



# African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Normative Teacher Training for Competency- Based School Environments in Kenya

Justina Syonthe Ndaita

Kisii University

Email: [srndaita@kisiiversity.ac.ke](mailto:srndaita@kisiiversity.ac.ke)

**Abstract:** *The introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya has generated debate regarding teacher preparedness, particularly in fostering moral and ethical competencies essential for holistic learner development. Although CBC emphasizes values such as integrity, responsibility, and respect, there remains limited clarity on how these competencies are embedded, assessed, and implemented in teacher training programmes. This study explored the integration of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), grounded in communal dialogue, collective learning, and culturally embedded moral values, into normative teacher education as a strategy to address these gaps. Guided by the theories of holism and constructivism, the study examined the moral competencies expected of teachers under CBC, the extent to which university-based teacher training programmes address ethical competence, and how IKS can support the development of these competencies among teacher trainees. The study employed a qualitative review and synthesis of secondary data, including policy documents, empirical studies, and theoretical literature. Findings revealed significant gaps in moral and ethical training within existing teacher education programmes, minimal integration of IKS, and inadequate mechanisms for assessing ethical competencies despite CBC's holistic intentions. The study established that IKS-based pedagogies characterized by experiential learning, dialogue, and community engagement offer culturally relevant approaches to strengthening normative teacher training. It recommends the development of structured ethical pedagogy modules, standardized assessment tools, enhanced capacity building for teacher educators, and stronger collaboration with communities. Integrating IKS in teacher education can bridge policy-practice gaps and support the development of morally grounded, socially responsible educators aligned with CBC reforms.*

**Keywords:** *African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Normative Teacher Training, Competency-Based Curriculum, Moral Competence, Teacher Education, Ethical Pedagogy, Culturally Relevant Education*

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## 1. Introduction

The rollout of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) marks a pivotal shift within the nation's educational

landscape, sparking robust debate among educators, policymakers, and wider society regarding its efficacy and philosophy. Central to this discourse is the perceived preparedness of teachers to enact the CBC vision, particularly, their capacity to foster not only cognitive but also moral and ethical growth among learners. Stakeholders

have expressed concern over the adequacy of teacher training programmes to intentionally cultivate these non-cognitive competencies and questioned the mechanisms by which such values are assessed and reinforced within both pre-service and in-service teacher development frameworks (Mule, 2025; Lumonya, 2020). This scrutiny reflects an acknowledgment that teacher effectiveness transcends content delivery, extending to the modelling and mentoring of socially responsible, ethical citizens able to contribute meaningfully to Kenya's national aspirations.

Amidst these challenges, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) present a compelling foundation for reimagining normative teacher training in CBC environments. Rooted in communal dialogue, collective responsibility, and culturally situated moral codes, IKS embody educational approaches that are inherently participatory and values oriented. The integration of IKS into teacher education promises a renewal of pedagogical methods, aligning them with indigenous worldviews that prize community well-being, respect, and integrity (Jumba & Mwit, 2022). Such a paradigm shift not only enriches the moral fabric of teaching practices but also grounds the CBC reform in lived cultural realities, enhancing its relevance and sustainability. Therefore, examining how IKS can be strategically infused into normative teacher preparation is crucial for equipping educators to meet both the technical and ethical demands of Kenya's evolving competency-based landscape.

## **1.1 Background of the Competency-Based Curriculum in Kenya**

The Competency-Based Curriculum represents a fundamental shift in Kenya's education system, introduced to move away from the traditional content-heavy approach characterized by the 8-4-4 system toward a more holistic model focused on nurturing learners' skills, attitudes, and values alongside knowledge acquisition. Implemented beginning in 2017 with Grade 1 learners, the CBC restructures the educational pathway into 2-6-3-3-3 years and emphasizes practical skills, creativity, critical thinking, and ethical citizenship. Students in the first CBC cohort progressed gradually to Grade 9 by early 2025 and are set to undertake new national examinations reflecting the curriculum's competency goals (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, 2017; Olubayi, 2025). According to Olubayi, restructuring aims to equip learners with relevant skills for the challenges of the 21st century rather than relying solely on rote memorization and high-stakes exams as measures of success.

Despite these ambitions, the implementation of CBC has elicited a variety of reactions among stakeholders, particularly regarding the readiness of teachers to deliver

the curriculum effectively. Teachers occupy a pivotal role as the primary facilitators of competency development; however, several reports outline significant gaps in teacher preparedness, especially in the domain of moral and ethical competencies crucial for CBC's holistic aims. Observations indicate that "teacher agency" often remains limited to curriculum delivery mechanics without sufficient empowerment to embed ethical values and socio-emotional skills into teaching practice (Mule, 2025). This tension reflects broader systemic limitations, including limited resources, infrastructural deficits such as lacking science and computer labs, and an acute shortage of adequately trained teachers, particularly for Junior Secondary School (JSS) levels where CBC is actively implemented (Cheruiyot, 2024).

The CBC framework explicitly identifies a range of competencies that teachers are expected to develop in learners, among which integrity, responsibility, critical thinking, communication, and citizenship feature prominently (Kenya National Examinations Council [KNEC], 2021). These competencies strongly align with moral and ethical domains, emphasizing character formation and community engagement as core educational goals. However, empirical evidence suggests that teacher education programmes in Kenya currently exhibit insufficient focus on embedding these moral and ethical competencies into normative training. The challenges stem from curriculum gaps, lack of explicit assessment tools for ethics, and inadequate ongoing professional development geared toward these dimensions (Mukandairo, 2025). As such, while CBC standards articulate moral competencies clearly, practical integration within teacher training and classroom enactment remains patchy and inconsistent.

In addition to instructional challenges, ongoing stakeholder dialogues underscore opportunities for improvement in CBC's rollout. For instance, the Ministry of Education's recent national conversations in 2025 reflected progress milestones such as recruitment of over 76,000 teachers for Junior Schools and infrastructure expansion, but also highlighted persistent barriers including localized curriculum adaptation, resource constraints, and the need for enhanced career guidance as learners enter senior secondary pathways (Otundo, 2024). Research also emphasizes the critical need for targeted teacher training, resource investment, and holistic assessment frameworks to realize CBC's competency goals fully (Ogembo, 2025; Wawire & Kiru, 2022). Addressing these issues is essential for sustaining CBC's transformative aims and ensuring teachers are equipped to nurture the moral and ethical dimensions foundational to Kenya's educational vision.

## 1.2 African Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Building on the foundational concerns around teacher preparedness for moral competencies under Kenya's CBC, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems emerge as vital pedagogical resources deeply embedded in communal life and cultural values. IKS represent locally rooted educational traditions that prioritize communal dialogue, collective learning, and the transmission of cultural values that serve as cornerstones for moral and ethical development of individuals (Lumonya, 2020). These characteristics make IKS not only relevant but essential frameworks for enriching normative teacher training in CBC environments, where holistic formation beyond academic skills is a declared goal.

