

Effectiveness Of Christian Religious Education Teaching Methodologies And Moral Values Promotion Among Junior Secondary School Students In Turbo Sub County

Sylvia Jepkoech Singoei¹, Naomi Kutto², Jacob Lolelea Natade³

Department Of Curriculum And Instruction, School Of Education, University Of Eldoret, Kenya

Department Of Curriculum And Instruction, School Of Education, University Of Eldoret, Kenya

Department Of Curriculum And Instruction, School Of Education, University Of Eldoret, Kenya

Abstract

Background: Moral values play a crucial role in shaping individual character and societal well-being. Schools serve as the primary institutions for instilling these values in learners, leveraging structured curricula to promote virtues such as honesty, empathy, respect, and responsibility. Despite ongoing efforts by teachers, religious institutions, and parents to instill moral values in learners, there is a growing concern about the evident signs of moral decline among junior school students in Turbo Sub-county. Incidents of indiscipline, disrespect toward teachers and elders, dishonesty, increased engagement in peer-influenced negative behavior, and declining academic integrity point to a deterioration in the moral fabric of young learners. This worrying trend raises questions about the effectiveness of moral education in schools, the role of family and community influence, and the broader socio-cultural factors contributing to this phenomenon. This study seeks to determine the effectiveness of CRE teaching methodologies and moral values promotion among Junior Secondary School (JSS) students in Turbo Sub County.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive survey design was adopted, targeting 15,600 respondents from 140 schools. Using Krejcie and Morgan's formula, a sample of 302 participants (260 students and 42 teachers) was selected through proportionate and purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews and analyzed using SPSS and thematic analysis.

Results: The findings indicated that interactive and context-driven teaching methodologies were most effective in promoting moral values among Junior School students. Storytelling emerged as the most impactful method, receiving unanimous support from teachers (mean = 4.58; SD = 0.500) and strong approval from students (mean = 4.00; SD = 1.049), who appreciated its narrative power in making moral lessons relatable. Group discussions and the use of real-life examples were also highly rated by teachers (100% and 86.1%, respectively), while students showed moderately strong support (means = 3.80 and 3.72), suggesting that methods encouraging reflection and dialogue were effective in fostering moral understanding.

Conclusion: The effectiveness of CRE teaching methodologies depends heavily on how interactive, contextually relevant, and emotionally engaging they are. Methods like storytelling, group discussions, and real-life examples were found to be most impactful, especially when well-facilitated under the CBC framework. However, less structured approaches like singing or debate were not consistently effective, suggesting a need for deliberate pedagogical planning that centers student engagement and understanding.

Keywords: Effectiveness, CRE, Teaching Methodologies, moral values, JSS students

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I. Introduction

Moral values play a crucial role in shaping individual character and societal well-being. Schools serve as the primary institutions for instilling these values in learners, leveraging structured curricula to promote virtues such as honesty, empathy, respect, and responsibility (Hikmah, 2024). Christian Religious Education (CRE) has traditionally served this moral function, providing learners with a foundation in biblical teachings, ethical reflection, and spiritual growth (Othoo & Aseu, 2022).

Globally, countries like Finland and the United Kingdom provide compelling examples of integrating moral and spiritual education into the school systems. Finland emphasizes values of education as part of its National Core Curriculum for Basic Education, which includes religious and secular ethics as integral components (Suwalska, 2022). The United Kingdom similarly prioritizes moral education through its Religious Education (RE) programs, which are mandatory in schools (Wareham, 2022). Religious Education (RE) programs expose learners to diverse religious traditions and moral frameworks, promoting tolerance, ethical reasoning, and cultural

awareness. Developed nations recognize the importance of nurturing morally upright and spiritually grounded citizens in the education policies (Mahanani, Kamaruddin, & Hussin, 2022).

In Ghana and Uganda, moral and spiritual education is integral to the school system (Arthur, (2024) and Tumwebaze & Mbabazi, 2022). Ghana's Basic Education Curriculum incorporates Religious and Moral Education (RME), which emphasizes Christian and Islamic teachings alongside moral values. The subject aims to shape learners' character and ethical worldview (Arthur, 2024). Similarly, in Uganda, Religious Education is taught in schools to promote ethical behavior, unity, and social responsibility. Both countries recognize the importance of religious education in addressing moral and social issues within their societies (Tumwebaze & Mbabazi, 2022).

