The Value of the Aims of Moral Education for Character Formation in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya: A Phenomenological Approach

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ABSTRACT

Historically, education has been responsible for imparting societal values, norms, customs, and expectations. Moral education lays the foundation of a happy society, economic progression, peace, and harmonious coexistence. However, many obstacles exist in realizing the moral ideal for character formation. The obstacles are related to curriculum content and instructional approaches of practicing teachers. Curriculum content areas such as Christian Religious Education, Hindu Religious Education, and Islamic Religious Education, primarily intended to promote the aims of moral education for character formation, are approached from mainly cognitive and exam-oriented perspectives. This is evidenced in the observable and undesirable behaviours of learners in school, such as school arson, premarital pregnancy, drug abuse, public indecency, and misuse of school and public resources. Therefore, this research sought to investigate the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya: a phenomenological approach. Aristotelian theory of Eudaimonia guided the study. The phenomenological hermeneutical method was applied in the study. The study targeted 5,789 teachers including the deputy principals and Christian Religious Education teachers. Purposive sampling was used to recruit 15 participants from seven public secondary schools in Kakamega County. Unstructured interviews were employed to collect primary data. The study established that moral education for character formation is critical in addressing the perennial problems facing the education sector and the country. The study recommends that the government develop guidelines that can help in the progressive assessment of moral competencies.

Keywords: Character Formation, Moral Education, Phenomenology

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I. INTRODUCTION

Moral education is essential in developing learners' character and fostering social cohesion. Education systems worldwide focus on providing moral values and virtues to students to develop morally upright citizens. However, achieving this goal most effectively is still a challenge, with different opinions over which solutions would be the most beneficial (Tang, & Wang, 2021).

The United States of America emphasizes moral education, but joint problems, such as school violence, substance abuse, and harsh social cohesion confront it. India deals with academic biases versus holistic development. The United Kingdom handles weaponry, gangs, and radicalization in schools. Relatively, African countries included cultural values but applied them unevenly due to modern influences such as secularism and consumerism (Pring, 2021).

Thus, moral education in South Africa is necessary and important for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of a separate society and building an ethical environment in a multicultural space. It seeks to teach respect and compassion and has topics such as gender bias and hatred, among others. Since South Africa introduced moral education into its curriculum, it has tried to shape a fair and tolerant society (Nucci & Ilten-Gee, 2021).

On the other hand, the Rwandese Primary and Secondary schools reconstructed their curriculum after the genocide. They infused peace, ethics, and religious education as Compulsory subjects (Stephen, 2021). The Reconstructionism of Rwanda's curriculum led to the development of youths of moral character and integrity.

Moreover, Kenya has historically held the moral education principle of character formation as valued and cherished, but the argument over its effectiveness endures (Gogo, 2020). The philosophical basis of education shapes its normative function in that an individual's societal expectations, values, beliefs, morals, and customs are essential for overall well-being and continuation and are well-developed within the educational setting. For example, prominent theorists such as Aristotle noted that moral education entailed practicing regularly to develop virtues like integrity, empathy, and accountability, which are beneficial both at a personal level and in societies. In Kenya, post-independence policy reviews show repeated attempts to uphold moral education, but criticism surfaces on implementation. More

importantly, surged immoral behaviours among youths suggest the divide between theories and actions requiring more investigation (Othoo & Aseu, 2022).

Traditional pre-colonial systems in Kenya effectively guided communities morally; however, colonial imposition interfered with this. Post-independence, the perceived significance of moral education led to several commissions and policies encompassing the Basic Education Act (2014) that required character building (Momanyi, 2020). Despite this, cases such as arson tend to indicate implementation deficiencies that need review; likewise, indiscipline, examination malpractices, corruption, and premarital pregnancy.

According to the Kenya Health Information Systems (KHIS), Kakamega County is among the leading counties with moral degradation cases in the recent past. For instance, Kakamega County was the second largest affected by premarital teenage pregnancy cases, standing at 6,669, equivalent to 33% from January to June 2020 (Stats, Hill, & Ndirias, 2022).71% of the reported cases of 2020 premarital teenage pregnancy in Kakamega were associated with unprotected premarital sex, which is an indicator of moral deviance. The KHIS report indicated that moral degradation has created havoc among parents, teachers, health workers, prevention agencies, and administrators in the county. Hence, the moral issues in the county require urgent attention.

