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Relationship Between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction and the Moral Formation of Grade 8–9 Learners in Catholic Private and Sponsored Primary Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract: The Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) is central to Catholic education, yet questions remain regarding its consistency and effectiveness in shaping learners' values. This study examined the relationship between PPI and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 pupils in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. A sequential convergent mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 28 teachers using structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained from 28 head teachers, four chaplains, one diocesan officer, and focused group discussions with pupils. Instrument validity was confirmed through expert review and piloting, while reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$) for quantitative data and triangulation and member checking for qualitative data. Quantitative results indicated that PPI was moderately implemented ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.61$) yet strongly correlated with moral formation ($r = .702$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis confirmed PPI as a significant predictor ($\beta = .636$, $p < .001$), explaining 49.3% of the variance in moral outcomes. Thematic findings further demonstrated PPI's influence on honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service, while highlighting challenges of chaplaincy involvement, curriculum pressures, and limited resources. The study concludes that PPI significantly contributes to learners' moral growth but requires stronger diocesan support, systematic training, and structured integration into school timetables.

Keywords: Programme for Pastoral Instruction, Moral Formation, Catholic Schools, Values Education

1.1 Introduction

The moral formation of learners remains a central concern in Catholic education, which seeks to nurture pupils who are not only academically competent but also guided by strong ethical and spiritual values. The Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) was introduced in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kenya as a structured initiative to instill virtues such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service. While the programme has been recognized as integral to the Catholic Church's mission of holistic education, limited empirical evidence exists on its actual influence on pupils' moral growth. This study therefore investigates the relationship between PPI and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners

in Catholic schools within Kajiado County, using a mixed-methods approach to capture both statistical trends and lived experiences.

1.2 Background of the study

Moral formation is widely acknowledged as a central pillar of holistic education. In Catholic schooling, the goal is not merely academic excellence but the nurturing of learners who are guided by ethical values, faith, and a sense of responsibility to society. The Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) was established within Catholic schools as a deliberate effort to achieve this mission by instilling key virtues such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service. Rooted in Catholic social teaching, which emphasizes the dignity of the human person and the pursuit of the common good (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004), PPI provides structured spaces in which pupils encounter faith-based instruction, engage in moral reflection, and develop habits consistent with Christian living.

Globally, evidence suggests that faith-based programmes can positively influence learners' moral development. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) demonstrated that Catholic schools in the United States fostered stronger moral commitments among students when compared with public schools, attributing this to structured religious and pastoral programmes. Tan (2018), examining values education in the Philippines, found that pupils exposed to integrated moral instruction displayed higher levels of civic engagement and social responsibility. These studies confirm that pastoral programmes can provide measurable benefits in shaping young people's behavior and ethical decision-making.

Across Africa, research points to both the potential and the challenges of faith-based programmes. Odoi (2017), in a study of Ghanaian Catholic schools, found that religious instruction instilled virtues such as honesty and service, yet inconsistencies in delivery weakened its overall impact. Similarly, Okeke and Nwankwo (2020) reported that in Nigeria, weak teacher preparation and inadequate resourcing limited the effectiveness of religious education in producing morally grounded adolescents. These studies suggest that pastoral initiatives are important, but their success depends on the quality of delivery and institutional support.

In East Africa, Mugisha (2018) observed that moral and religious education in Ugandan Catholic schools played a key role in promoting discipline and responsibility among learners, though implementation was often undermined by competing curriculum demands. In Tanzania, Mushi (2019) found that pastoral programmes positively influenced pupils' behavior but varied significantly in effectiveness depending on school leadership and chaplain involvement. These findings highlight that context, resources, and institutional priorities are critical determinants of outcomes.

Within Kenya, the Catholic Education Commission of Kenya (CECK, 2019) has emphasized PPI as an integral tool for holistic formation. However, concerns remain about its actual impact on learners' behavior. Kagema, Ileri, and Wanjohi (2019) reported that pastoral care activities in Kenyan Catholic schools improved discipline, but were often overshadowed by academic priorities. Mutua and Njoroge (2022) further observed that chaplaincy involvement varied widely, leading to unequal exposure of pupils to structured moral instruction. Despite this, no study has systematically tested the relationship between PPI participation and measurable moral outcomes among learners at the primary school level. This gap is particularly relevant in Kajiado County, a region with a diverse cultural and religious landscape where Catholic schools play an important role in shaping learners' values. While PPI is