A defining feature of IKS is communal dialogue, which facilitates collective decision-making processes and shared learning experiences. Such dialogue encourages mutual accountability, inclusiveness, and reflection among learners and community members, fostering a lived sense of ethical responsibility and social cohesion (Muli, Nyambura & Onyango, 2023). Unlike Western individualistic paradigms, this dialogic approach nurtures relational understanding and collective agency, both crucial for teachers tasked with cultivating ethical citizenship in school settings. Studies across Africa highlight how communal dialogue underpins indigenous conflict resolution, environmental stewardship, and social norms transmission, and how these practices retain continuing relevance for contemporary education systems seeking culturally responsive pedagogy (Maangi, 2024; Jaiswal, 2025).

Collective learning is another core pillar of IKS, where knowledge transfer occurs through storytelling, apprenticeship, mentorship by elders, and active participation in communal cultural rituals. This experiential and participatory learning embeds moral values organically within social and environmental contexts, making ethical reasoning inseparable from everyday community life (Nyangaresi, 2022). Such practices contrast with formal education's often abstract moral instruction, offering instead a tangible, context-sensitive moral formation that respects locality and cultural memory. Research from pastoralist Turkana communities in Kenya demonstrates how mother tongue instruction combined with indigenous stories significantly enhances literacy and ethical identity formation among young learners, validating the empirical power of collective learning paradigms (Ng'asike, 2019).

The cultural values upheld within IKS, including respect for elders, responsibility to the community, harmony, and

cultural identity, form the ethical backbone for social relations and individual behaviour across many African societies (Nyangaresi, 2022). These values are inculcated through everyday interactions and ritual practices that emphasize character development and communal wellbeing. Globally, similar indigenous systems reflect congruent emphases on interconnectedness, respect for ancestral knowledge, and sustainable living, which further illustrate the universality and adaptability of IKS approaches for moral education in diverse cultural settings (Owuor, 2008). By drawing on these cultural values, teacher training programmes grounded in IKS can promote not only cognitive competencies but also the ethical dispositions critical for reflective, socially responsible educators well-aligned with CBC's holistic aims.

Despite widespread recognition of IKS's potential, research shows limited formal integration into Kenya's national curricula, with Indigenous Language Activities constituting only a subset of broader IKS content currently addressed (Muli *et al.*, 2022). Barriers include inadequate teacher awareness, resource constraints, and unclear policy guidelines (Jumba & Mwiti, 2022). Nonetheless, progressive scholarship and policy debates increasingly advocate for intentional infusion of IKS into teacher education to leverage their proven strengths in moral formation and culturally relevant pedagogy (Jumba & Mwiti, 2022; Ronoh, 2018). Such integration promises to bridge the gap between formal education's theoretical moral frameworks and the lived values of Kenyan communities, thus enhancing moral competence in teachers and by extension, in learners.

## 1.3 Rationale for Integration of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The rationale for integrating African IKS into formal education, especially in normative teacher training for CBC environment in Kenya, is informed primarily by the premise of relevance, contextualization, and holistic education. African IKS offer culturally authentic frameworks that resonate with local values and practices, essential for moral formation and character development within Kenyan and broader African contexts. These systems emphasize communal dialogue and indigenous pedagogies that shape learners' understanding of integrity, responsibility, and ethical conduct in ways that align closely with their lived realities and social environments (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). Such integration addresses the disconnect often observed in education systems dominated by Western epistemologies, which may alienate learners by ignoring the socio-cultural milieu that forms their identity.

African communal dialogue and indigenous pedagogies are critical in moral formation because they embody

collective ways of knowing and transmitting values that promote social cohesion and ethical conduct. Indigenous knowledge is typically shared through interactive oral traditions, storytelling, rituals, and community participation, fostering a deep sense of belonging and responsibility among learners. This pedagogical approach supports CBC's objectives to nurture empowered, reflective, and ethical citizens capable of contributing positively to their communities (Higgs & Makoni, 2016). The emphasis on holism in IKS, integrating spiritual, emotional, social, and intellectual development, is particularly aligned with CBC's goal of producing well-rounded individuals rather than mere academic performers.

The potential of IKS to enrich normative teacher training curricula lies in their ability to provide teachers with local content and methodologies that are authentically African and culturally responsive. This enrichment can enhance teachers' instructional competence, especially in CBC environments that prioritize competence over rote learning. Training educators to incorporate IKS can equip them with tools to foster learners' critical thinking, problem-solving, and sustainable development skills rooted in indigenous perspectives (Lumonya, 2022). Additionally, the integration of IKS encourages respect for indigenous languages and cultural practices, which strengthens learners' cultural identity and promotes inclusivity in education (Cindi, 2021).

There are significant opportunities in integrating IKS in normative teacher training for CBC. This includes tapping into rich local examples of sustainable living, conflict resolution, ecological stewardship, and ethical conduct. IKS emphasize character formation and community well-being, thereby modelling education as an agent for social justice and sustainable development. Such integration can stimulate learners' motivation and interest by relating schooling directly to their cultural heritage and daily life experiences (Cindi, 2021). Importantly, IKS incorporation supports decolonizing education, challenging the dominance of Western knowledge systems that have historically marginalized indigenous epistemologies in Africa.

However, several challenges need to be addressed to realize the full potential of IKS in teacher training and CBC. The dominance of Western epistemological frameworks in education continues to marginalize IKS as being outdated or unscientific, leading to inadequate institutional support and policy neglect. There are also practical challenges related to the lack of clear guidelines, instructional materials, and teacher educator training programmes tailored to IKS integration. Furthermore, systemic barriers such as insufficient funding, teacher preparedness, and the undervaluing of indigenous languages hinder effective incorporation of IKS

(Oloruntoba-Oju, 2020). Addressing these challenges requires deliberate policy measures, curriculum reforms, and capacity-building initiatives to foster an educational environment where IKS can thrive alongside modern knowledge systems.

## 1.4 Problem Statement

Despite the CBC in Kenya emphasizing holistic development, including moral and ethical growth, there remains a lack of clarity on how these moral and ethical competencies are explicitly included and evaluated within the CBC framework. Policy documents and curriculum guidelines articulate values such as integrity, responsibility, and respect, yet there is insufficient guidance on how these competencies should be taught, monitored, and assessed among teachers and learners alike. This ambiguity contributes to inconsistent application of moral education across schools, undermining the CBC's objective of producing ethically grounded learners. Moreover, gaps exist in standardized tools and metrics to measure the moral and ethical dimensions of teacher competencies, raising concerns about the effectiveness of current assessment practices and the extent to which teachers internalize and model these values in the classroom.

Further complicating the issue are questions regarding the extent of teacher involvement and their preparation to address moral and ethical learning within CBC environments. While teachers are expected to be key agents in inculcating these competencies, existing teacher training programmes tend to focus more on pedagogical skills and content delivery than on embedding moral and ethical formation in their professional development. This disconnect has led to insufficient focus on normative teacher training approaches that could equip educators with the necessary capacities to foster values education effectively. Consequently, there is a pressing need for research and policy initiatives that explore and develop teacher education models integrating moral and ethical dimensions, models that draw on culturally relevant pedagogies such as African IKS, to ensure that teachers are holistically prepared to realize the CBC's transformative goals.

