. Teaching methods involving student engagement and their ability to internalize and apply moral lessons determine how effective Christian Religious Education

will be. The research indicates that CRE requires improved curricular design, interactive instructional methods, and practical application to increase its effectiveness in moral and ethical student development.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a synthesized summary of the study, highlighting the major findings derived from the phenomenological and critical analysis of the Christian Religious Education (CRE) curriculum and pedagogy in relation to moral reasoning among students. It also presents conclusions drawn from the findings and outlines key recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

5.2 Summary

The study sought to critique the effectiveness of CRE in fostering moral reasoning among secondary school students in Kakamega Central. It was guided by three objectives: to analyze the Kenyan secondary school CRE syllabus in light of moral content, to examine teachers' pedagogical approaches in delivering moral content, and (3) to assess the implications of the syllabus and pedagogy on students' moral reasoning. The research adopted a phenomenological hermeneutical and critical philosophical approach.

In objective one the study established that the CRE syllabus has a lot of moral content based on biblical stories, ethical values and moral instruction. Students remembered the lessons about forgiveness, honesty, choices and consequences, and compassion which means that moral values were incorporated in the curriculum. Nonetheless, the process of internalizing these moral values was highly dependent on the lived experiences of the learner, reflection and the classroom learning. Phenomenological investigation revealed

that students would not develop moral awareness until the lessons became personalized and related to the real life.

In objective two the study found out that the pedagogical practices were teacher-centered and were based on the lectures, text-based teaching, and exam-oriented instruction. Learner centered strategies like role-playing, storytelling, case studies or moral dilemma discussions were used in a limited way. The main obstacles to the use of interactive methods is due to the high number of students in classrooms, inadequate training in life approach pedagogy and the need to complete the syllabus. Although the moral content was there, the passive approach restricted the capacity of the learners to make moral reasoning or apply the lessons in the real-life contexts.

In objective three the study established that the consequences of the present CRE delivery to the moral reasoning of students were unclear. Although some students have said that CRE lessons have motivated or challenged them to reconsider their actions and make right choices, most students have said that the subject is an academic subject and not a way of making moral choices in life. The results also indicated the disengagement between moral knowledge and moral action- a finding that can be blamed on the absence of experiential learning and philosophical basis of teaching. The Kantian deontological system assisted in criticizing this disconnect by demonstrating that the moral value is not of any outside compliance but an inner rational obligation, which should be developed deliberately through reflective training.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings of objective one indicates that the Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabus in Kenya secondary schools is very rich in moral contents but its ability to foster moral reasoning in students is not fully achieved. The teaching of the bible, moral values, and ethics like forgiveness, honesty, and compassion gives a moral development base. Nevertheless, the way this content is provided to students and the possibility to internalize it is highly dependent on the way the content is delivered and contextualized in the real life of students. The research discovered that a significant moral development was achieved when the students were able to connect the teachings with their lives and moral issues.

The findings of objective two indicates that the teaching methods that are mostly applied in teaching CRE are teacher-centered and examination oriented. The teaching methods are more of rote learning and teaching contents instead of interactive, reflective and participatory teaching. This restricts the ability of students to think morally and behave ethically in real life complex situations. Students have fewer chances to engage in moral reasoning and to wrestle with moral dilemmas, and so they are less likely to learn to think critically in a way that will allow them to judge autonomously about morality.

The study also found out that the moral reasoning can be better developed when CRE lessons are provided in the form of experiential learning. The storytelling, role-play, moral case analysis, and open discussions are the techniques that enable the learners to consider the ethical principles in a practical and meaningful manner. These approaches support Kantian principles of moral action that is based on duty, and encourages the inner moral conscience instead of external enforcement of rules. Passive instructional methods, on the

other hand, do not support the formation of rational moral agency, which is the core of the goals of CRE and the philosophical background of the present study.

5.4 Recommendations

Teachers and school administrators ought to be more practical and learner-oriented in their teaching methods. Lessons should include such approaches as storytelling, Socratic dialogue, ethical debates, case studies, and role-playing. These approaches encourage critical thinking and enable the students to approach moral content in a manner that is related to their lived experiences, and thus increase their moral awareness and ethical decision making.