officially timetabled in Catholic private and sponsored schools, there is limited evidence on whether it actually translates into stronger moral formation among pupils. Addressing this gap is essential for diocesan policy, school leadership, and teachers who seek to evaluate whether PPI is fulfilling its purpose of nurturing learners who embody Catholic values both within and beyond the classroom.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Although Catholic education is founded on the principle of holistic learner development, there is growing concern that schools are struggling to achieve this ideal. Reports from the Ministry of Education (2019) indicate that cases of indiscipline, dishonesty, and peer misconduct among pupils are on the rise, raising questions about the strength of their moral foundation. At the same time, the Catholic Education Commission of Kenya (CECK, 2019) has acknowledged gaps in the consistency and quality of delivering the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI), which remains the Church's principal tool for nurturing learners' values. Scholarly work in Kenya has mostly concentrated on examining the extent of PPI's implementation (e.g., Kagema, Ileri, & Wanjohi, 2019; Mutua & Njoroge, 2022). However, little systematic research has moved beyond programme delivery to evaluate whether participation in PPI actually contributes to learners' moral formation. This creates a significant knowledge gap, as the effectiveness of PPI cannot be judged solely on the basis of whether it is timetabled or facilitated; its true measure lies in the transformation of learners' attitudes, choices, and behaviors. Without empirical evidence linking PPI to tangible moral outcomes, Catholic educators and policymakers remain uncertain whether the programme is fulfilling its intended purpose or whether it requires restructuring to meet the contemporary challenges facing young people in Kajiado County and beyond.

1.4.1 Research Question

What is the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kajiado County?

1.4.2 Research Objective

To determine the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored primary schools in Kajiado County.

1.4.3 Research Hypotheses

Ho. There is no statistically significant relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored primary schools in Kajiado County.

1.5 Significance of the Study

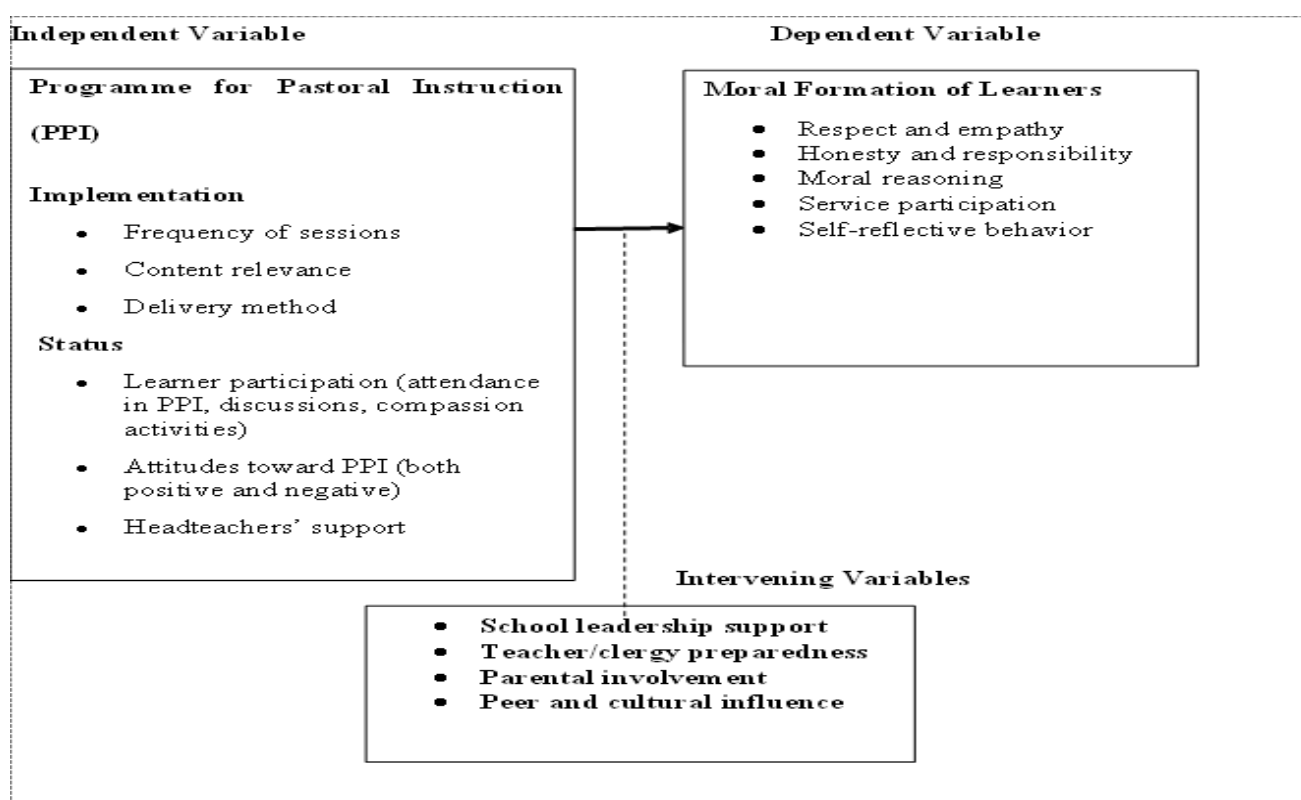
This study is significant in several respects. For the Catholic Diocese of Ngong and the Catholic Education Commission of Kenya (CECK), it provides empirical evidence on whether PPI is achieving its purpose of nurturing morally upright learners. For school administrators and teachers, it highlights the impact of their support and facilitation of PPI on pupils' moral behavior. For chaplains, it affirms their role as moral and spiritual mentors in schools. Pupils, as the primary beneficiaries, stand to gain from a more structured and impactful PPI programme that fosters honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service. At a broader level, the study contributes to academic literature on faith-based education in Kenya, offering insights for both local and comparative international studies on moral formation.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of Study