The prevalence of such immoral issues is often linked to socio-cultural and economic factors such as substance abuse and family dynamics. Statistical data from the Kenya Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (2013-2014) reveals concerning attitudes towards school unrest, domestic violence and child discipline, indicating a cultural backdrop that may condone abusive behaviours (Chepkong'a, 2023). Therefore, it is against the above backdrop the study investigated the value of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county: a phenomenological approach.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Education is intrinsically a moralization process. Classical Philosophers such as Aristotle contend that any educational process devoid of moral and character formation misses out on its normative aim. The moral aim of education is equally affirmed by Kenyan policy and legal frameworks such as the reports of Educational commissions, the legal Constitution of Kenya 2010, the Education Act of 2014, and various task forces that are keenly interested in moral education for character formation among Kenyan youths (Momanyi, 2020). In regard to the legal and policy needs, the Basic Education Curriculum Framework of 2017 places critical emphasis on moral competencies such as citizenship and core values like love and integrity.

Despite the centrality of Moral Education for character formation as prescribed by Philosophers, legal frameworks, and policies, moral education in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya, lacks a clear implementation framework for moral education programs, strategies, and assessment. The loopholes in the transfer of moral content, instructional approaches, and moral assessment are major obstacles to the realization of moral education for character formation. This is evidenced in the observable and undesirable behaviours of learners in school, such as school arson, premarital teenage sex, drug abuse and public indecency.

If the moral problems are not addressed in time, the social dysfunctionality among Kenyan youths is expected to be rampant. In addition, the social fabric of Kenyan society is likely to rapture.

Therefore, it is against the above backdrop that the researcher embarked on the value of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

1.2 Research Objective

To examine the value of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Question

What is the value of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review
2.1.1 The Aristotelian Theory of *Eudaimonia*

Aristotle's theory of e*udaimonia* guides this study. The theory is based on the virtues of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. The pioneers of Aristotelian *eudaimonia* are John Cooper, W. D. Ross, Anscombe, and Alasdair M McIntyre (Eaglestone, 2021). *Eudaimonia* originates from two Greek words: *EU*, which means good or well, and

daimon, which has different concepts such as *spirit*, *genus, inner force*, *and god.* When the terms are combined, they mean a good life in Aristotelian conception. The ancient stoics or epitomized Epicurus understand *eudaimonia simply as* happiness. For Aristotle, happiness is an activity of the soul regarding the best virtues (Aristotle 2008). Epicurus asserts that humans should avoid pain and seek pressure attained through good virtues (Epicurus 341-370 B.C.E).

To understand the concept of e*udaimonia, a* Greek word known as 'a*rete'* is cardinal. Aristotle used the word "arete" to respond, "What is the goal of daily human existence?" According to him, the fundamental purpose of human existence is to achieve a decent life, which leads to human pleasure (Aristotle 2008). Aristotle's concepts of *eudaimonia* and "arete" are handy for this study because the study intends to unfold teachers' perspectives on the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya, through the lived experience of teachers with the ultimate goal of achieving human happiness. Human happiness can only be attained by habitually instilling good virtues in the youths and mentoring them through guidance to grow morally upright. In so doing, the contaminated society will be transformed into a happy community.

Aristotle argued that happiness should persist throughout life, and good character should be in human beings as they grow (habitual) to achieve happiness in fellow men. For Socrates and Plato, they argued that human beings require happiness (*eudaimonia*) more than anything else (Aristotle 2008). To achieve happiness in the 21st century, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato's ideologies of happiness (*eudaimonia*) should be embraced in all sectors entitled to instil virtues. In so doing, the youths will grow morally upright. Socrates put forward virtues such as purity, courage, wisdom, and justice, which were cardinal for nourishing the soul to achieve the maximum happiness in human life. Plato concurred with Socrates' virtues of joy, but he emphasized Justice. Aristotle also pointed out four great virtues that should be considered: justice, wisdom, courage, and temperament for human happiness (Aristotle 2008). The virtues elucidated by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are crucial in guiding this study. The virtues will provide a road map for instilling moral values among secondary school students in Kenya to achieve a happy society.

This theory was essential and guided the study because it pointed out the salient virtues to be reconstructed in secondary schools' curricula to answer the Aristotelian question, "What is the purpose of human life? "Which the research intended to achieve.