## 1.5 Purpose of the Study

To explore the infusion of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems into normative teacher training for CBC environments.

## 1.6 Research Questions

The study sought to address the following research questions:

- i. What are the moral or ethical competencies expected of a teacher under CBC in Kenya?
- ii. To what extent and how do current teacher training programmes address teacher moral or ethical competence?
- iii. In what ways can African indigenous knowledge systems facilitate the infusion of moral competencies in teacher-trainees in universities?

## 1.7 Significance of Study

This study is significant as it offers a transformative contribution to re-imagining teacher education pedagogy and content in Kenya by advocating for the intentional integration of moral and ethical competencies within teacher training programmes, specifically through the incorporation of African IKS. By centring culturally relevant and communal pedagogical approaches, the research challenges the prevailing dominance of Western epistemologies and aligns teacher preparation with the values, traditions, and lived realities of Kenyan learners and communities under the CBC. This reorientation enriches teacher education by equipping educators with holistic competencies necessary for fostering moral formation and ethical behaviour, enabling them to serve as effective role models and facilitators of values that resonate with students' cultural contexts. Furthermore, the study addresses critical gaps in the existing moral and ethical training of CBC teachers, which remains insufficiently emphasized or systematically integrated within current teacher education frameworks. Through exploring normative training approaches that fuse IKS principles, the research provides practical insights and policy recommendations aimed at enhancing teachers' abilities to internalize, teach, and assess moral competence. Ultimately, this contributes to the creation of more ethical and socially responsible school environments, supporting the CBC's broader objective of nurturing learners who are not only academically proficient but also morally grounded and civic-minded, thereby advancing Kenya's ongoing educational transformation.

## 1.8 Theoretical Perspectives

The integration of African IKS into Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) is strongly supported by holism theory and constructivist learning models, which together

provide a robust theoretical foundation for embedding culturally relevant, ethical, and social competencies in teacher training. Holism theory, rooted in Indigenous epistemologies and highlighted by scholars such as Battiste (2018) and Morcom (2017), emphasizes the interconnectedness of all aspects of learning, including intellectual, social, spiritual, and environmental, rejecting the compartmentalization typical of Western education systems. This framework asserts that knowledge and moral understanding emerge through relationships within the community, the environment, and cultural contexts, aligning closely with African communal values and IKS pedagogies that stress collective responsibility, respect, and contextualized meaning-making (Morcom, 2017). Holistic education supports teachers to engage learners in integrated learning experiences that honour their cultural heritage and lived realities, thus fostering ethical, social, and cognitive growth simultaneously, which is critical for the CBC's aim of producing well-rounded citizens.

In parallel, constructivist theories, particularly social and cultural constructivism, underpin the active, learner-centred engagement central to IKS integration in teacher training. Originating from seminal theorists such as Piaget and Vygotsky, constructivism posits that learners construct knowledge through meaningful interactions within their socio-cultural environments, recognizing diverse ways of knowing as valid (von Glasersfeld, 2008; Ronoh, 2018). This aligns with IKS's communal dialogue and experiential learning methods, where moral and ethical competencies develop through shared storytelling, mentorship, and participatory practices embedded in community life (Seleke *et al.*, 2025). Applying constructivist principles, normative teacher training can become a capacity-building process that prepares educators not only to transmit content but also to facilitate ethical reasoning, social norms interpretation, and culturally responsive pedagogy. This approach encourages teachers to develop reflective practices and adaptability necessary for effectively implementing CBC's holistic and competency-based goals, bridging indigenous knowledge systems with formal curriculum demands (Seleke *et al.*, 2025).

Together, holism and constructivism conceptualize normative teacher training as building capacity for ethical, social, and pedagogical norms within contextually grounded frameworks. This means teacher education goes beyond mastery of content and pedagogy to include moral formation rooted in cultural values and community practices (Ronoh, 2018). The theoretical integration offers a paradigm where IKS informs teacher identity, ethical agency, and classroom practices, thus equipping teachers to foster learners' moral development in culturally congruent ways. The study's reliance on these theories supports examining how to embed IKS in CBC teacher

training programmes systematically, addressing gaps in ethical competence development and aligning training with both local cultural realities and national education reforms.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Competency-Based Curriculum and Teacher Competencies in Kenya

Koskei and Chepchumba (2020) conducted a study in Nakuru County focusing on the role of teacher competency in the effective implementation of the CBC in lower primary schools. Their purpose was to establish how teacher preparedness influences CBC rollout, using surveys and interviews with teachers and curriculum officers. The findings emphasized teachers as the “cornerstone” of CBC, revealing critical challenges such as reliance on outdated pedagogies and insufficient training in learner-centred approaches. The study underscores the importance of developing teacher competencies tailored to the CBC, with implications for enhancing moral and ethical dimensions in teacher training, which is the focus of the current study.

Amukowa (2020) researched the challenges and opportunities in CBC implementation in Bungoma County using mixed methods including questionnaires and interviews with teachers, head teachers, and education officials. Their findings highlighted teacher preparedness as a bottleneck, along with inadequate teaching resources and weak collaboration between stakeholders. The study found that CBC places heavy demands on teachers to shift their roles to facilitators but noted gaps in training and assessment capacity, especially regarding moral and ethical competencies. This aligns with the current research’s focus on normative training and the need to embed indigenous knowledge systems to address such deficits.

Lumonya (2020) critically examined the Kenyan CBC through the lens of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). The study employed holism theory and constructivist models to analyse the extent to which IKS has been integrated into the teaching and learning processes promoted by CBC. Methodologically, it relied on a critical analysis of curriculum documents, policies, and secondary data sources to unpack the presence and treatment of indigenous knowledge within Kenya’s formal education system. Lumonya found that although the CBC mandates Indigenous Language Activities (ILA), this represents only a fraction of the broader IKS, resulting in partial and superficial integration of indigenous knowledge. The study calls for a total curricular focus on IKS to decolonize

education, foster culturally relevant problem-solving skills, and motivate learners through contextualized knowledge relevant to sustainable development. The findings underpin the need to embed IKS more comprehensively in normative teacher training programmes to develop moral and ethical competencies aligned with local realities, a key concern of the current research.

Nyamosi (2024) explored selected teacher competencies that can enhance CBC implementation with a focus on pedagogical, assessment, leadership, and digital literacy competencies among Kenyan teachers. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative data, Nyamosi found that pedagogical competence extends beyond content mastery to managing learner-centred classrooms fostering creativity, critical thinking, and ethical conduct. However, gaps remain in explicitly integrating moral and ethical training within teacher education programmes. This resonates with findings that while CBC articulates values like integrity and responsibility, formal coursework often lacks structured moral competence development. The study’s conclusions provide a foundation for integrating IKS methodologies, which offer culturally responsive avenues for enhancing teacher ethics and social responsibility, as proposed in the present research.