This study was confined to examining the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and the moral formation of learners in Catholic private and sponsored primary schools within Kajiado County, Kenya. The focus was on Grade 8 and 9 pupils, as these learners are at a critical stage of adolescence where moral reasoning, responsibility, and social identity begin to take deeper root. The scope also included teachers, head teachers, chaplains, and a diocesan education officer, since these groups play integral roles in shaping, facilitating, and supervising PPI. Methodologically, the study was delimited to a sequential convergent mixed-methods design, combining teacher questionnaires, head teacher and chaplain interviews, pupil focused group discussions, and document reviews. This approach allowed the study to capture both statistical associations and lived experiences. However, the study did not attempt to compare moral formation outcomes across different dioceses or non-Catholic schools, nor did it track learners longitudinally beyond the Grade 8–9 level. These delimitations ensured depth within the selected context while acknowledging that findings may not be generalizable beyond Catholic schools in Kajiado County.

1.7 The Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: *The Conceptual Framework*



Source: *Own Conceptualization, 2025*

The study was guided by a conceptual framework that illustrates the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) as the independent variable and moral formation of pupils as the dependent

variable. PPI was conceptualized in terms of its core elements—regular timetabling, chaplaincy involvement, teacher facilitation, integration into school life, and availability of instructional resources. Moral formation was measured through key indicators including honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service, which reflect the virtues that PPI seeks to instill in learners. The framework assumes that consistent and structured implementation of PPI leads to enhanced moral formation among pupils. However, this relationship may be influenced by intervening factors such as school leadership commitment, curriculum pressures, availability of chaplains, and parental/community support.

1.8 Literature Review

The literature review for this study is organized into two sections: the theoretical review and the empirical review. The theoretical review examines the educational and moral development theories that guided the study, providing a conceptual foundation for understanding how the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) may influence pupils' moral formation. These theories—Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, Fowler's Faith Development Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory—highlight the role of structured moral instruction, faith engagement, and environmental contexts in shaping values and behavior. The empirical review synthesizes previous studies conducted globally, continentally, regionally, and in Kenya on the relationship between faith-based programmes and learners' moral formation. It highlights evidence on how structured religious education affects outcomes such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service, while also identifying gaps in existing literature. The review concludes by noting that limited research has systematically tested the relationship between PPI and moral formation in Catholic primary schools in Kajiado County, thus providing justification for the present study.

1.8.1 Theoretical Review

The relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and pupils' moral formation can be understood through three key theoretical perspectives: Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory, Fowler's Faith Development Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory posits that individuals progress through hierarchical stages of moral reasoning, from obedience to authority at lower levels to principled ethical reasoning at higher levels (Kohlberg, 1984). During adolescence, when learners are typically in Grades 8–9, they are transitioning from conventional reasoning—focused on social approval and rules—toward higher stages where justice and moral principles guide behavior. Structured programmes such as PPI provide opportunities for learners to engage with moral dilemmas, reflect on ethical choices, and internalize values, thereby fostering progression through these stages. *Fowler's Faith Development Theory* complements this view by emphasizing the role of faith and religious experience in shaping moral identity (Fowler, 1981). Fowler argued that adolescence is a critical stage where individuals form their own understanding of faith, moving from a reliance on external authority to a more personal and focused group faith. In this context, PPI provides structured opportunities for pupils to integrate faith into their moral reasoning, encouraging them to link religious teachings with everyday decisions and behaviors. This underscores PPI's dual role as both a faith and moral formation programme. *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory* provides an environmental lens by situating learner development within multiple layers of interaction (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For pupils in Catholic schools, the microsystem (family, school, peers) and mesosystem (connections between school, church, and community) play a critical role in shaping moral values. Effective PPI delivery depends not only on teachers and chaplains but also on supportive school leadership, parental involvement, and diocesan oversight. When these systems align,

moral formation is reinforced; when they are fragmented, learners may experience conflicting influences. Together, these theories demonstrate that moral formation is not an automatic outcome but a process that depends on structured moral instruction (Kohlberg), faith engagement (Fowler), and supportive environments (Bronfenbrenner). They provide a strong theoretical foundation for examining whether and how PPI contributes to the moral growth of pupils in Catholic schools in Kajiado County.