2.2 Empirical Review

This chapter reviewed literature drawn from relevant sources and studies. The relevant theoretical literature was reviewed and critiqued where necessary. The academic literature review was based on an examination of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

The primary purpose of education is to assist students in obtaining and perfecting practical moral values (Narvaez, 2021). Moral education cultivates this sense of social and civic responsibility in people. Its goal is to promote active and responsible citizenship by inspiring people to participate in improving the welfare of their communities and society (Narvaez, 2021). It is also true that the moral goals of education are essential parameters and should not be treated with levity because without morals, what will amount to educating an individual in the first place? Akanga (2014) pointed out that 'the world has been too preoccupied with the non-moral goals of education brought about by what was perceived as success and obsession in science and technology.' He adds that while standards guide human conduct, moral education for character formation is dwindling (Akanga, 2014).

In his study, Stephen (2021) noted that despite their critical position in education, researchers have stated that moral aims must be implemented adequately. There are gaps in the implementation framework of moral aims, such as no clear criteria to implement, a biased assessment system for oral goals of education that seems dominated by summative evaluation, which mostly nullifies any notion based on morality, virtually eliminating the affective dimension of moral philosophy and an unproductive pedagogical method adopted with teaching through lecture mechanism prevailing course at schools hitting calibrations were. The cases of blatant immorality left unsolved crises in society and schools today remain as they were many years ago (Stephen, 2021).

Like any other country, Kenya has educational objectives that shape its character. Simiyu and Stephen (2021) argue that living a righteous life is the ultimate test of the modern world. However, they also highlighted that moral education to shape character is paramount in educating the youths to be responsible citizens capable of contributing towards financial stability, social cohesion, and development (Simiyu & Stephen, 2021). In Kenya, the instructional system focuses on providing moral education for character development through traditional religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism to ensure that one's views are morally sound and spiritually correct. The 8.4.4 products demonstrate violent protests, drug and substance use, property destruction, arrogance against teachers, and radicalization, some of the factors recorded in them (Simiyu & Stephen, 2021).

The study by Simiyu and Stephen (2021) was more logical in addressing the moral dilemma of education. The current research filled the gap by employing a phenomenological hermeneutical method, which allowed the researcher to extract concrete lived experiences of participants on a phenomenological investigation into the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kenya.

Sober (2009) argued that classrooms taught students how to behave morally because it taught them what is culturally acceptable when communicating with others. Hall (2024) similarly remarked that a good education in moral reasoning introduces students to societies that form their lives as honest individuals. In agreement with Sober (2009) and Hall (2024), the researchers support their views that schools are mainly meant to help learners develop moral virtues through incremental guidance of habituation so that they grow up morally upright as responsible citizens. On the other hand, these two studies contradict a principle of moral reasoning and automatic acceptability of cultural, ethical decisions that could go against the eudaimonic principle of ultimate happiness. An additional limitation of moral reasoning in the classroom contradicts principle integration in morality lived outside teachers' rooms (Sober, 2009; Hall, 2024).

Myyry (2003) pointed out that morally developed and accurate learners should have four crucial ethical elements: awareness, judgment, ambition, and execution. Moral judgment focuses on what is right and fair, while ethical sensitivity deals with acceptable behaviours in a specific situation. These elements are mainly intended to influence a person's moral behaviour (Gardiner, 2012). The ethical aspects form a foundation for moral reasoning for elementary school students. Pupils receiving moral training for character-shaping have excellent morals and can reason about ethical problems (Myyry, 2003). The above basis provided the edge for study, especially at the theoretical level based on Aristotelian Thomistic cardinal virtues. Halme *et al.* (2021) need to indicate the level of moral issues for learners of different ages. For instance, moral problems that stem from dilemmas and tri-lemmas may still need to be resolved or even dissolved by learners who have learned the four ethical aspects. The highly advanced moral issues may be well analyzed if they follow a long time where these higher rubrics such as courage and fortitude come into play to analyze or categorize deciding when a character is morally right.

Simiyu and Stephen (2021) revealed that the primary purpose of education is to foster moral values among young people. They added that moral education is crucial in character building; hence, without it, society would end or be heading towards a point of unequivocal moral degradation and purity. They claimed that no plausible theory in education can be responsible for implementing moral education; hence, happiness will never come. Their study was limited to the use of a critical method. It excluded empirical or experiential approaches that promoted knowledge about moral education for character training, which this research filled with phenomenological tangents.