Muthoka and Mbirithi (2025) studied teachers’ preparedness and its impact on CBC implementation in Lang’ata Sub-County, Kenya. Employing mixed methods, their research found that although most teachers demonstrate mastery of subject content and pedagogy, many struggle with individualized learning and ongoing competency-based assessment. Importantly, moral and ethical values, such as honesty, unity, and patriotism, are stated CBC goals, but teachers lack formal training on incorporating these into daily teaching and assessment. The study highlights time-consuming planning requirements and insufficient moral competence preparation as significant barriers. These findings substantiate the need for normative teacher training approaches enriched by IKS to embed moral competencies authentically and feasibly within CBC pedagogical practice.

### 2.2 Moral and Ethical Competencies in Teacher Education

Ozturk (2025), in his article, offers a comprehensive framework for integrating moral and ethical competencies into teacher education, emphasizing that ethical knowledge for teachers extends beyond codes of conduct to include moral sensitivity, decision-making skills, reflective practice, and value embodiment. Drawing on global perspectives and current critiques of moral education

approaches, the study highlights the shortcomings of traditional teacher training that often neglects deep moral reasoning and contextual ethical challenges. Instead, Ozturk advocates for experiential, dialogic, and culturally responsive pedagogies that foster ongoing moral formation and prepare teachers as ethical agents capable of navigating complex classroom dynamics. This framework complements calls to integrate African IKS and communal dialogue into normative training by foregrounding culturally relevant and holistic approaches to ethical competence, which align with Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum goals. The research further underscores the need for supportive institutional policies and assessment frameworks to cultivate and evaluate moral competencies systematically, reinforcing the significance of reflective, experiential models proposed in this paper.

Zhukov *et al.* (2025) investigated the moral and ethical culture of future art teachers in Russia, revealing that ethical education in teacher preparation programmes is often superficial and inconsistently integrated. Through mixed methods involving curriculum analysis, surveys, and interviews, the study highlights that reflective practices, mentorship, and community-based projects effectively enhance moral sensitivity and ethical decision-making among preservice teachers. Their findings emphasized the importance of embedding comprehensive, practice-oriented ethical pedagogy that goes beyond theoretical knowledge to include critical engagement and collaborative learning. These insights align closely with the need in Kenya's CBC to incorporate culturally grounded approaches like African IKS into normative teacher training, supporting holistic moral competence development through experiential and community-centred education. The study underscores the imperative of positioning ethical culture at the core of teacher professionalism, offering relevant strategies for strengthening moral and ethical teacher competencies within CBC frameworks.

In Kenya, Njui (2017) has critically examined the integration of character education within teacher education curriculum, highlighting its importance alongside knowledge and skills for developing ethical and responsible citizens equipped for 21st-century challenges. Using document analysis, the study found that while key character traits such as integrity, leadership, and empathy are acknowledged, their systematic inclusion in pre-service teacher training remains inadequate. Njui argues for character education to be a compulsory, holistic component that prepares teachers to model and impart these values effectively, reinforcing their role as agents of moral formation, a point that aligns with concerns in Kenya's CBC. The study also emphasizes the significance of the "hidden curriculum" in shaping learners' values through everyday school experiences, underscoring the

need for teacher training programmes to embed both explicit and implicit character education strategies. This work provides a solid foundation for integrating culturally relevant frameworks like IKS to enhance normative teacher training and advance CBC's goals of nurturing empowered, ethical citizens.

## 2.3 African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as Pedagogical Tools

Cindi's (2021) qualitative study of two South African schools examined the incorporation of African IKS into the Basic Education curriculum. It highlighted IKS' core features of communal dialogue, collective learning, and embedded cultural values as vital pedagogical tools. The research revealed that IKS has historically and continues to play a significant role in moral and social education by fostering cultural pride, community cohesion, and sustainable practices through participatory and contextualized learning approaches. However, the study also identifies challenges such as limited curricular guidance, inadequate resources, and insufficient teacher training that hinder consistent IKS integration. Despite these barriers, educators value IKS for enhancing cultural relevance and collaborative learning, which increase learner engagement and support holistic moral development, findings that resonate with Kenya's CBC goals and underscore the importance of systematically embedding IKS in teacher training and curriculum design.

Kigozi's (2021) master's thesis explores South African Life and Physical Sciences teachers' awareness and implementation of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) within classroom teaching, revealing that despite supportive national policies, actual integration of IK remains inconsistent due to limited teacher training, scarce resources, and the dominance of Western curricula. Grounded in social constructivist and culturally relevant pedagogy frameworks, the study emphasizes that incorporating IK fosters contextualized, meaningful science education by bridging traditional and scientific worldviews, thereby enhancing learner engagement and cultural relevance. These findings highlight the necessity for teacher education programmes to enhance competencies in IKS, aligning with Kenya's CBC goals of holistic and culturally grounded education. The study underscores the importance of systemic reforms, including professional development and resource support, to enable teachers to authentically embed moral and ethical dimensions through IKS in their pedagogical practice.

Ogegbo and Ramnarain's (2024) systematic review identifies effective pedagogical practices for integrating IKS into science teaching, highlighting strategies such as

argumentative discussions, use of contextualized indigenous materials, collaboration with knowledge keepers, and experiential learning activities. The review emphasizes that incorporating IKS enriches students' scientific understanding by grounding concepts in local cultural contexts, fostering critical thinking, and promoting new knowledge generation. It also shows that integration improves learner engagement and appreciation of indigenous worldviews alongside Western science. However, challenges like teacher unfamiliarity, resource limitations, and entrenched Western paradigms hinder effective inclusion. The authors advocate for professional development, contextual curriculum design, and partnerships with indigenous communities to support teachers. These findings align closely with Kenya's CBC goals, reinforcing the importance of training teachers to use culturally relevant and participatory methods to nurture holistic scientific and ethical competencies through IKS integration.

## **2.4 Integration of IKS in Kenyan Education and CBC**

Ronoh (2018) explored the role of teacher educators and university curricula in IKS integration. Employing curriculum review and educator interviews, the study found that colonial legacies and persistent privileging of Western epistemologies in teacher training institutions have led to the superficial presence of IKS in curricula. While there is rhetorical support for decolonizing knowledge, effective operationalization is slow due to weak institutional incentives and lack of clear pedagogical models. The implication for this research is the critical importance of holistic, participatory curriculum reform and capacity building at teacher educator level. The gap highlighted is the scant documentation and evaluation of effective pilot models or case studies in teacher education, which this study intends to address by providing new empirical evidence and actionable frameworks.