1.8.2 Empirical Review

Globally, research consistently affirms that structured faith-based programmes positively influence moral development. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993), in a large-scale study of Catholic schools in the United States, found that students exposed to structured religious programmes demonstrated stronger moral commitments and civic responsibility compared to peers in public schools. Tan (2018), examining values education in the Philippines using a mixed-methods design, reported that learners who actively engaged in moral instruction developed greater empathy, honesty, and social responsibility. These studies demonstrate that faith-based initiatives can cultivate essential moral virtues when consistently delivered.

In West Africa, Odoi (2017) studied Catholic schools in Ghana and observed that pupils who regularly participated in pastoral instruction displayed higher levels of honesty and responsibility. However, the study also revealed that inconsistent implementation weakened its overall effect. Similarly, Okeke and Nwankwo (2020) found that in Nigeria, religious education positively shaped adolescents' moral reasoning, but its impact was undermined by inadequate teacher preparation and insufficient resources. These findings suggest that while faith-based programmes have potential, their effectiveness depends on quality delivery and supportive structures.

Mugisha (2018), in Uganda, conducted a qualitative investigation into moral education in Catholic schools and found that learners credited pastoral programmes with improving discipline, empathy, and respect for authority. However, the study noted that curriculum pressures often reduced the frequency of such programmes. In Tanzania, Mushi (2019) reported that pupils in schools with active chaplaincy involvement demonstrated stronger moral decision-making and community service orientation compared to those in schools where pastoral activities were irregular. These studies highlight that faith-based programmes are critical in shaping learners' values, but their outcomes are uneven across East African contexts.

In Kenya, Kageema, Ireri, and Wanjohi (2019) examined pastoral care programmes in Catholic-sponsored schools and found that they significantly contributed to learners' discipline and moral growth. However, the study also reported that the impact varied depending on teacher preparedness and leadership support. Mutua and Njoroge (2022) further demonstrated that chaplaincy services enhanced learners' responsibility and honesty, yet uneven chaplain involvement limited the programme's reach. While these studies confirm that faith-based instruction can foster moral development, they primarily describe outcomes broadly without isolating the specific relationship between PPI and measurable moral virtues such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service.

Research Gap

The reviewed studies collectively affirm that faith-based education positively contributes to moral formation. However, gaps remain. First, most global and continental studies highlight challenges of implementation but do not rigorously test the strength of the relationship between structured programmes

and moral outcomes. Second, East African research acknowledges pastoral programmes' importance but offers limited empirical evidence linking them directly to specific virtues. Third, Kenyan studies have described the role of pastoral care in discipline and general moral growth, but few have systematically analyzed whether participation in PPI specifically predicts learners' moral formation. This study addressed this gap by employing a mixed-methods design to examine the relationship between PPI and the moral development of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kajiado County.

1.9 Research methodology

Research Design: This study employed a sequential convergent mixed-methods design to capture a comprehensive picture of the implementation of the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kajiado County. In the quantitative phase, data were collected from teachers through structured questionnaires to generate measurable indicators of PPI delivery. The qualitative phase complemented this by gathering insights from head teachers, chaplains, and pupils through interviews and focus group discussions, which illuminated how PPI was timetabled, organized, and supported within schools. The sequential component allowed initial quantitative findings to be further explained by qualitative evidence, while the convergent aspect enabled integration of the two strands during analysis and interpretation. This approach was deemed appropriate because evaluating programme implementation required both statistical measures of frequency and consistency and narrative accounts of contextual challenges and successes. By triangulating results across multiple sources, the design enhanced the validity and depth of the study, offering a nuanced and holistic analysis of PPI implementation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Study Area: The study was conducted in Kajiado County, Kenya, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Diocese of Ngong. The county is geographically expansive, covering both rural and urban settings, and is administratively divided into four deaneries: Kajiado, Kiserian, Oloitoktok, and Ngong. Within these deaneries are Catholic private and Catholic-sponsored primary schools that host the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) as part of their formation mandate. Kajiado County was selected as the study area because of its diverse cultural and religious composition, which exposes learners to a variety of influences that may challenge or reinforce Catholic moral values. Additionally, diocesan reports have highlighted inconsistencies in the delivery of PPI across schools in the county, making it an ideal context for assessing the extent of programme implementation.