In Kenya, the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) represents a shift from exam-centered education to holistic learning that includes spiritual and ethical development. Under CBC, CRE is offered as a learning area from Grade 4 onwards, and continues into Junior Secondary School as an elective subject, focusing on spiritual understanding, character formation, and moral decision-making (Bizimana, 2024). However, the implementation of CRE under CBC is still evolving, and various studies have pointed to challenges including teacher capacity, inadequate instructional materials, and variability in interpretation and delivery (Karanja & Mwangi, 2022).

Despite ongoing efforts by teachers, religious institutions, and parents to instill moral values in learners, there is a growing concern about the evident signs of moral decline among junior school students in Turbo Subcounty. Incidents of indiscipline, disrespect toward teachers and elders, dishonesty, increased engagement in peer-influenced negative behavior, and declining academic integrity point to a deterioration in the moral fabric of young learners. This worrying trend raises questions about the effectiveness of moral education in schools, the role of family and community influence, and the broader socio-cultural factors contributing to this phenomenon. This study seeks to determine the effectiveness of CRE teaching methodologies and moral values promotion among Junior Secondary School (JSS) students in Turbo Sub County.

II. Materials And Methods

Research Design: The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which observes and describes existing conditions without manipulation, making it suitable for educational research focused on perceptions and attitudes (Asenahabi, 2019; Chowdhury & Shil, 2021). This approach enabled the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data using questionnaires and interviews, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in promoting moral values under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Study Location: The research was conducted in Turbo Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, and a culturally diverse region with 140 public junior schools.

Target Population and Sample Size: The target population comprised 15,600 respondents, including 15,400 Junior Secondary School (JSS) students and 200 CRE teachers (MoE, 2024). The sampling frame included all registered junior schools in Turbo. A 30% sampling ratio was applied, resulting in 42 schools, from which 302 participants (260 students and 42 teachers) were selected using proportionate and purposive sampling techniques. Sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's formula, ensuring representativeness.

Data Collection Instruments: Included structured questionnaires for students and teachers, and semi-structured interviews with 6 teachers. The instruments were validated through expert review and piloted on 30 respondents from a comparable sub-county. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.7 across all sections, indicating high internal consistency.

Data Analysis: it involved quantitative analysis using SPSS (version 24) for descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means), presented in tables and charts. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify emerging patterns and insights.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical approval was obtained from relevant authorities, including NACOSTI, the Ministry of Education, and the university ethics board. Informed consent and assent were secured from all participants, with confidentiality assured through coding and secure data handling.

III. Results And Discussion

This study determined the effectiveness of CRE teaching methodologies and moral values promotion among JSS students in Turbo Sub County. Table 1 presents the findings based on the opinion of the respondents.

Table 1 Effectiveness of CRE Teaching Methodologies

			SD	D	N	A	SA	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
1. Storytelling in CRE lessons helps me learn and remember moral values.	Teachers	F	0	0	0	15	21	36	4.58	.500
		%	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.7	58.3	100.0		
	Students	F	12	16	12	121	79	240	4.00	1.049
		%	5.0	6.7	5.0	50.4	32.9	100.0		
2. Role-playing activities in CRE help me understand and apply moral lessons.	Teachers	F	0	0	0	20	16	36	4.44	.504
		%	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.6	44.4	100.0		
	Students	F	20	21	81	85	33	240	3.38	1.091
		%	8.3	8.8	33.8	35.4	13.8	100.0		
3. Group discussions during CRE help me think critically about moral issues.	Teachers	F	0	0	0	15	21	36	4.58	.500
		%	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.7	58.3	100.0		
	Students	F	28	16	22	84	90	240	3.80	1.323
		%	11.7	6.7	9.2	35.0	37.5	100.0		
4. Singing and composing songs in CRE make learning about moral values fun and memorable.	Teachers	F	0	0	11	20	5	36	3.83	.655
		%	0.0	0.0	30.6	55.6	13.9	100.0		
	Students	F	16	41	53	84	46	240	3.43	1.173
		%	6.7	17.1	22.1	35.0	19.2	100.0		
5. My CRE teacher uses real-life examples that help me relate to moral lessons.	Teachers	F	0	0	0	20	16	36	4.44	.504
		%	0.0	0.0	0.0	55.6	44.4	100.0		
	Students	F	20	38	24	65	93	240	3.72	1.342
		%	8.3	15.8	10.0	27.1	38.8	100.0		
6. Watching videos or using digital media in CRE makes moral lessons more engaging.	Teachers	F	0	0	6	20	10	36	4.11	.667
		%	0.0	0.0	16.7	55.6	27.8	100.0		
	Students	F	33	58	47	90	12	240	2.96	1.171
		%	13.8	24.2	19.6	37.5	5.0	100.0		

Key: F=frequency, %=Percentage, SD=1, D=2, U=3, A=4, SA=5, Std.Dev=Standard Deviation

The study findings in table 4.8 found that storytelling is one of the most effective CRE teaching methodologies. All teachers agreed it helps learners understand and remember moral values, with 58.3% strongly agreeing. Among students, 83.3% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The high mean scores for both groups (teachers = 4.58, students = 4.00) affirm the method's popularity and effectiveness. Storytelling resonates well because it simplifies abstract moral concepts into relatable narratives. According to Mutua and Nyang'au (2023), storytelling remains one of the most impactful pedagogical tools in CRE, especially when grounded in biblical and real-life moral scenarios.