Okal (2022) critically examined indigenous language education under Kenya's CBC framework, with a focus on policy, teacher training, curriculum resources, and assessment methods. Using policy analysis and synthesis of implementation challenges, the study found that despite policy mandates to teach indigenous languages from primary through secondary school levels, actual practice is hindered by inadequate teacher skills, scarce teaching and learning materials, unspecified pedagogical and assessment strategies, and brief retraining periods for in-service teachers. Okal recommends adopting immersion teaching strategies and enhancing formative and summative assessments that are culturally contextualized, drawing from successful global models adaptable to Kenya's context. Implications for current research include

the vital need for robust teacher preparation and institutional support for indigenous languages within CBC, highlighting a gap in empirical data on scalable pedagogical innovations in resource-limited settings. Okal's work underscores indigenous language education as a crucial yet underdeveloped pillar of CBC that connects to broader Indigenous Knowledge Systems integration challenges in Kenyan teacher training and curriculum execution.

A recent study by Opolo Charles Oando (2024) investigated the integration of traditional ecological knowledge, a core aspect of IKS, into integrated science education in the Mbita sub-county, Homa Bay County, Kenya. This qualitative case study used semi-structured interviews and document analysis across five junior secondary schools. The research aimed to explore teachers' understanding of IKS, the depth of its integration in classroom practice, and strategies for bridging traditional and modern scientific concepts. Findings showed that while teachers generally recognized IKS as knowledge rooted in environment and tradition, their grasp of ecological knowledge was limited. Integration was mostly surface level, with sporadic inclusion in science content. For the present work, this suggests that deeper teacher capacity-building and contextualized resource development are needed. The main gap highlighted is the absence of sustained, systemic strategies for moving beyond tokenistic inclusion toward genuine, curriculum-embedded IKS practice in science education, especially at junior secondary level.

Ngumbau (2023) analysed the role of policy and institutional frameworks in supporting the integration of IKS in CBC and lifelong learning in Kenya, focusing especially on the continuing education of teachers through government-led diploma programmes. Using policy analysis and teacher cohort data, the research found that while there is formal recognition of IKS and mechanisms for upgrading teacher qualifications, the transfer of these principles into practical classroom application remains inconsistent. Assessment of newly qualified teachers indicated difficulty in conceptualizing IKS as part of CBC capacities. This suggests that ongoing reform in teacher preparation must include explicit, experience-based modules on IKS. The main gap identified is inadequate alignment between teacher education, policy, and everyday classroom reality, pointing to a need for research-driven policy and curriculum reform to make IKS an integral, assessable part of teacher competencies.

In a primary school setting in Buuri East sub-county, Jumba and Mwiti (2022) explored the awareness, extent, and practices of IKS integration under the new CBC through a descriptive survey of teachers. Their methodology included cluster sampling and a structured questionnaire, targeting a representative set of schools and

teachers. The findings revealed low teacher awareness (only 36% could correctly identify IKS), with integration largely limited to areas such as agriculture and cultural history at early grades. Major barriers included resource constraints, lack of guidelines, and mixed cultural contexts in classroom settings. The implication here is that policy alone is insufficient; teacher capability and school-level support are pivotal for successful IKS adoption. The identified gap for the current study is to explore practical solutions to teacher training and resource provision for sustained integration.

Previous studies also identify opportunities and challenges for integrating IKS into CBC in the Kenyan context. These challenges and opportunities centre largely on systemic, cultural, and resource-based factors. The dominance of Western epistemologies in Kenya's formal education has long marginalized IKS, making integration partial and sometimes superficial, as seen in the limited focus on Indigenous Language Activities within the CBC rather than a holistic inclusion (Lumonya, 2020; Jumba & Mwiti, 2022). According to Jumba and Mwiti, teachers often face challenges such as low awareness of IKS, inadequate instructional materials, unclear policy guidelines, and mixed cultural contexts, which hinder effective infusion of IKS in their teaching. On the opportunity side, IKS offers a contextually relevant pedagogical framework rooted in communal dialogue, experiential learning, and cultural values that align with holistic education principles of CBC. There is policy recognition and growing scholarly advocacy for deeper integration of IKS, which can transform teacher training and curriculum design to better reflect learners' socio-cultural realities and promote moral and ethical competencies (Zalo, 2023).

Despite the noted integration challenges, the reviewed studies general affirm that IKS inherently embodies knowledge systems that are locally grounded and closely linked with sustainable living practices, community wellbeing, and ecological stewardship (Owuor, 2008). Therefore, integrating IKS in education fosters learning that is not only culturally relevant but also responsive to local environmental and social challenges, thereby supporting education for sustainable development goals. By valuing indigenous ways of knowing and problem-solving, formal education can bridge the divide between global scientific knowledge and local experiential knowledge, enhancing learners' critical thinking and adaptive capacities (Lumonya, 2020). This contextualized learning through IKS nurtures culturally competent citizens who understand and act on sustainability principles embedded in their heritage, which is crucial for Kenya's socio-economic and environmental future. However, the practical realization of this potential depends on reforms in teacher education, curriculum support, and resource allocation to embed IKS fully and meaningfully into the curriculum.

### 3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design, specifically a review and synthesis of secondary data, to examine the integration of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in normative teacher training under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The qualitative design was appropriate because it allowed for an in-depth exploration of theoretical, policy, and empirical literature, providing insights into how moral and ethical competencies are addressed in teacher education programmes.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a systematic qualitative review approach, combining elements of document analysis and thematic synthesis. This design enabled the researcher to critically examine and interpret existing knowledge from multiple sources, identify patterns, gaps, and contradictions, and synthesize findings relevant to the infusion of IKS into teacher training.

#### 3.2 Sampling and Sample

The study employed purposive sampling to select relevant secondary sources. Inclusion criteria were: (1) literature focusing on teacher training, moral and ethical competencies, and CBC in Kenya; (2) studies or reports addressing African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in education; and (3) publications in English, from 2010 onwards, to ensure relevance and currency. The sample included **40–50 sources**, comprising academic journal articles, policy documents (e.g., CBC policy guidelines), official reports from the Ministry of Education, and relevant theoretical literature.

#### 3.3 Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data were collected through document review, where the researcher systematically retrieved relevant materials from electronic databases, university repositories, government websites, and other academic sources. Each source was examined for content related to: teacher moral competencies, CBC implementation, and the role of IKS in education. Key information was extracted and organized thematically to facilitate synthesis.

#### 3.4 Data Analysis

The study employed thematic content analysis to interpret the collected data. Texts were coded into themes

reflecting moral and ethical competencies, IKS integration strategies, challenges, and recommendations. Patterns and recurring findings were identified, compared across sources, and synthesized into coherent narratives that informed the study's conclusions and recommendations.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

As a secondary study, the research did not involve human participants; however, ethical principles were observed in the use of literature. All sources were properly cited to avoid plagiarism, and only publicly accessible or officially authorized documents were used. The study maintained integrity, objectivity, and transparency in reviewing and interpreting findings.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Moral and Ethical Competencies Expected of CBC Teachers**

From the review of existing policies, educational frameworks and practices, the Competency- Based Curriculum in Kenya explicitly foregrounds several moral and ethical competencies that teachers are expected to embody and nurture in learners. Key competencies include integrity, respect, communal responsibility, and cultural sensitivity. These moral foundations underpin teacher professionalism within CBC environments and are vital for fostering holistic learner development. Teachers under CBC are expected to model honesty, fairness, and ethical conduct both in and out of the classroom. According to KNEC (2021) frameworks, integrity goes beyond individual behaviour to include professional responsibility, adherence to ethical standards, and transparency in assessment and classroom management. This quality is crucial for building trust and credibility with learners, parents, and the community. Integrity also informs fair treatment of students, equitable application of CBC principles, and resistance to corrupt practices, which the curriculum aims to eliminate.