Target Population: The target population for this study comprised all stakeholders directly engaged in the implementation of the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) within Catholic private and sponsored primary schools in Kajiado County. These included approximately 240 Religious Education teachers, 120 head teachers, and 15,600 pupils in Grades 8 and 9 across the four deaneries of Kajiado, Kiserian, Oloitoktok, and Ngong. In addition, four chaplains and diocesan education officers responsible for pastoral programmes were included, given their supervisory and policy roles. This population was considered appropriate because teachers and head teachers play a direct role in organizing and facilitating PPI, while pupils represent the immediate beneficiaries of the programme. Chaplains and diocesan officers provided higher-level insights into institutional support, pastoral oversight, and challenges affecting consistent implementation of PPI across schools.

Sampling Procedure: The study employed purposive and stratified random sampling techniques to select participants from the target population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), a sample size of at least 30% of the accessible population is considered adequate for descriptive studies. Guided by this principle, the study selected 28 Religious Education teachers ($\approx 30\%$ of 90 teachers in accessible schools) to complete structured questionnaires. In addition, 28 head teachers were purposively sampled to provide administrative perspectives

through interviews, as they are custodians of school policies and timetables. The pupil sample consisted of approximately 3,850 learners in Grades 8–9, drawn from Catholic private and sponsored schools across the four deaneries of Kajiado, Kiserian, Oloitoktok, and Ngong. Pupils were purposively included in focused group discussions to provide direct insights into how PPI was experienced and practiced in daily school life. Furthermore, four chaplains (one from each deanery) were selected purposively because of their unique pastoral roles in supporting and supervising the implementation of PPI. A diocesan education officer was also included to provide policy-level insights. This sampling procedure ensured that the study captured perspectives across the different stakeholder levels—teachers, administrators, learners, chaplains, and diocesan leaders—thereby enabling a holistic understanding of PPI implementation.

Sample Size: Mugenda and Mugenda’s (2019) guideline that 30% of an accessible population is sufficient for descriptive studies. In total, the study involved 28 teachers, 28 head teachers, approximately 3,850 pupils, four chaplains, and one diocesan education officer. This sample was considered appropriate for the study objectives. Teachers provided quantitative data on the extent of PPI implementation through questionnaires, while head teachers offered qualitative insights on administrative and structural support for the programme. Pupils were engaged in focused group discussions to share their direct experiences as beneficiaries of PPI. The chaplains and diocesan officer contributed supervisory and policy-level perspectives, ensuring that the study captured voices from all key stakeholders involved in PPI delivery.

Tools of Data Collection: The study utilized multiple instruments to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. A structured questionnaire was administered to teachers to collect quantitative information on the extent of PPI implementation. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items and closed-ended questions focusing on timetabling, teacher preparedness, chaplaincy involvement, and availability of instructional resources. To complement this, semi-structured interview guides were used with head teachers and diocesan education officers. These captured detailed qualitative perspectives on institutional support, challenges, and leadership commitment toward PPI. Interview schedules were also administered to chaplains to explore their pastoral roles in programme delivery. In addition, focused group discussion guides were employed with pupils in Grades 8–9 to capture learners’ direct experiences of PPI and how it was practiced in their daily lives. Finally, a document analysis checklist was used to review school timetables, pastoral records, and diocesan circulars, allowing triangulation of self-reported data with institutional documents.

Data Collection Procedures: Data collection was carried out in three phases over a period of two months. First, an introductory letter from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) was obtained and presented to the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to secure a research permit. Permission was also sought from the Catholic Diocese of Ngong and Kajiado County Education Offices for participating schools. In the first phase, questionnaires were administered to teachers. The researcher worked closely with head teachers and catechists to coordinate convenient schedules that minimized disruption to school activities. Completed questionnaires were checked for accuracy and completeness before analysis. The second phase involved conducting semi-structured interviews with head teachers, chaplains, and the diocesan education officer. Prior to each session, participants were briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. Interviews lasted between 30–45 minutes and were audio-recorded with consent, supplemented by detailed field notes. The third phase consisted of focused group discussions with pupils and document analysis. Pupils engaged in guided reflections on their experiences with PPI, while school timetables, pastoral records, and diocesan circulars were reviewed to validate and triangulate data from other sources. Throughout all phases, ethical considerations were observed. Informed consent was obtained from teachers, head teachers, chaplains, and the

diocesan officer. Parental consent and pupil assent were secured for learner participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained to protect the identities of all respondents.