Moreover, CRE teachers should have continuous professional development and training. A lot of educators nowadays do not have the pedagogical instruments and philosophical basis to introduce reflective, value-based education. The training programs must thus aim at empowering educators with the knowledge of how to go about using life approach pedagogy and philosophical ethics, particularly Kantian deontology and virtue ethics, in classroom teaching. These capacity-building processes would enable the teachers to be free of exam-focused teaching and foster the moral independence of the students.

The curriculum developers, especially Kenya institute of curriculum development (KICD) ought to update the CRE syllabus to capture the current ethical issues. New moral concerns that should be included in the revised curriculum are digital ethics, environmental stewardship, social justice, and interfaith dialogue. Also, the curriculum must have a clear incorporation of philosophical ethical frameworks to enable students not only to know what is right, but also to know why it is right- hence cultivating a stronger moral reasoning.

The policymakers should also lend their support to the moral education reforms by giving the reforms the institutional and structural support. This will involve decreasing the ratios of teachers to students in order to facilitate individualized teaching and provision of resources to support interactive teaching aids and moral education curriculums. Lastly, parents, religious leaders, and the community at large should join schools in enforcing the values that are taught in CRE, so that students will be exposed to a uniform moral message both in the academic and social life.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

1. Phenomenological exploration of students' lived experiences in moral reasoning: The case of primary education in Kenya
2. Critical analysis of pedagogical methods and their ethical impact: The case of primary education in Kenya
3. Kantian deontological perspectives on moral education in CRE: The case of primary education in Kenya

REFERENCES

- Acholla, P. P. & Pillai, V. K (2001). *Challenges of primary Education in developing countries*. Insights from Kenya. Builingtone, Ashgate.
- Adow I.M., et.al(2015). *An Assessment of the Management of Kcse Examination and Its Influence on Irregularities among Students: A Case of Secondary Schools in Mandera County, Kenya*. Journal of Education and Practice www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.6, No.28, 15
- Aggarwal, J. C. (1995), *Essentials of Educational Technology: Teaching Learning, Innovations in Education*. New Delhi: VIKAS Publishing House PVT Ltd.
- Aggarwal, J. C. (2001). *Principles, Methods and Techniques of Teaching*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Ltd.
- Amugune, A. A. (2005). *Analysis of Factors Affecting Achievement and Enrolment in CRE in Selected Public Secondary Schools in Tiriki West Division of Vihiga District*. (Unpublished M.Ed. Thesis) Kenyatta University.
- Amukowa W. (2013). *A call to reform Education in Kenya*. American international journal of contemporary research vol.3 no.1.
- Amukowa, W. (2010). *A Critique of Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission Initiatives in Combating Corruption and Its Implication for Education in the Light of Aristotelian Concept of Akrasia*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- Aristotle. (350 BCE). *Nicomachean Ethics*. (Translated by W.D. Ross). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Awan, S. (2014). *Teaching controversial issues in the classroom: A handbook for teachers*. A Published Master of ARTS in Education (Language and Literacy) project. California State University, Sacramento.
- Barton, K. & Levstik, L. (2011). *Doing history: Investigating with children in elementary and middle schools*. (4th Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Basome Samson & Vencie Allida 2018 *Moral Decline In Schools: Reflections On Public Secondary Schools In Iganga District, Uganda*. Baraton Interdisciplinary Research Journal (2018), 8(Special Issue), pp 1-9 catholic schools from Kitui Central Deanery (Thesis). Strathmore University.

- Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2005). What works in character education: A research-driven guide for educators. *Character Education Partnership*.
- Bishop, G. (1986). *Innovations in Education*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.
- Burgman, H. (1990). *The Way the Catholic Church Started in Western Kenya*. Nairobi: Mission Books Service.
- Bwire, A. (2016). *Religious Education and Moral Imagination in East African Schools*. *Journal of Moral Education*, 45(3), 267–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2016.1195734>
- Callahan, J. F. & Clark, L. H. (1982). *Teaching in Middle and Secondary School*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc.
- Cherkowski, S., Walker, K. D., & Kutsyuruba, B. (2015). *Principals' moral agency and ethical decision-making: Toward a transformational ethics*. *International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership*, 10(5).
- Chesaro, D. K. *Expression of Moral Values Taught in the Christian Religious Education Subject by Secondary Schools Students in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya*.
Child Behavior and Development. Springer, Boston, MA. [://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_1831](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-79061-9_1831)
- Chowdhury M. (2016) *Emphasizing Morals, Values, Ethics, And Character Education In Science Education And Science Teaching*. The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science. Monash University, Australia (Volume4 - Issue 2)
- Clegg, A. (2009). *Draft Lower Secondary Curriculum and Assessment Review Map*. Implementation notes, Kampala.
- Cooling, T. (2003). *Concept Cracking: Exploring Christian Beliefs in School*. Stapplefort, Notts: Association of Christian Teachers.
- Cox, E. (1983). *Changing Aims in Religious Education*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Cushman, F. & Young, L. (2009). *The psychology of dilemmas and the philosophy of morality*. *Ethic Theory Moral Practice*, 12, 9–24.
- Dall'Alba, G. (2009). Phenomenology and education: an introduction. *Educational philosophy and theory*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 2009
- Dorough S. (2011) Moral Development. In: Goldstein S., Naglieri J.A. (eds) *Encyclopedia*

- Durkheim, É. (1912). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. (Translated by Karen E. Fields, 1995). New York: Free Press.
- Ellie Zolfagharifard (2013). *The internet porn map of the world reveals US, Holland, and Britain as the largest providers in the world*. Published: 13:39 BST, 19 August | UPDATED: 09:34 BST, 20 August 2013
- Endicotta, L., Bockb, T. & Narvaezb, D. (2003). *Moral reasoning, intercultural development, and multicultural experiences: relations and cognitive underpinnings*. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 403–419.
- Enright, R. D., & Fitzgibbons, R. P. (2000). *Helping clients forgive: An empirical guide for resolving anger and restoring hope*. American Psychological Association.
- Eric Digest, (1994). *Religion in the Social Studies curriculum*. Evangelical Alliance Report, 2007 <http://www.eric digest.org/1994/religion.htm>.
- Felder, & Brent (2005). *Understanding student differences*. *Journal of Engineering Education* .January 2005 DOI: 10.1002/j.2168-9830.2005.tb00829.x
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos). New York: Continuum.
- Gardiner, P. (2018). *A virtue ethics approach to moral dilemmas in medicine*. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 29 (5),297–302.
- Githaiga P.W, Wamutitu J.M & Kinuthia L.D (2018). *Enhancement of Secondary Schools Students’ Moral Reasoning through the Christian Religious Education Curriculum in Nakuru County, Kenya* *Journal of Education and Practice* www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.9, No.26, 2018
- Githaiga, M., Kariuki, P., & Wambua, J. (2018). *Role of Christian Religious Education in Shaping Character among Learners in Public Secondary Schools in Kiambu County, Kenya*. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(10), 120–126. <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/44245>
- Githaiga, P. M., Ochieng, A., & Karugu, W. N. (2018). “Challenges Facing Christian Religious Education in Promoting Moral Development in Secondary Schools in Kenya.” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 8(2), 45-59.