CBC teacher competencies also emphasize respect for learners' diverse backgrounds, opinions, and cultures. This includes sensitivity to gender equality, inclusion of learners with special needs, and fostering a classroom climate that values diversity and dialogue (Ghosh & Sankar, 2024). The moral underpinning of respect aligns with CBC's learner-centred pedagogy, where teachers act as facilitators who listen and respond empathetically to student needs and cultural contexts. Respect extends to upholding learners' dignity and promoting mutual respect among learners, which is instrumental in social and emotional development.

Recognising African traditions, communal responsibility is deemed central to CBC's holistic goals. Teachers are charged with nurturing a sense of collective agency, social cohesion, and environmental stewardship (Ngwacho, 2024). This competency calls for educators to encourage learners' participation in community activities, collaborative problem-solving, and recognition of interdependence as a societal norm. Community engagement as a teaching principle aligns with CBC's objective of producing socially responsible citizens capable of contributing meaningfully to Kenya's national development. Additionally, given Kenya's cultural diversity, CBC requires teachers to demonstrate cultural awareness and integrate indigenous knowledge systems into pedagogy. This sensitivity involves recognizing and appreciating learners' cultural identities, languages, and traditions, thereby fostering a culturally responsive classroom (Høgetveit, 2024). Reflecting the values embedded in African communal dialogue, such sensitivity enhances learner engagement and supports ethical development contextualized within local realities. These moral competencies interlink with CBC's broader aims to nurture critical thinking, communication, citizenship, and creativity, illustrating that ethical formation is not ancillary but integral to competency development. However, a critical examination of Kenya's CBC policy and curriculum documentation equally reveals a complex engagement with moral and ethical dimensions, one marked by clear aspirations but limited practical guidance and inconsistent implementation.

Granted, CBC policy frameworks such as those developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD, 2017) and KNEC (2021) explicitly identify values such as integrity, responsibility, respect, and citizenship as core competencies. Such recognition indicates a strong conceptual commitment to embedding moral education within Kenya's educational reforms. These documents emphasize character formation alongside cognitive skills, reflecting a holistic educational philosophy that transcends traditional knowledge transmission. Nevertheless, despite explicit mentions, moral competencies are often embedded implicitly across learning areas rather than treated as distinct, assessable domains. This has led to a patchy infusion of ethical content in formal teaching plans and assessments, undermining consistent competency development. For example, while Indigenous Language Activities (ILAs) serve as an entry point for integrating African IKS, this focus remains narrow relative to the wider scope of moral education envisaged by CBC. This represents a limitation in curriculum design, where moral and ethical education's comprehensive inclusion remains secondary to academic skill.

Besides, CBC documentation lacks robust, standardized tools for assessing moral and ethical competencies in both

learners and teachers. As noted by Ndungu (2021), the absence of explicit evaluation mechanisms hampers the monitoring and reinforcement of these values in classrooms. This gap challenges teacher preparedness and accountability in delivering normative competencies, especially given the subjective and nuanced nature of ethical development. Additionally, the treatment of moral competencies within teacher education policy is underwhelming. While CBC frameworks proclaim the importance of ethical formation, they provide scant detail on embedding moral education systematically within normative teacher training programmes. According to Micheni (2021), this detachment between policy aspirations and professional development results in teachers being inadequately equipped to mentor learners' moral growth. Practical ethical pedagogy, reflective practice, and community-based learning methodologies, which are essential for CBC's competency goals, are insufficiently emphasized.

CBC policy documents further endorse the inclusion of indigenous languages and some aspects of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, signalling awareness of cultural relevance. However, the systemic integration of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems as pedagogies for moral education remains minimal and fragmented. This insufficiency restricts the realization of culturally nuanced ethical competencies that could otherwise root CBC's moral objectives in Kenya's socio-cultural realities. Lastly, broader policy discussions highlight constraints such as inadequate teacher numbers, resource shortages, and infrastructural deficits adversely affecting CBD implementation (Otundo, 2024; Cheruiyot, 2024). These systemic issues limit the institutional capacity to operationalize ethical training and assessment frameworks. The lack of clear policy guidelines specific to moral competence further exacerbates implementation challenges.

## **4.2 Current Status of Integration of Moral Competence in Teacher Training**

Kenyan universities, as the primary providers of pre-service teacher education, nominally recognize the importance of moral and ethical training but tend to incorporate these competencies unevenly and often implicitly within teacher education programmes. The study reviewed some Kenyan public universities' programmes on teacher education, including Kenyatta University, Moi University, University of Nairobi, and Technical University of Kenya. Overall, the programmes reference ethical competencies within their teacher education policies or module descriptions. The teacher training programmes align with the KICD (2017) and KNEC (2021)

frameworks, which emphasize teacher ethics as integral to professional practice.

For example, Kenyatta University's Bachelor of Education (Arts and Science) includes courses like Educational Psychology, Philosophy and Sociology of Education, and School Guidance and Counselling, which touch on ethical and moral development implicitly, but rarely offer standalone, explicit moral competence modules (Kenyatta University, 2024). Similarly, Moi University's Teacher Education programmes incorporate Professional Ethics and Educational Philosophy as compulsory courses but often these focus on professional standards and codes of conduct, with less emphasis on moral formation and values education as lived experiences (Moi University, 2024). Some universities, such as University of Nairobi and Technical University of Kenya, are beginning to pilot specialized courses or modules on ethics and values education influenced by IKS (Kipkoech, 2024), although these have not yet been mainstreamed across all training institutions.

Overall, the integration of moral and ethical training often occurs within broader pedagogical modules or as part of the "hidden curriculum" in practicum experiences. This indirect approach frequently limits the depth and intentionality with which moral training is delivered, making it more reliant on individual lecturers' interest and institutional priorities. Research studies corroborate these gaps. Muthoka and Mbirithi (2025) reveal that teachers, though adept at content competence, are ill-prepared to integrate moral values such as honesty and unity into teaching and assessment. The absence of formal ethical training is compounded by curriculum overload and limited in-service professional development targeting moral competence. Similarly, Jumba and Mwiti (2022) highlight low teacher awareness of IKS and a general deficiency in skills and resources to embed moral and cultural values meaningfully, impeding authentic values education. Mukandairo (2025) further underscores the lack of standardized, reliable assessment tools and reflects on limited capacity among teacher trainers themselves to facilitate ethical pedagogy, resulting in inconsistent moral education delivery.