Data Analysis Procedures: Data analysis followed the logic of the sequential convergent mixed-methods design, whereby quantitative and qualitative data were first analyzed separately and later integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of PPI implementation. In the quantitative strand, data from teacher questionnaires were cleaned, coded, and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 27). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize teachers' perceptions of how PPI was timetabled, facilitated, and supported with resources. Inferential statistics, including correlations, were then applied to test the null hypothesis related to the extent of programme implementation. In the qualitative strand, interview transcripts from head teachers, chaplains, and the diocesan officer, as well as pupil focused group discussions, were transcribed verbatim. The study adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis, which involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Themes were organized around key aspects of PPI implementation such as time allocation, chaplaincy involvement, leadership commitment, and resource support. Finally, the two strands were integrated at interpretation stage through a process of triangulation. Quantitative patterns (e.g., the proportion of teachers confirming regular PPI sessions) were compared with qualitative narratives (e.g., head teachers' and chaplains' accounts of challenges and successes). This merging of data provided explanatory insights, strengthening the validity of the findings and ensuring that results reflected both measurable trends and lived experiences.

Ethical Considerations: The study strictly adhered to established ethical standards in educational research. Approval to conduct the research was first obtained from the Directorate of Research at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) and a permit was issued by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Additional clearance was sought from the Catholic Diocese of Ngong and the Kajiado County Education office for participating schools. Informed consent was obtained from all adult participants, including teachers, head teachers, chaplains, and the diocesan officer. For pupils, parental consent and learner assent were secured through the Chair of BoMs prior to participation in focused group discussions. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by coding responses and avoiding disclosure of school or participant identities. Voluntary participation was emphasized, with respondents assured that they could withdraw at any stage. Throughout the research process, the principles of beneficence, respect, and non-maleficence were upheld. Care was taken to minimize disruption to school activities, safeguard the dignity of participants, and ensure that findings would be used solely for academic purposes and to improve pastoral instruction in Catholic schools.

1.10 Study Findings

This section presents the findings of the study in response to the research question: *What is the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored primary schools in Kajiado County?* Results are presented in two parts. First, quantitative findings from teacher questionnaires are reported, showing statistical associations between PPI and moral formation. Second, qualitative insights from interviews with head teachers, chaplains, and focused group discussions with pupils are presented thematically. The two strands are then integrated through triangulation to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship.

Response Rate of the Questionnaires

The study achieved a satisfactory response rate across the sampled categories. Out of the 28 teachers targeted with questionnaires, 27 responded, representing a 96% response rate. Similarly, 28 head teachers were interviewed, ensuring full coverage of the administrative sample. In addition, four chaplains, one

from each deanery (Kajiado, Kiserian, Oloitoktok, and Ngong), and one diocesan education officer participated. Focused group discussions were conducted with a representative group of pupils drawn from the 3,850 Grade 8–9 learners across the participating schools.

Teachers: The majority of teachers were aged between 30 and 40 years, with a fairly even gender distribution. Most held a bachelor’s degree in education and had between 5–15 years of teaching experience. This demographic profile suggested that respondents were professionally qualified and experienced enough to offer reliable perspectives on PPI implementation.

Head Teachers: Among the 28 head teachers, administrative experience ranged from 1 to over 30 years. The largest group (76%) had served between 1–10 years, while a smaller number (16%) had 11–20 years of experience, and only two had served over 20 years. Their educational qualifications included bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education, equipping them with relevant leadership capacity to comment on school-level implementation of PPI.

Chaplains: The chaplains who participated were all male clergy, most aged between 30–40 years, with one in the 40–50 bracket. Their academic qualifications ranged from bachelor’s to master’s degrees in theology, and their administrative experience varied between 2–15 years. Their perspectives provided important insights into pastoral and liturgical dimensions of programme delivery.

Pupils: The pupil participants represented a cross-section of learners in Grades 8 and 9 across the four deaneries. Their inclusion ensured that the findings captured the voices of the primary beneficiaries of PPI. Their reflections provided first-hand accounts of how the programme was experienced in daily school life and how consistently it was conducted across schools. Overall, the demographic distribution of participants enriched the study by ensuring that findings reflected the views of all key stakeholders—teachers, school leaders, chaplains, and learners—thus strengthening the credibility of the results on the extent of PPI implementation.

Table 1: Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Category	Targeted	Actual Response	Response Rate (%)	Key Demographics
Teachers	28	27	98	Majority aged 30–40; balanced gender; most with Bachelor’s degrees; 5–15 yrs teaching experience
Head Teachers	28	27	98	Admin experience: 1–10 yrs (76%); 11–20 yrs (16%); over 20 yrs (8%); Bachelor’s/Master’s qualifications
Chaplains	4	4	100	All male; aged 30–50; Bachelor’s/Master’s in Theology; 2–15 yrs pastoral experience
Pupils	~3,850	Sample engaged*	–	Grade 8–9; mixed gender; representation from four deaneries
Diocesan Officer	1	1	100	Over 10 yrs experience; diocesan-level policy oversight

Source: Field data, 2025

Findings on the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and the moral formation