- Goldman, R (1965). *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence*. London:Routledge and KeganPul.
- Gonsalves, Milton A. (1981). *Fagothey's right and reason*7thEdition. USA: The C.V Mos Company.
- Goudarzi, Z. et. al (2016). *The Role of Education in Purging Violence and Immoral Acts in Individual and Social Upbringing*. Journal of History Culture and Art Research (ISSN: 2147-0626) Vol. 5, No. 4.
- Government of Kenya. (2001). *Task force on student discipline and unrest in secondary schools*. Nairobi. Government Printers.
- Grimitt, M. (1982). *What Can I Do in Religious Education: A guide to New Approaches*. London: Majhaw - McCrimmon.
- Grimmit, M. (1973). *What Can I Do In Religious Education? A Guide to New Approaches*. London: MayhewMcCrimmon.
- Groenewegen; T. (1993). *Subject Methods Religious Education: A Course Book for Teachers*. Nairobi, Lectern Publications.
- Hedley, M. & Markowitz, L. (2001). *Avoiding moral dichotomies: Teaching controversial topics to resistant students*. Journal of Teaching Sociology, 29 (2), 195-208.
- Hesse-Biber S.N. & Leavy P. (2011). *The Practice Of Qualitative Research 2nd* . SAGE publications Ink, Los Angeles.
- Hornby, A. S. (1974). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Hull, J. (1982). *New Directions in Religious Studies*. Taylor and Frances (Printers) ltd. Basingstoke, England.
- Hussain, K. (2007). *An Islamic consideration of western moral Education: An exploration of the individual* .Journal of Moral Education, 36(3), 297-308.
- Husserl, E. (1970). *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Northwestern University Press.
- Ian Fisher (2001). *58 Youths Die in Kenyan Dormitory Fire*. The New York Times. 27th March,
in Instilling The Virtue Of Respect in Public Secondary School Students in Rachuonyo

- Itolondo, W. (2012). *The Role of Christian Religious Education in Moral Development of Learners in Kenya*. International Journal of Current Research, 4(3), 142–147.
- Itolondo, W. A. (2011). *The Role and Status of Christian Religious Education in the School Curriculum in Kenya*. Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies, 3(5), 721-729.
- Itolondo, W.A. (2012). *The Role and Status of Christian Religious Education in the School Curriculum in Kenya Journal*. Scholarlink Rf Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Research Institute Journals, 2012 (ISSN: 2141olicy Studies (JETERAPS)-6990) 3(5):721-729 jeteraps.scholarlinkresearch.org
- Itonga, M. (2011). *Influence of CRE on Moral Behavior of Secondary School Students in Kajiado North District*. [Master's Thesis, University of Nairobi]. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/4236>
- Jacques, M. (1967). *Education of Man*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Japhet, K. (2020). Role Of Christian Religious Education Subject On Student Behaviour: A Case Of Day Secondary Schools In North Imenti Meru County, Kenya (Doctoral
- Jebungei K.N. (2013). *Overcoming the Challenges Facing Secondary Schools Teachers in Using Christian Religious Education to Convey Values to Students in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya*. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Vol. 3 No. 15; August
- Jebungei, N. K. (2020). Overcoming the challenges facing secondary schools teachers in using Christian Religious Education to convey values to students in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 3(15), 271-27
- Kafu, P., & Simiyu, C. (2017). *Instructional Challenges Facing Christian Religious Education in Kenya*. African Journal of Education and Practice, 2(8), 91–104.
- Kant, I. (1785). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. (Translated by Mary Gregor, 1997). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kant, I. (1959). *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, L.W. Beck (trans.), The BobbsMerrill Company, Inc., Indianapolis
- Kant, I. (1993). *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (J. W. Ellington, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company. (Original work published 1785).