A critical challenge identified across these studies is the marginalization of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in teacher training programmes. Despite IKS' rich traditions of communal dialogue, collective learning, and culturally rooted ethical values, their integration is limited and superficial (Kipkoech, 2024; Jumba & Mwiti, 2022). Teacher training misses vital opportunities to harness IKS as a normative framework for moral competence formation aligned with Kenya's socio-cultural context. Further systemic constraints include shortages of teacher educators trained in ethical pedagogy,

insufficient institutional resources, and a lack of clear policy directives mandating explicit moral training within pre-service programmes (Muthigani, 2019; Cheruiyot, 2024). These factors collectively work against effective internalization and operationalization of the moral competencies espoused by CBC.

### **4.3 African Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a Vehicle for Moral Competency Development**

African IKS provide a deeply rooted, culturally responsive framework for the development of moral competencies. Unlike Western individualistic pedagogies, IKS are grounded in communal dialogue, collective responsibility, and culturally situated ways of knowing, which makes them particularly potent for nurturing ethical reasoning and shared values in both learners and teachers (Romm, 2017). IKS foster moral competency primarily through communal dialogues, which are open, participatory processes where youth and elders engage in storytelling, conflict resolution, and collaborative problem-solving. In these settings, knowledge is constructed through group interaction and negotiation, which promotes shared values and collective ethical reasoning. Studies such as Muli, Nyambura and Onyango (2023) emphasize that communal dialogue in African societies serves as a vehicle for discussing moral dilemmas, societal norms, and ethical challenges, allowing participants to internalize principles such as respect, responsibility, truthfulness, and social harmony. This dialogic process is not limited to formal school environments but infuses daily communal life, rituals, and ceremonies, making moral reasoning contextual and experiential. In a study in Zimbabwe, Sunzuma *et al.* (2025) found that teachers who adopted IKS-informed dialogic methods were more successful in transmitting core ethical values to their students compared to conventional didactic approaches

Historical and ethnographic research documents that traditional African education systems placed moral formation at their core (Obiagu, 2023). Education was holistic, with a strong emphasis on character building, respect for elders, communal welfare, generosity, and integrity. Young (2015) and Wenman (2023) show how indigenous pedagogies, such as mentorship by elders, age group initiations, participatory storytelling, and apprenticeship, embedded moral and ethical codes through lived experience rather than abstract instruction. These practices utilized oral traditions, songs, and proverbs to make values memorable and relatable. In modern times, studies have shown that aspects of IKS (like storytelling and collective decision-making) still shape youths' ethical identities, especially in communities where indigenous practices are strong. Cross-continental research, for

example by Cindi (2021), highlights similar patterns in other African contexts, showing that IKS-based schooling environments foster greater respect, discipline, and sense of communal obligation

Literature on teacher education and Competency Based Curriculum in Kenya consistently argues for the integration of IKS as a means to introduce culturally relevant, collaborative, and holistic pedagogical approaches to moral formation. Kipkoech (2024) argues that the strength of IKS lies in its adaptability to local contexts while preserving core communal values. Pedagogically, IKS-based approaches are characterized by participatory methods (circle discussions, joint projects, community-based learning), mentorship models, and the use of local languages and cultural artefacts. Such methods not only tap into learners' lived realities but also position teachers as facilitators and role models of ethical conduct, rather than mere transmitters of academic content (Sunzuma *et al.*, 2025). Ngumbau (2023) further shows that teachers trained in IKS principles demonstrate greater capacity to nurture respect, collaboration, and critical ethical reflection in the classroom, qualities foundational for the moral and civic aims of CBC. IKS approaches also support holistic education, integrating emotional, spiritual, social, and intellectual development, embodying the principles at the centre of the CBC. By positioning moral formation as a lived, daily practice, IKS move ethical development from the periphery to the centre of educational experience. This approach is highly recommended in recent Kenyan literature on education reform, including policy documents and academic reviews (Akumbu, 2022; Thukia, 2025).

### **4.4 Potential Models for Integrating IKS into Normative Teacher Training**

Integrating African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into teacher training requires centring family, community, and cultural practices as foundational pedagogical resources. In Kenyan teacher education, the ideal situation, well-reflected in IKS, is one where families and communities are active participants in knowledge transmission and moral formation. However, most university-based teacher education programmes remain predominantly oriented towards Western and formal academic models, offering only limited and often symbolic engagement with indigenous cultural practices (Lumonya, 2020; Ronoh, 2017). A review of several Kenyan teacher training programmes finds that while policy frameworks, such as those backing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), encourage community and parental engagement, the actual curriculum content dedicated to IKS remains minimal and patchy. For example, family involvement in

curriculum planning or delivery is seldom systematically institutionalized; rather, community and cultural input is invited through ad hoc engagement, such as school cultural days, or as illustrative case studies (Jumba & Mwiti, 2022).

Recent studies highlight that tangible incorporation of IKS within teacher education is mostly visible at the school- or classroom-level, not within university coursework, and is largely left to individual teachers' initiative (Sunzuma *et al.*, 2025). Teachers trained in more culturally responsive approaches, such as experiential learning in rural schools, often cite the influence of community elders, local artisans, and family traditions as formative, but these are underrepresented as structured modules in most teacher training institutions (Iwuanamwu, 2023). The lack of standardized frameworks integrating these practices in Kenya's teacher training programmes reflects both an over-reliance on Eurocentric training models and limited curricular space or resources for supporting meaningful partnerships with local communities.

Indigenous languages, storytelling, and collective activities are core modalities through which IKS transmit moral values, ethics, and communal norms. The CBC in Kenya, especially in early childhood and lower primary, formally recognizes the central role of indigenous languages as both a medium and subject of instruction (Chege, 2023). This has led to an expansion of Indigenous Language Activities (ILA), which aim to promote cultural heritage and identity among young learners, and by extension, among trainee teachers. However, integration of indigenous language instruction in teacher training remains uneven across universities and colleges. While there are government and policy efforts to prepare mother-tongue materials and establish training workshops (Kagendo, 2024), most pre-service teachers are not required to demonstrate fluency or pedagogical skill in an indigenous language unless they specialize in early childhood or specific language streams (Nyariki, 2020).

Storytelling as a pedagogical tool, fundamental in IKS, is recognized for its power to instill values like respect, responsibility, and empathy. Some projects—supported by collaborations between Kenyan universities, the Ministry of Education, and international partners—have piloted teacher training workshops on narrative methods, local drama, and traditional storytelling (Cooke, 2018). These initiatives show strong promise in fostering creativity, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking among both teachers and their students. Community engagement, meanwhile, is encouraged in teacher practicum programmes and through project-based assignments linking schools to local history, governance, or cultural sites, but this is still far from systematic or standardized practice in university coursework (Ronoh, 2017). Barriers to full adoption include inconsistent government support,

lack of materials in many languages, under-prepared teacher educators, and sometimes resistance from parents or trainees who undervalue indigenous content due to long-standing colonial biases or aspirations for global integration (Ng'asike, 2019).