Quantitative Findings

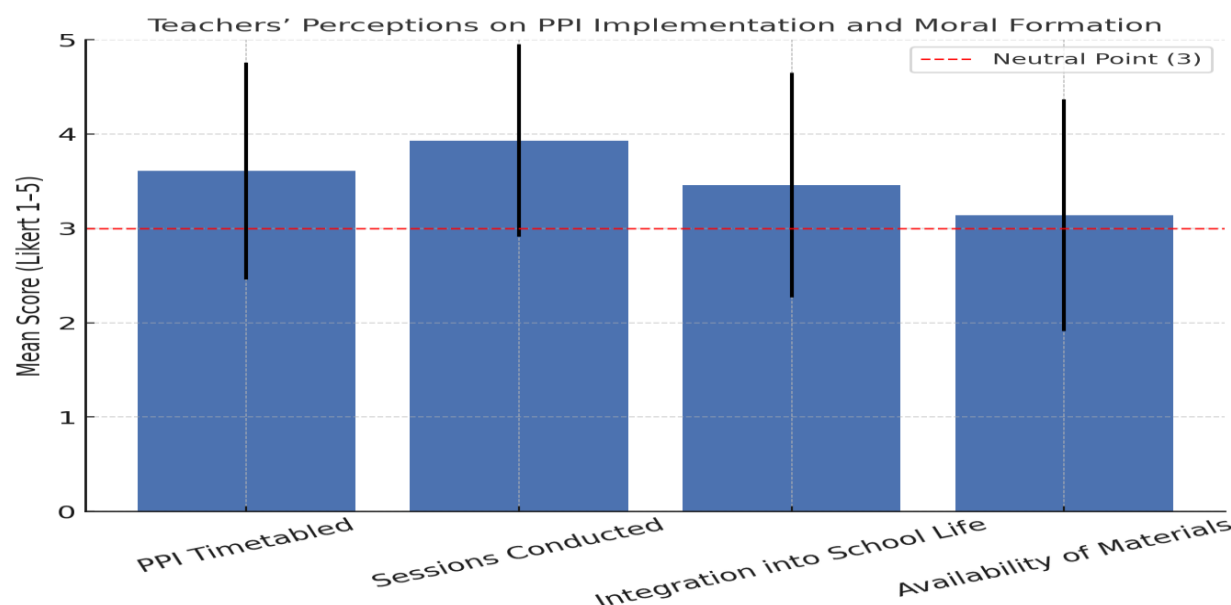


Figure 2: Teachers' Perceptions on PPI Implementation and Moral Formation

Source: Field data, 2025

The quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between PPI and moral formation. Pearson's correlation analysis showed a significant positive association ($r = .702$, $p < .001$), suggesting that schools with more consistent and structured PPI programmes reported higher levels of pupil moral development. Regression analysis further indicated that PPI was a significant predictor of moral formation ($\beta = .636$, $t = 16.917$, $p < .001$), accounting for 49.3% of the variance in learners' moral growth ($R^2 = .493$). This suggests that nearly half of the observed changes in pupils' moral formation could be attributed to the quality and consistency of PPI delivery.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of interview and discussion data highlighted five key virtues associated with PPI: honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service.

Honesty: Pupils reported that PPI sessions encouraged them to avoid cheating in classwork and examinations, while head teachers observed reductions in cases of dishonesty.

Empathy: Both pupils and chaplains noted that PPI activities, such as group discussions and storytelling, helped learners understand and support one another emotionally.

Responsibility: Teachers and head teachers emphasized that PPI instilled a sense of responsibility, with pupils taking greater ownership of their behavior and duties.

Reasoning: Chaplains pointed out that PPI provided a platform for moral reasoning, helping learners reflect on the consequences of their decisions.

Service: Pupils highlighted PPI's emphasis on serving others, noting that it encouraged participation in school-based charity and community service activities.

Triangulation and Interpretation

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results confirms that PPI has a significant influence on learners' moral formation. The statistical evidence established a strong positive relationship between PPI

and moral development, while qualitative narratives explained how this relationship manifested in pupils' daily lives. Together, these findings underscore that PPI is not merely a symbolic activity but a substantive contributor to shaping the moral values of pupils in Catholic schools.

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kajiado County. The findings revealed a strong and statistically significant relationship between PPI and learners' moral growth, with correlation analysis showing $r = .702$ ($p < .001$) and regression results indicating that PPI accounted for 49.3% of the variance in moral formation. These results were reinforced by qualitative themes, where learners, teachers, head teachers, and chaplains consistently linked PPI participation to the development of honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service. From a theoretical perspective, these findings resonate strongly with Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory. By providing structured opportunities for moral reflection and engagement, PPI creates contexts where learners can advance from conventional moral reasoning—based on obedience and social approval—towards higher levels where they act according to principles of justice and care (Kohlberg, 1984). The evidence of improved honesty, responsibility, and reasoning among pupils aligns with the theory's assertion that exposure to moral dilemmas and guided discussions fosters progression in moral reasoning. The findings are also consistent with Fowler's Faith Development Theory, which emphasizes adolescence as a critical stage for personalizing and internalizing faith (Fowler, 1981).