Generally, the concerns raised by these researchers about moral education from both theoretical and practical points of view have merit. Moreover, their discourses contribute to advancing discussions. Simiyu and Stephen (2021) took advantage of such generalizations that could only be valid for meta-ethical studies. However, this study's concern is locating moral conversations on phenomenological, pragmatic, and descriptive perspectives. Sober (2009) and Myrry (2003) take a contextualised approach.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Design

The study employed descriptive phenomenological design to explore teachers' perceptions of the aims of moral education for character formation in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The design is effective because it aims to gain insight into participants' lived experiences of a phenomenon without prejudices and preconceptions. The study employed an interpretive paradigm to understand teachers' perceptions of their social realities. This paradigm enables the researcher to learn participants' subjective views. Three elements of this paradigm were explored: ontological orientation to delineate teachers' realities, epistemological orientation to shed light on their claim's knowledge, and axiological orientation to understand what guides them.

3.2 Study Setting

The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Kakamega County -Kenya. Phenomenologists prefer the study setting instead of the study area because the setting provides a convenient and conducive ground for participants. Lannan (2015) asserts that the study environment is cardinal for the participant to participate in the research effectively. According to the Kenya Health Information Systems (KHIS), the selected county is among the leading counties with moral degradation cases in the recent past. For instance, Kakamega County was the second largest affected by premarital teenage pregnancy cases, standing at 6,669, equivalent to 33% from January to June 2020 (Stats, Hill, & Ndirias, 2022).71% of the reported cases of 2020 premarital teenage pregnancy in Kakamega were associated with unprotected premarital sex, which is an indicator of moral deviance. The KHIS report indicated that moral degradation has created havoc among parents, teachers, health workers, prevention agencies, and administrators in the county. Hence, the moral issues in the county require urgent attention.

3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with in-depth information for this study. "Purposive sampling in a descriptive study is commonly used to pick persons or activities that are most relevant to the inquiry's present emphasis" (Krathwohl, 2009). Kruger (2011) adds that purposive sampling is the most appropriate non-probability sampling method for identifying primary participants. Kruger further notes that the sampling looks for experienced participants for the phenomenon under scrutiny, which this study employed.

The sampling was used to select a sample size of 15 participants. The sample size was enough for this study because it was based on two factors, which were anchored on the participants' information power and the participants' homogeneity. Further, the selection of 15 participants is coherent with other authorities on data saturation and sample margin on interviews. However, K'Odhiambo (2013) notes that sample size is not mandatory in phenomenological research. Besides that, he emphasizes that; … "Sample size, which is the number of researchers engaged in the study, has no universal rule. He added that other experts have advocated various sample sizes in phenomenological studies. Researchers like Ary et al. (2006), Ahnn & Anderson (1998), and Cohen et al. (2002) believe that a sample size of thirty is enough. McMillan (2008) suggests that a sample size of five to twenty-five is enough to avoid data saturation, and Groenewald (2004) recommends a sample size of ten to avoid saturation points.

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

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using unstructured interviews because they are conversational, dialogical, and open to gathering in-depth information. Phenomenologists prefer unstructured interviews because of their utility in gathering rich and in-depth information (Vagle, 2018).

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process that includes organizing, classifying, and analyzing evidence to make conclusions and judgments regarding the phenomenon of interest (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln noted that data analysis entails the use of evidence in looking at, categorizing, or tabling to answer initial propositions. This process enabled the researcher to distil vast information into central themes and meanings. Braun and Clarke (2017) employed thematic analysis on the qualitative data. In this way, it fits well with the flexible phenomenological approach targeting the identification of themes and patterns of moral education for character formation. Braun and Clarke's six-step guidelines will ensure a rigorous analysis.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Lived Experiences of Deputy Head Teachers on the Value of the Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation.

The deputy head teachers are herein coded as D1, D2, D3, and D4. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows: Participant D1 argued that moral education fosters good relationships between teachers and students, helps students make the right decisions, and promotes good academic performance in school. The participant further narrated that the current society has a moral lapse concerning what is happening today; the participant recommended that all stakeholders should emphasize moral education. Participant D1 stated;

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

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

Participant D3 noted that moral education for character formation improves the perception of spiritual life among the students because their school emphasizes spiritual practices as a means of moralization to students. The participant also argued that moral education promotes harmonious coexistence within the school and society. Further, the participant noted that it fosters the elements of "*good and bad*" among the learners with the aid of school rules. The

participant observed that the value of moral aims of education cannot be taken for granted because it nurtures citizens with moral wisdom who actualize what their mentors have trained them.

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

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

4.2 Discussion on the Lived Experiences of Deputy Head Teachers on the Value of the Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation

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

Participants D1, D2, and D4 emphasize the societal implications of moral education, linking it to social well-being and the prevention of moral lapses. However, a unique perspective is offered by Participant D3, who elevates moral education to the level of moral consciousness and wisdom, aligning with the transcendental and immanent dimensions discussed by Alam (2022) in the context of sustainable education. The distinct viewpoints among the participants underscore the richness and complexity of moral education's impact.