The CBC's vision of holistic teacher competencies, blending cognitive, affective, and ethical capacities, aligns strongly with IKS principles. Studies such as Nyamosi (2024) and policies such as KICD (2017) affirm that CBC has paved the way for integrating IKS by emphasizing learning that is hands-on, values-driven, and rooted in learners' sociocultural realities. However, the full potential of IKS integration is yet to be realized. Current CBC implementation, according to critical studies such as Thukia (2025), has limited IKS to narrow subject streams or to isolated curriculum sections rather than embedding it as an ethos across levels or disciplines.

Integrating African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into normative teacher education in Kenya requires a comprehensive, multi-level approach that transcends the limited scope of current practices, which often confine IKS mainly to Indigenous Language Activities targeting primary education. To realize the full potential of IKS, it is essential to embed these systems across all teacher education programmes, including secondary and tertiary levels. This broader integration involves incorporating IKS principles not only in language instruction but also within science, social studies, and professional ethics courses, thus ensuring that moral and ethical teachings grounded in indigenous contexts permeate diverse subject areas (Ronoh, 2017; Kipkoech, 2024; Jumba & Mwiti, 2022). Such curricular diversification promotes the development of holistic teacher competencies, equipping educators to deliver culturally relevant and ethically grounded pedagogy throughout the educational spectrum.

A key strategy in embedding IKS into teacher training is the institutionalization of community-based practicum experiences. This model formalizes attachments where teacher trainees engage directly with community elders, artisans, families, and other cultural custodians, learning through observation, participation, and mentorship in authentic indigenous settings. Recognizing and accrediting these community-based learning experiences as part of teacher education formalizes the value of experiential moral instruction deeply rooted in local traditions and collective knowledge transmission. This approach not only enriches trainee teachers' understanding of IKS but also fosters the development of relational, communally oriented ethical competencies essential for implementing the Competency-Based Curriculum successfully.

Another critical dimension is the curricular co-design process, which actively involves local communities,

parents, and cultural guardians in shaping teacher education content and delivery. Engaging these stakeholders ensures that curricula reflect authentic cultural narratives, values, and pedagogical methods intrinsic to African Indigenous Knowledge Systems. This collaborative approach fosters curricula that are relevant, context-sensitive, and respectful of diverse cultural identities, thereby enhancing the resonance and effectiveness of moral competency development in normative training programmes (Lumonya, 2020; Ng'asike, 2019). Through such participatory curriculum design, teacher education becomes a dialogic and inclusive process, bridging formal education with community wisdom and values.

Pedagogically, a reflective and dialogic methodology is paramount to embedding IKS effectively within teacher training. Emphasizing storytelling, cultural performances, indigenous problem-solving strategies, and mother tongue instruction as routine teaching and assessment methods honours the communal and experiential nature of African knowledge systems. These methods engage trainees not only intellectually but also emotionally and socially, fostering deep ethical reflection and value embodiment. Such dialogic approaches serve to model participatory learning and cultural continuity, equipping teachers to facilitate moral reasoning and communal identity formation within their classrooms (Ronoh, 2017). By normalizing these indigenous pedagogies, teacher training programmes nurture educators who appreciate the ethical richness of cultural narratives and who can transfer these values through active, contextually grounded learning experiences.

Finally, for these ambitious integration efforts to succeed, robust professional development investments are necessary for teacher educators themselves. Building the capacity of university faculty and teacher trainers to understand, model, and mentor IKS-informed pedagogy ensures continuity and authenticity in moral competency formation. This faculty-level empowerment addresses current gaps in instructor preparedness, enabling the embedding of cultural values and communal ethics in normative training environments (Ronoh, 2017). Through continuous professional development, teacher educators become catalysts for the systemic transformation required to harmonize Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum goals with indigenous knowledge traditions, ultimately strengthening the moral and ethical fabric of the teaching profession.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

Kenya's CBC policy and curriculum set an ambitious

agenda for moral and ethical competencies in education, highlighting values essential for national and community development. Teachers are envisioned as key agents in modelling and fostering integrity, respect, communal responsibility, and cultural sensitivity. Nevertheless, policy and curriculum documents currently fall short in providing systematic, explicit, and actionable frameworks for teaching, assessing, and embedding these competencies within teacher training and classroom practice. The gap between moral competence aspirations and their practical realization underscores the need for deliberate infusion of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and community-rooted pedagogies into normative teacher education. Doing so would not only enrich ethical competence but also contextualize CBC's goals within Kenya's indigenous cultural milieu, enhancing relevance, authenticity, and sustainability of the curriculum reform.

While Kenya's CBC demonstrates a commendable commitment to moral and ethical competencies, integrity, respect, communal responsibility, and cultural sensitivity, the current policy and training frameworks often fall short in translating these values into explicit curricula, teacher preparation, and assessment mechanisms. The disconnect between policy aspirations and classroom realities points to a need for deliberate, systemic reforms in teacher education that prioritize ethical formation alongside pedagogical skills. Strategic infusion of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into normative teacher training offers a culturally grounded pathway to enriching moral competence. IKS's emphasis on communal dialogue, experiential learning, and locally relevant ethical norms provides an ideal framework to complement CBC's holistic aspirations and to enhance teacher capacity for authentic moral mentorship.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

### **1. Teacher education modules on moral competence and ethical pedagogy:**

Policymakers and curriculum developers should prioritize the creation of structured modules that go beyond theoretical knowledge to equip pre-service and in-service teachers with practical skills for fostering moral and ethical growth among learners. These modules should integrate community-engaged teaching methods aligned with African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS), emphasizing dialogue, collective responsibility, and experiential learning in ways that support CBC goal. There is a need for contextually appropriate frameworks to assess moral competence, including reflective practice, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility. These tools should enable both formative and summative evaluation, ensuring accountability and consistency in the integration

of ethical competencies in teacher training programmes.

## 2 Strengthening institutional capacity for teacher educators

Teacher trainers and university faculty should be trained in both ethical pedagogy and IKS methodologies. Capacity-building initiatives should include specialized workshops, collaborative learning with community custodians, and continuous professional development to ensure educators can model and teach moral competence effectively. Substantial investment is required to develop teaching materials, train educators, and expand community-based practicum programmes. Policy mandates should mainstream IKS in teacher education, supported by monitoring mechanisms to ensure compliance and innovation. Further studies should assess the effectiveness of IKS integration in developing teachers' ethical competencies and its impact on learner outcomes, identifying best practices and scalable models. Educational stakeholders should foster dialogue with local elders, artisans, parents, and cultural custodians to co-develop curricula, ensuring teacher training reflects indigenous values, promotes ownership, and contextualizes education. IKS should be framed as dynamic and integral to national identity, sustainability, and ethical citizenship. Elevating its status will motivate educators to integrate, embody, and transmit indigenous moral values within CBC-aligned teaching and professional standards.

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