Pupils in this study reported that PPI sessions helped them link faith with daily life decisions, reinforcing Fowler's claim that structured faith instruction supports the transition from externally imposed to self-owned beliefs. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) helps explain why the relationship between PPI and moral formation was not uniform across all schools. Chaplain availability, school leadership support, and curriculum pressures acted as intervening factors that either strengthened or weakened the programme's influence on pupils' values. Empirically, the findings confirm global patterns. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) reported that Catholic schools in the U.S. fostered stronger moral commitments when pastoral and religious programmes were integrated into school life. Tan (2018) similarly showed that values education in the Philippines improved learners' civic responsibility. Within Africa, Odoi (2017) and Okeke and Nwankwo (2020) highlighted that Catholic religious instruction enhanced virtues of honesty and responsibility, though effectiveness was hampered by inconsistent delivery and lack of trained personnel. Regionally, Mugisha (2018) in Uganda and Mushi (2019) in Tanzania observed that pastoral programmes positively influenced empathy, discipline, and service orientation, yet were constrained by curriculum pressures and variable chaplain involvement. Kenyan studies, including Kagama, Ireri, and Wanjohi (2019), also affirm that pastoral care activities contribute to discipline and moral growth but often suffer from inadequate institutional support.

This study extends the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence from Kajiado County, showing not only that PPI is implemented but that it makes a measurable difference in learners' moral outcomes. Unlike previous studies that emphasized delivery gaps, the present findings demonstrate that when PPI is consistently timetabled and supported, it becomes a significant predictor of virtues such as honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service. This positions PPI as an indispensable component of holistic Catholic education in Kenya.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores that the relationship between PPI and moral formation is both statistically significant and practically meaningful. However, its impact depends on contextual factors such as chaplaincy presence, teacher preparedness, and leadership commitment. Strengthening these areas is therefore essential to maximizing PPI's contribution to the moral formation of learners.

Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis for this study stated that:

H₀₆: There is no statistically significant relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored primary schools in Kajiado County.

Quantitative analysis provided strong evidence against this null hypothesis. Pearson's correlation results indicated a strong positive relationship between PPI and moral formation ($r = .702$, $p < .001$). Further, regression analysis confirmed that PPI significantly predicted learners' moral development ($\beta = .636$, $t = 16.917$, $p < .001$), explaining 49.3% of the variance in pupils' moral outcomes ($R^2 = .493$).

Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings demonstrate that PPI is not merely symbolic but plays a substantial role in shaping pupils' honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service. This statistical evidence was further supported by qualitative insights from head teachers, chaplains, and pupils, who consistently described PPI as a critical influence on learners' moral growth.

1.11 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the relationship between the Programme for Pastoral Instruction (PPI) and the moral formation of Grade 8–9 learners in Catholic private and sponsored schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The findings revealed a strong, statistically significant relationship between PPI and pupils' moral growth. Quantitative results demonstrated that PPI accounted for nearly half of the variance in moral formation, while qualitative evidence highlighted its role in nurturing honesty, empathy, responsibility, reasoning, and service.

The study therefore concludes that PPI is a substantive contributor to learners' moral formation. However, its impact is not automatic; it depends on consistent implementation, chaplain involvement, teacher preparedness, and supportive institutional environments. Strengthening these elements is essential if Catholic schools are to fulfill their mission of holistic education that integrates faith, values, and academic excellence.

1.12 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations:

For the Catholic Diocese of Ngong and CECK: Develop a standardized framework to monitor the outcomes of PPI, ensuring that moral virtues such as honesty, empathy, and responsibility are explicitly assessed alongside academic performance.

For School Administrators: Safeguard PPI within the school timetable and allocate resources for chaplaincy and teacher training to ensure that its delivery is both consistent and impactful.

For Teachers: Integrate moral values from PPI into everyday classroom practice, and adopt participatory teaching methods that encourage learners to reflect on moral dilemmas and apply values in real-life contexts.

For Chaplains: Increase structured engagement with pupils through pastoral talks, mentorship sessions, and faith-based activities that explicitly connect PPI content to moral behavior.

For Pupils: Actively participate in PPI sessions and practice the values learned in their daily lives, fostering peer-to-peer accountability and service within the school community.

For Policy Makers: The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with CECK, should formally recognize PPI as a vital co-curricular programme and provide policy and financial support to sustain its influence on moral formation.

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