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

The discrepancies among participants underscore the ongoing debate in the literature regarding the effectiveness of moral education implementation. While teachers acknowledge its importance, diverse perspectives exist on the actual outcomes. This aligns with Fafunwa & Aisiku's (2022) findings, which suggest that traditional didactic methods may be insufficient for character development. Nargiza (2022) states that the acquisition of values requires active learning and reflection, pointing toward the need to move beyond traditional indoctrination methods. Overall, studies indicate that Kenyan teachers strongly endorse the goals of moral education in principle, recognizing their role in developing not just academic but ethical, social, and civic competencies (Hidayati et al., 2020). For example, a study by Fafunwa & Aisiku (2022) found that over 75% of secondary teachers surveyed viewed moral education as an important objective essential for positive values and responsible conduct. Similarly, Nargiza (2022) reported a consensus amongst secondary teachers on cultivating national values and good morals through the curriculum. This aligns with the national goals outlined in Kenya's education policies and Vision 2030 plan.

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

4.3 Critical Evaluation of the Lived Experiences of D1, D2, D3, and D4 on the Value of Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation.

In this section, the participants' ideas are exposed to meta-ethical critique and phenomenological hermeneutical method, a process that necessitates this research to appeal to its theoretical stronghold and methods. Participants who exhibit dialectical aptitudes (D1 and D3) are juxtaposed to Phenomenological tangents, while Participants with dualistic aptitudes are normativity (D2 and D4).

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

Participant D3 points out that moral education improves spiritual life and spiritual life improves moral education. The underlying assumption of spirituality is a continuum of morality and vice-versa, an indicator of dialectical vertical consequentialism. It is dialectical because spirituality has needs, a significant other and morality. Morality, on its part, also needs the fecundity of spirituality, which leads to spiritual nourishment. This doctrine is found in the moral philosophies of Aristotle. The underlying logical connection is the principle of bi-conditionality; in this case, moral education is worthwhile if and only if spiritual exercises influence it. The coherent flow between morals and spirituality is an antecedent of horizontal moral value herein expressed as harmonious co-existence; this point of view correlates with consequential ethics. Metaphysics informs consequential ethics in turn of causes and effects. From an epistemic perspective, moral cognition for citizenship is only feasible if morality leads to applied and lived wisdom.

The concept of finality alludes to actions whose ends are in themselves, while self-sufficiency is the basis of authenticity at individual and social levels. Inclusivity is an appeal to the metaphysical universal existence of realities. It points out that each reality is an ontological appendage to the next. The concept of excellence refers to the inclination towards the optimum good. In moral reasoning, excellence refers to moral evaluation at its optimum.

Participant D2 is a dualistic moral assessor because the participant bleaches the rule of eudaimonia inclusivity as being located at the school, community, and family levels. The shift of moral responsibility to the family alone not only bleaches the principle of inclusivity but raises radical dualism and impartiality in moral education. This disintegrated viewpoint cannot lead to optimum happiness. Participant D4 is highly deontological and operates from categorical moral evaluation, which depicts categorical moral imperative at its strictest level. High-handed normativity might not produce existential and eudaimotive happiness.

4.4 Lived Experiences of T1-T11 on the Value of Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation.

The Christian Religious Education teachers are herein coded as T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10 and T11. Their findings were presented as follows: It was established that all Christian Religious Education teachers recognize that moral education for character formation plays a great role. Their anecdotal reports were presented as follows:

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

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

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

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Participant T3 posited that moral education for character formation helps learners acquire virtues of moral life such as honesty, integrity, and respect. The participant also noted that moral education expands learners' spiritual horizons, such as religious practices in school and spiritual clubs. Further, participants indicated that it helps students

be responsible members of society. The participants, however, noted that schools should emphasize the value of moral education to liberate humanity from undesirable tendencies that can result in greater evils.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Participant T10 agreed that moral education for character formation imparts good habits and behaviour to students. The participant also noted that it nurtures responsible citizens,

"Shaping learners' moral conscience, enabling them to interact seamlessly with other members of society. In the 21st century, there are many individuals devoid of moral consciousness. For instance, look at cases where students burn schools, teachers collaborate with students to cheat in exams and where traffic police take bribes at the expense of the life of innocent citizens, is a clear indicator of lack of moral consciousness."