- Kant, I. (1993). *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (J. W. Ellington, Trans.). Hackett Publishing Company. (Original work published 1785)
- Kariuki, N. (2019). *Improving Ethical Reasoning through Simulation-Based Moral Education in Kenya*. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, 6(3), 24–33.
- Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) (2000). *CRE Form Three Teacher's Guide*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Kiambi, J., Kinoti, M., & Mwangi, J. (2019). The effect of CRE syllabus on student behavior change in day secondary schools in North Imenti-Meru County. *Int. J. Adv. Multidiscip. Res*, 6(9), 16-30.
- KIE (Kenya Institute of Education). (2002). *Secondary education syllabus: Volume Three*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau
- Koech Commission. (1999). *Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET)*. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya.
- Kohlberg, L. (1984). *Essays on Moral Development, Vol. II: The Psychology of Moral Development*. Harper & Row.
- Koross, K. (2015). *Revealed: why cases of unrest in schools are rising*. Standard Newspaper. July, 8th Pg 11.
- Kowino, J. Agak, J. O. & Kochung, J. E. (2012). *The role of teaching Christian religious Education to the development of critical thinking amongst Kenyan secondary school student in Kisumu East District, Kenya*. *International Journal of academic Research in progressive Education and Development*, 1(2), 113-133.
- Kowino, O. J., Agak, J. O., & Obiero-Owino, C. E. (2011). The perceived discrepancy between the teaching of Christian religious education and inculcation of moral values amongst secondary schools students in Kisumu East district, Kenya
- Levinas, E. (1969). *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Duquesne University Press.
- Maani, J.S., & Kenyi, L.G. (2005). *Preparatory Strategies for Teaching Religious Education*. Kampala: Unpublished Module.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Mbiti, J.S, (1969). *African Religious and Philosophy*. Heinman, London.
- Mburu, D. M. (2020). The Role of Christian Religious Education in Shaping the Moral Behavior of Secondary School Students in Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 8(4), 87–101.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. Routledge.
- Mikhail, J. (2007). *Universal moral grammar: theory, evidence and the future*. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 11 (4), 143–152. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>
- Ming'yue, L. (2013). *Problems, causes and solutions in a school moral education course*. Research in a school at Jiangx. Retrieved from [www.ioe.ac.ukk/aboutdocuments/About overview, Ming'yue-L.pdf](http://www.ioe.ac.ukk/aboutdocuments/About%20overview,%20Ming'yue-L.pdf).
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2012). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- Mull, M. D. (2009). Effects Of Teaching Christian Religious Education As An Elective Subject On Students'behaviour In Secondary Schools In Mwea Division, Mbeere District, Kenya. Unpublished Med Thesis), Kenyatta University.Dissertation).
- Muthamba, J. (2017). *Implementation of moral Education in Kenyan schools: a study of selected*
- Muthoni, R. W. (2015). *Christian Religious Education Curriculum and Its Influence on Students' Moral Behaviour in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya* (Master's Thesis, Kenyatta University).
- Mutua, J., & Barasa, P. L. (2013). Challenges in the Implementation of Christian Religious Education Curriculum in Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(15), 210–217.
- Myyry, L. (2003). *Components of morality: A professional ethics perspective on moral motivation, moral sensitivity, moral reasoning and relate constructs among University students*. University of Helsinki, Department of Social Psychology.
- Naliaka E., Wanyonyi D. & Mukwa C. (2017). *Use of Life Themes Pedagogy and its Influence on Performance in Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Secondary Schools in Kenya*. Volume 2, December, 201. AJESS. ISSN:2415-0770 nation. www.nation.coke.

- Narvaez, D., & Lapsley, D. K. (2005). The psychological foundations of moral education and character development. In M. Killen & J. G. Smetana (Eds.), *Handbook of moral development* (pp. 371–398). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Nawose, F., & Chege, P. (2023). *Pedagogical Approaches for Value-Based Education in Secondary Schools in Kenya: A Case of Selected Schools in Nairobi*. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 11(2), 12–21.
- Ndarwa, L. (2007). *Students' and teachers' perception on the role of CRE in moral development of students. Central Division in Trans Nzoia District, Kenya*. Unpublished M. Phil Thesis. Moi University, Eldoret.
- Njogu, M. W. (2021). Effects of Religious Education on the Moral Development of Learners in Kenyan Secondary Schools. *African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 8(2), 23–34.
- Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education*. Teachers College Press.
- Nord, A, W. & Haynes, C. C. (1998). *Taking religion seriously across the curriculum*. from www.ascd.org/publication/books/198190/chapters/moraleducationEducation.aspx
- North Sub-County, Kenya*
- Nucci, L., & Weber, E. (1991). *The domain approach to values education: From theory to practice*. In W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (Eds.). *Handbook of moral behavior and development* (Vol. 3: Applications) (pp. 251 - 266). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Nyaga, D. (2022). *Reframing the Christian Religious Education Curriculum for Holistic Learner Development in Kenya*. *African Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 6(1), 77–89.
- Nyangaresi, J. K., Nasongo, J. W., & Injendi, J. (2024). Teachers' Perspectives on the Effectiveness of Moral Strategies for Character Formation in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(4), 695-707.
- Nyangaresi, J. K., Nasongo, J. W., & Injendi, J. (2024). The Value of the Aims of Moral Education for Character Formation in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya: A Phenomenological Approach. *African Journal of Empirical Research*, 5(4), 1197-1207.