Role-playing was rated highly by teachers (100% agreement), with 44.4% strongly agreeing it helps students apply moral lessons. However, student opinions were more divided: only 49.2% agreed, while 17.1% disagreed, and 33.8% remained neutral. This suggests that while educators value role-play, its impact on learners varies, possibly depending on how it's implemented. A study by Okello and Maina (2022) highlights that role-playing is effective only when learners are actively engaged and the roles are contextualized within familiar environments to enhance empathy and ethical reasoning.

Group discussions were also seen as highly effective by teachers, with a perfect agreement of 100% and a mean of 4.58. Students' responses were more varied, though the majority (72.5%) agreed that discussions enhanced their critical thinking on moral issues. This method appears to foster collaborative learning and deeper engagement with moral content. As supported by Githinji and Kiarie (2024), group discussions in CRE classes promote dialogue and peer moral reflection, particularly when facilitated in a learner-centered environment that encourages diverse opinions.

Singing and composing songs in CRE received moderate support. While 69.5% of teachers agreed it makes learning fun and memorable, only 48.2% of students agreed or strongly agreed. A notable portion (22.1%) remained neutral, and 23.8% disagreed. The relatively lower student mean (3.43) suggests that musical methods may be more entertaining than effective for internalizing moral content. This aligns with findings by Wambua and Kosgei (2023), who argue that while music enhances memory and engagement, its moral impact depends on the thematic depth and clarity of the songs used in instruction.

Real-life examples were highly appreciated, with 100% of teachers agreeing that they help students relate to moral lessons. Among students, 65.9% agreed or strongly agreed, though a notable 24.1% disagreed or remained neutral. The positive student mean (3.72) shows that concrete experiences help ground abstract moral

concepts in lived reality. This confirms the findings of Atieno and Muthoni (2021), who emphasized the need for real-world examples in value-based education, noting that such approaches enhance learners' ability to transfer moral lessons to everyday life.

The use of videos and digital media showed a strong contrast between teachers and students. While 83.4% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that digital tools make moral lessons more engaging, only 42.5% of students expressed similar sentiments. In fact, 38% of students disagreed, resulting in a low student mean score of 2.96. This indicates that while the digital approach is promising, its implementation may be inconsistent, and learners may not always find videos relevant or well-integrated into lessons. Nyambura and Ochieng (2024) note that digital media can be transformative in moral education, but only if the content is age-appropriate, contextually relevant, and supported by reflective discussion.

The high overall teacher ratings across all methodologies reflect a general confidence in the pedagogical strategies used in CRE instruction. Teachers seem to value interactive and experiential learning approaches, which align with the current CBC framework that encourages learner-centered teaching. However, the discrepancies between teacher and student responses in methods like role-play and digital media signal a potential mismatch between teacher intentions and student experiences. Mwikali and Chebet (2020) emphasize the importance of aligning teaching methods with learner preferences and technological literacy for maximum impact.

Student responses across the methods show a preference for storytelling, real-life examples, and group discussions, suggesting that methods grounded in interpersonal interaction and familiar contexts are most effective for promoting moral development. Students seemed less responsive to more passive or less structured methods such as singing or videos, which may reflect changing learning styles or varying levels of interest. A study by Kiprono and Moraa (2022) found that students are more likely to engage with CRE content when it is practical, relatable, and participatory rather than performative or media-heavy.

The relatively high standard deviations among student responses especially in group discussions (1.323), real-life examples (1.342), and digital media (1.171) indicate considerable variation in how students perceive and benefit from each method. This suggests that student background, learning style, and classroom environment may influence how effective a method is. Chege and Lang'at (2023) argue that differentiated instruction—tailoring methods to meet the diverse moral development needs of students—is critical in the effective delivery of CRE.