Participant T11 affirmed that moral education for character formation promoted good behaviour in school and society. Further, the participant agreed that it imparts moral virtues such as respect, integrity, and royalty to learners, and finally, it helps learners achieve their academic careers.

"Moral students tend to concentrate in class and are responsible for their activities. However, institutions, where the value of moral aims of education for character formation should be emphasized, are not taken seriously, and the consequences are poor performance and other immoral acts such as strikes which portray the image of the school negatively."

4.5 Discussion of the Lived Experiences of T1-T11 on the Value of Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation.

Practicing teachers' acknowledgement of the significance of moral education for character formation aligns with the findings of Anangisye (2008), who emphasizes the crucial role of moral education in character development based on the African Indigenous Education Framework. However, it is noteworthy that the anecdotal reports from all practicing teachers, excluding T2, T7, and T8, suggest that schools are not giving moral education the emphasis it deserves.

T2 and T6 express concerns about schools prioritizing academic performance over moral education. This resonates with Dewey's (1916) call for a holistic approach to education (Greenwalt, 2016). T2 and T11 criticize the

competitive atmosphere in Kenyan secondary schools, as it does not align with the holistic formation envisioned by the Kenyan government. This observation highlights the need for a shift in education paradigms, moving away from a narrow focus on the cognitive domain at the expense of the psychomotor and affective domains.

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

4.6 Critical Evaluation of the Lived Experiences of T1-T11 on the Value Of Moral Aims of Education for Character Formation

While most participants agree that academic performance leads to de-emphasis in moral education, their use of the concept of performance is loose and ambiguous. The term performance does not automatically imply academic performance. This ambiguity emanates from Kenya's persistent view of education as being academic-oriented. Such orientation indicates perennial and essentialist philosophies of education, dichotomized epistemology of idealism, rationalism, and capital philosophy. The foretasted philosophical orientations can only be mitigated by a counter-thesis of moral philosophies of education, especially pragmatic philosophy. These philosophies need to align themselves with the parameters of phenomenological thinking and the eudaimotive approach. The researcher believes that phenomena keep changing and human beings are not statistical data. Therefore, it's appropriate to approach the aims of moral education for character formation from a pragmatic phenomenon. Phenomenological issues cannot be solved by either a cognitive approach or pure science. Still, the issues require humanistic approaches, which recall a paradigm shift in the theory and practice of education. The shift in education will be vital in reconstructing education to a humanistic viewpoint, holistic tangents, and pragmatic tendencies (Öztürk, 2023). The humanistic approach will help to address the problem of natural scientists who are partial in addressing humanistic phenomena such as moral education for character formation. Pure science is only interested in understanding what a person is without taking into account their held conscious beliefs. Human conscious beliefs are multifaceted and variegated; thus, they require a humanistic approach. The humanistic phenomenon is holistic and it examines the understanding and meaning of the held human conscious beliefs (Yar Yildirim, 2021).

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

Moral education for effective character formation should focus on a pragmatic approach instead of old philosophies. The pragmatic approach should be phenomenological pragmatic. In this sense, it will get to the sense of things themselves practically, which is the essence of moral education for character formation in the light of the lived experiences of practicing teachers. Authors like Dewey considered education as a pragmatic or progressive phenomenon with constantly evolving difficulties. Examining any dynamic phenomenon and determining ways to relate it to past educational methods is an effective strategy in education. Simultaneously, it envisions what the future holds for education as a field, which contains challenges that can't be adequately addressed by scientific knowledge alone.

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The research establishes that moral education for character development is crucial to determining the ethical and moral perspective of learners within public secondary schools. This aspect of education has a central role in moulding the students into righteous citizens who will be helpful to society. In so doing, the research underscores the importance of moral character development. Moral education positively affects students' behaviour, decision-making, and interpersonal relations. As future leaders and citizens, the basis of moral points of view formed during these years defines the quality of the society to which these people will contribute. The study underlines the need to strengthen moral education's place in the overall education systems.

5.2 Recommendations

Consistent with the conclusions, the following research recommendation is proposed: the Government should pursue an active policy and ensure work is done to establish clear demos for developing moral competencies at schools. These guidelines should be designed to make it possible to teach moral education and assess the teaching of moral education in a manner that is in tune with the national goals of education. The critical assessment dimensions should be

connected clearly with the regulative and prescriptive reference frameworks the country wants to support through its education system. Thus, educators are more able to monitor the moral growth of students and ensure the students are well-equipped with the skills required to solve the moral problems of the contemporary world. Furthermore, adopting these guidelines would go a long way in giving schools across the country a central approach to forming moral character.

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