- Ochieng, W. R. (Ed.). (1990). *Themes in Kenyan History*. Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya Ltd.
- Okeke, C., & Okoye, H. (2016). *The challenges facing the effective teaching and learning of religious/ moral Education in secondary schools in Onitsha urban*. *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, 8(1), 84-96.
- Oketch, J. A., & Asiachi, A. (1992). *Curriculum Development for Schools*. Educational Research and Publications.
- Okwueze, M. I. (2002). *Ethics, religion, and Society: Biblical, traditional, and contemporary*
- Omari, A (2016). Teen Pregnancy is keeping girls out of school in Kenya Article · March 2016 DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.8273486
- Ominde, S. H. (1964). *Kenya Education Commission Report*. Government Printer.
- Omiya G.A (2015) *Influence of Effective Implementation of Life Skills Education on Student Academic Perfomance in Secondary Schools in Koibatek District Baringo County, Kenya*.
- Ondieki, E. & Chege, N. (2017) . *Eight students die in Moi Girls School dormitory fire*. Daily Nation. September, 2nd .www.nation.co.ke
- Onsongo, J. K. (2001). *The Life Approach Method in Teaching Christian Religious Education in secondary schools*. Retrieved on March, 23, 2011 from <http://www.fiuc.org.../ejoun1lifeap.php>
- Onsongo, J. K. (2008). *Teaching Christian Religious Education in Secondary Schools: A Handbook for Teachers and Student-Teachers*. Nairobi: Catholic University of East Africa.
- OTIENO, W. A. P. (2019). Effectiveness of Methods of Teaching Christian Religious Education in Instilling The Virtue Of Respect in Public Secondary School Students in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, Maseno University).cal practices in teaching.
- Ouma W. (2019). *KCSE 2019: 26 arrested in Nairobi over exam malpractice*. Daily nation. November, 6th, www.nation.co.ke
- Ouma.W. (2015). Experts scratch their heads over student’s unrest. Daily Nation. November, 6th, www.nation.co.ke
- Oyaro, K. (2009). *Kenyan moral at crossroad*. Daily Nation, April 4, Page 20. Nairobi. Nation Media Group

- Paul, R & Elder, L (2010). *The miniature Guide to Critical; Thinking concepts and Tools*.
Dillon Beach: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press.
- Republic of Kenya (1999) *Report of the Commission of the Inquiry into the Education Systems of Kenya*. Government Printer, Nairobi.
- Republic of Kenya,(1964). *Ominde Commission Kenya Education Commission*. Nairobi
Government Printer
- Republic of Kenya,(1976). *Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies: Gachathi Report*. Government Printer, Nairobi
- Ross, W. D. (1999). *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Ryan McKay & Harvey Whitehouse (2014). *Religion and Morality*. Psychological Bulletin
Vol. 141, No. 2, 447–473
- Sahu, B. (2013). *Need and importance of moral Education in schools*. Retrieved from
- Schofield, H, (1972). *The philosophy of Education*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Shakil, Ali (2015). *Kantian duty based ethics*.<http://sevenpillarsinstitute.org/morality-101/Kantian-duty-based-deontological-ethics> retrived on 5/11/2015.
- Shikokoti (2016) *Influence Of Principals' Characteristics On Students' Discipline In Public Secondary Schools In Kakamega Central, Kakamega County, Kenya*.
- Shitoli, Kerre, & Gichaga (2008). *Existential approach: A pedagogical model for the teaching of religious and moral Education*. Journal of Counseling, Education and Psychology, 2(1). 17 26.
- Sifuna, D. N. (1990). *Development of Education in Africa: The Kenyan Experience*. Nairobi: Initiatives Ltd.
- Situma J. (2016). *Methods Used By Teachers to Teach Christian Religious Education in Secondary Schools in Kimilili in Bungoma County, Kenya*. British Journal of Education Vol.4,No. 1, pp.1-8, January 2016
- Skinner, B. F. (1953). *Science and Human Behavior*. New York: Macmillan.
- Sober, E. (2009). *Beyond ethical codes: A call for critical thinking in religious culture*. *Forum on public policy*. Isidoro Talavera, Lead faculty, department of humanities & communication arts. Franklin University. Retrieved from [http:// forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol2011no3/archive/talavera.pdf](http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/vol2011no3/archive/talavera.pdf).