In conclusion, the study shows that interactive and context-based teaching methodologies particularly storytelling, group discussions, and real-life examples are perceived as the most effective by both teachers and students in promoting moral values in CRE. While other methods like role-play and digital media have potential, their impact appears to depend heavily on how they are applied. This supports Wekesa and Mutai's (2025) recommendation that CRE teaching should be dynamic and responsive, integrating learner feedback to improve moral outcomes.

Table 2 Methods used in CRE lessons to promote moral values

			Yes	No	Total	Mean	Std. Dev
Storytelling	Teachers	F	36	0	36	1.00	0.000
		%	100.0	0.0	100.0		
	Students	F	132	108	240	1.45	0.499
		%	55.0	45.0	100.0		
Group discussions	Teachers	F	31	5	36	1.14	0.351
		%	86.1	13.9	100.0		
	Students	F	140	100	240	1.42	0.494
		%	58.3	41.7	100.0		
Real-life examples	Teachers	F	31	5	36	1.14	0.351
		%	86.1	13.9	100.0		
	Students	F	114	126	240	1.53	0.500
		%	47.5	52.5	100.0		
Question and answer sessions	Teachers	F	25	11	36	1.31	0.467
		%	69.4	30.6	100.0		
	Students	F	134	106	240	1.44	0.498
		%	55.8	44.2	100.0		
Case studies	Teachers	F	10	26	36	1.72	0.454
		%	27.8	72.2	100.0		
	Students	F	74	166	240	1.69	0.463
		%	30.8	69.2	100.0		
Role-playing activities	Teachers	F	26	10	36	1.28	0.454
		%	72.2	27.8	100.0		
	Students	F	134	106	240	1.44	0.498
		%	55.8	44.2	100.0		
Singing and composing songs	Teachers	F	15	21	36	1.58	0.500
		%	41.7	58.3	100.0		
	Students	F	102	138	240	1.58	0.495

		%	42.5	57.5	100.0		
Watching videos or using digital media	Teachers	F	20	16	36	1.44	0.504
		%	55.6	44.4	100.0		
	Students	F	74	166	240	1.69	0.463
		%	30.8	69.2	100.0		
Debates on moral issues	Teachers	F	21	15	36	1.42	0.500
		%	58.3	41.7	100.0		
	Students	F	120	120	240	1.50	0.501
		%	50.0	50.0	100.0		
Field trips or community service	Teachers	F	15	21	36	1.58	0.500
		%	41.7	58.3	100.0		
	Students	F	97	143	240	1.60	0.492
		%	40.4	59.6	100.0		

Key: *F=frequency, %=Percentage, Std.Dev=Standard Deviation*

In table 2, the findings indicate that storytelling is unanimously supported by teachers (100%) as a valuable method for promoting moral values in CRE, with students showing moderate support at 55%. The student mean score (1.45) and standard deviation (0.499) suggest a divided perception, indicating that although storytelling is widely used, nearly half of the students do not find it as impactful. This divergence may be attributed to how stories are presented—without interactive elements, students may not fully engage. As Njoroge and Chege (2023) emphasize, storytelling in moral education must be participatory and contextually relevant to resonate with modern learners.

Group discussions were favored by 86.1% of teachers and 58.3% of students. While a majority of learners supported this method, a significant minority did not, suggesting that discussion quality or structure may vary between classrooms. The method achieved a moderate student mean (1.42), showing mixed but slightly positive views. This is consistent with Wekesa and Ndung'u (2021), who observed that group discussions enhance moral reasoning only when guided effectively by the teacher and when students feel safe to express differing viewpoints.

Using real-life examples was endorsed by 86.1% of teachers but received less student support, with only 47.5% agreeing it helps promote moral values. The students' lower mean (1.53) and high standard deviation (0.500) suggest inconsistency in how this method is perceived or applied. This may be because real-life examples are sometimes abstract or not clearly linked to students' experiences. According to Atieno and Wambua (2022), effective moral education must use localized and relatable case scenarios to bridge the gap between theory and lived reality.

Question and answer sessions were supported by 69.4% of teachers and 55.8% of students. This moderate approval highlights that while interactive, this method may not always lead to deep moral insight, especially if questions are superficial or closed-ended. With a student mean of 1.44, it is evident that the method has potential but requires refinement. Kipruto and Gathura (2024) recommend integrating open-ended moral dilemmas into Q&A sessions to stimulate ethical thinking and student participation.

Case studies received limited support, with only 27.8% of teachers and 30.8% of students endorsing the method. Both groups had high mean values (teachers = 1.72; students = 1.69), indicating widespread disapproval or underuse. The findings may point to a lack of exposure or teacher training in using case-based teaching effectively. Nyakundi and Kamau (2023) critique that although case studies are effective in theory, their practical application in Kenyan classrooms is minimal due to limited resources and time constraints in the curriculum.