- Turgeon, W. C. (2011). *Philosophy and children. The challenge of moral Education*. Retrieved from https://philosophynow.org/issues/84/The_Challenge_of_Moral_Education.
- Turkkahraman, M. (2012). *The role of Education in the societal development*. Journal of Education and Instructional Studies in the World, 2 (4), 38-41.
- Twoli, N., et.al. (2007). *Instructional Methods in Education*. Nairobi: Kenya Institute of Education.
- UNESCO (1975). *Recommendation concerning the status of teachers*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Vagle, M. D. (2014). *Crafting Phenomenological Research*. Routledge.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. State University of New York Press.
- Vangronsvelt, K & Marichal, K. (2014). *Facing moral dilemmas. How to improve ethical decision making in the workplace?* Retrieved from http://tfli.be/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/White-Paper_Facing-moral-dilemmas.pdf.
- Waithira, K. M. (2014). *The Role Of Christian Religious Education In Transmitting Moral Values Among Secondary School Students In Mathioya District In Murang'a County, Kenya* (Doctoral Dissertation, School Of Education In Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirement For The Degree Of Master Of Education, Kenyatta University).
- Wamahiu, S. P. (1999). The Role of Religious Education in Moral Development: A Kenyan Perspective. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 21(1), 27–39.
- Wambugu, J., & Barasa, P. (2017). *Christian Religious Education and Character Formation in Kenya: Perspectives from Teachers and Students*. East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 2(2), 105–114.
- Wangai Committee (2001). *Report of the Task Force on Students Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools*. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Wanjiku, R., & Karimi, L. (2020). *Relevance of CRE in Addressing Contemporary Moral Challenges Among Youth in Kenya*. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 4(7), 112–117
- You- Di. & Penny, N. H. (2011). *Assessing students' moral reasoning of value-based*. A Journal of Psychology Research, 1(6), 385-391.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR STUDENTS

1. Can you describe a specific moment during a CRE lesson when you felt personally challenged or inspired to reflect on your own moral decisions or behavior?
2. How do the topics you learn in CRE relate to the way you handle real-life situations, such as peer pressure, honesty, or respect?
3. In your experience, what parts of the CRE syllabus seem most helpful or unhelpful in shaping your values or sense of right and wrong?
4. Can you describe a specific CRE lesson where your teacher's way of teaching helped you understand or reflect on a moral issue deeply?
5. How does your CRE teacher usually teach moral topics, and how do you personally experience or respond to that teaching style?

APPENDIX B: APPROVAL LETTER



MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

Tel: 056-30870

P.O Box 190

Fax: 056-30153

Kakamega – 50100

E-mail: directordps@mmust.ac.ke

Kenya

Website: www.mmust.ac.ke

Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

Ref: MMU/COR: 509099

Date: 20th November, 2020

Samuel Owuor Odipo,
EEP/G/01-53110/2018,
P.O. Box 190-50100, KAKAMEGA.

Dear Mr. Odipo,

RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your master's proposal entitled: "*A Critique of Christian Religious Education for Moral Reasoning among Students in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega Central, Kenya: A phenomenological approach*" and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. Prof. Joseph Nasongo Wamocha - SEDU, MMUST
2. Mr. Elvis Kauka - 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, Educational Foundations Department. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of two years from the date of registration to complete your master's 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,


Prof. John Obiri
DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