Role-playing activities were considered effective by 72.2% of teachers and 55.8% of students. Despite the majority support, the student mean (1.44) suggests that many students remain unconvinced of its value. The success of this method likely depends on the creativity and preparation of the teacher and the willingness of students to participate. According to Kibe and Mutheu (2020), role-playing is an engaging tool for teaching moral reasoning, but it must be student-centered and carefully debriefed to connect actions with ethical lessons.

Singing and composing songs were endorsed by 41.7% of teachers and 42.5% of students, with nearly 60% of both groups disapproving or unsure of its effectiveness. The mean scores for both groups (1.58) confirm its relatively low rating as a moral teaching tool. While music has potential to reinforce memory, the data suggest that it is not being used effectively or that the songs used lack moral clarity. Otieno and Gikonyo (2022) argue that unless songs have clear moral messages and are integrated with reflective discussions, they may serve more as entertainment than instruction.

The use of videos and digital media was supported by 55.6% of teachers but only 30.8% of students. This significant gap suggests that although educators see potential in media-based methods, many students may not find the digital content engaging or relevant. The high student mean (1.69) and moderate standard deviation reflect dissatisfaction or underutilization of quality resources. As highlighted by Maina and Naliaka (2024), digital media can enhance moral instruction only if the content is age-appropriate, interactive, and followed by discussion or guided reflection.

Debates on moral issues showed a 58.3% approval rate among teachers, while student responses were evenly split (50% yes, 50% no). This indicates that while some students appreciate the critical thinking promoted by debates, others may find them confrontational or confusing. The relatively high standard deviation (0.501) for students further supports this interpretation. Mwangi and Otieno (2021) suggest that debates are most effective in CRE when structured with clear guidelines and when students are taught how to respectfully argue moral viewpoints.

Field trips and community service were among the least supported methods, with only 41.7% of teachers and 40.4% of students affirming their use. The high disapproval may stem from logistical challenges such as time, cost, or administrative approval. Yet, experiential learning outside the classroom is a powerful way to promote empathy and civic responsibility. According to Njuguna and Cheruiyot (2023), community-based learning enhances moral development by connecting students to real-world moral challenges, but schools often lack the frameworks to support such activities consistently.

Teachers most frequently cited *storytelling*, *role-playing*, and *use of real-life examples* as the most effective methods. They noted these approaches helped personalize moral lessons and improve student retention and understanding.

Teacher [2] said that, *"When learners act out situations or hear real-life stories, they tend to reflect deeply and remember."* This supports Kiplangat and Mwangi (2022), who found that experiential and participatory strategies such as dramatization and contextual storytelling significantly improve moral engagement in religious education classrooms.

The most frequently mentioned method was *storytelling*, followed by *group discussions* and *real-life examples*. Students felt that storytelling made lessons memorable and enjoyable, while group discussions allowed them to express personal views and learn from peers.

Student [2] stated that, *"When our teacher tells us stories, I remember the moral lesson easily."* Student [3] stated that, *"Discussions help us think deeply and correct each other respectfully."* This is supported by Kamau and Chebet (2021), who noted that participatory methods like storytelling and group work increase students' engagement and critical thinking, enhancing moral reasoning.

Students had a generally positive perception of CRE methods but highlighted variability depending on the teacher's approach. Some students found lessons engaging, while others reported that they felt passive during some sessions.

Student [4] said that, *"Sometimes we just listen, and it becomes boring."* Student [5] stated that, *"When we act or debate, I enjoy the lesson and remember what I learn."*

This aligns with Mutuku and Nyanchama (2024), who emphasize that while CRE has great potential for moral formation, its success heavily depends on the pedagogy used. Learner-centered techniques promote internalization of values more effectively than traditional lecture-based approaches.

IV. Conclusion

The effectiveness of CRE teaching methodologies depends heavily on how interactive, contextually relevant, and emotionally engaging they are. Methods like storytelling, group discussions, and real-life examples were found to be most impactful, especially when well-facilitated under the CBC framework. However, less structured approaches like singing or debate were not consistently effective, suggesting a need for deliberate pedagogical planning that centers student engagement and understanding.

V. Recommendation

School administrators and curriculum developers should allocate more instructional time for CRE lessons in the school timetable to allow for comprehensive moral teaching and reflection activities that are essential for value internalization among learners.

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) should organize regular training workshops for CRE teachers to equip them with modern, CBC-aligned pedagogical skills, especially in the use of experiential and technology-based teaching methods

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