

Relationship Between Community Service and Learner Responsibility in Junior Schools of Nyamira County, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between participation in community service and the development of responsibility among junior school learners in Nyamira County, Kenya. Kenya's Competency-Based Education (CBE) curriculum emphasizes nurturing core values such as responsibility and identifies community service as a key pedagogical strategy to bridge classroom learning and real-life practice. Despite global recognition of its effectiveness, limited empirical research has examined how community service influences learners' responsibility in rural Kenyan contexts. The study specifically sought to identify community service opportunities available to learners, determine the relationship between service participation and responsibility, and examine how school and community contexts influence this relationship. Guided by the Ubuntu philosophy - which promotes interconnectedness, collective responsibility, and moral growth - and aligned with Kenya's CBE framework, the study adopted a cross-sectional correlational design. The target population comprised 7,963 learners from 111 junior schools, of whom 160 Grades 7–9 learners were sampled using proportionate stratified random sampling to ensure gender and school-type representation. Data were collected using standardized Likert-scale questionnaires adapted from the Benefits of Community Engagement (BACE) Scale and the Hemingway Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (HMAC). Analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 26 through descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and regression analysis. Findings revealed that learners participated widely in school and community activities, such as tree planting, peer tutoring, cleaning, and assisting the elderly, and that this participation was statistically significantly positively related to learner responsibility ($r = 0.561$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis showed that participation accounted for 31.5% of the variance in responsibility, which rose to 52.6% when moderated by school and community support. The study concludes that structured community service, reinforced by supportive environments, effectively fosters responsibility and recommends that teachers integrate structured community service into learning and collaborate in supportive initiatives. It further recommends longitudinal and comparative studies to assess sustained impact.

Keywords: Community Service, Competency-Based Education, Learner Responsibility, Values Education, Ubuntu Philosophy, Kenya.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Educational reforms in the 21st century increasingly emphasize competencies that foster holistic learner development. Community Service Learning (CSL), rooted in the experiential philosophies of John Dewey and Paulo Freire, embodies this shift by promoting “learning by doing” through authentic community engagement (Losada et al., 2021). Originating in North America, CSL has expanded globally, with adoption in Europe (Mazeikienė, 2019), Latin America, and beyond. Its distinguishing feature is the integration of

academic learning with community service, reinforced by structured reflection that allows learners to connect their experiences with classroom knowledge (Afzal & Hussain, 2020; Santos-Rego & Lorenzo, 2018). This approach develops responsibility, empathy, and civic-mindedness, producing socially responsible citizens (Asio et al., 2023). CSL is thus increasingly recognized as a dynamic pedagogical strategy worldwide (Aramburuzabala et al., 2019).

Responsibility, particularly during adolescence, is understood as the capacity to act empathetically, provide support, and engage constructively within a community (Quinones, 2019; Dingili, 2024). Scholars emphasize its role in enabling learners to make sound moral judgments, informed choices, and meaningful contributions to society (UNESCO, 2015; Pong & Leung, 2023). Responsibility, as a key outcome of values education, is demonstrated through dependability, persistence, and active participation (Ngwacho, 2024; Fasco et al., 2024). Schools play a critical role in fostering these values by shaping learners' ethical behavior and socio-moral development (Narjis Unar et al., 2024).

In Africa, CSL is increasingly acknowledged as a strategy that links education with real-life challenges. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 2016–2025) highlights the importance of embedding moral values, civic duty, and social accountability within education systems (KICD, 2020). Ngwacho (2024) identifies CSL as central to implementing competency-based curricula for sustainable development. Through hands-on activities, learners develop civic awareness, empathy, and responsibility, preparing them for participation in civic life (Chansa, 2024). East African nations, including Kenya, have integrated community service into Competency-Based Education (CBE), recognizing its role in cultivating responsibility and social awareness (Cheruiyot, 2024; Nsengimana, 2020).

Kenya's CBE, launched in 2019, marked a major shift from exam-centered education to learner-centered models prioritizing holistic development (Mogere & Mbataru, 2023). The framework emphasizes values such as responsibility, respect, integrity, and citizenship, identifying CSL as a key strategy for achieving them. Despite its integration, concerns persist about whether CSL is effectively fostering responsibility and civic engagement. Stakeholders have noted challenges, including low learner initiative, weak reflection, and inconsistent community partnerships (Cheruiyot, 2024; Dingili, 2024; Ngwacho, 2024). These issues highlight the importance of localized studies that assess how CSL shapes responsibility within specific contexts.

Nyamira County, with its largely rural setting and diverse community support systems, provides a compelling case for such an investigation. While junior schools in the county have adopted CBE and provide learners with opportunities for community service, limited research has examined how these experiences shape the formation of responsibility. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the relationship between community service participation and the enhancement of responsibility among junior school learners in Nyamira County, contributing localized evidence to the broader discourse on values education and the implementation of CBE in Kenya.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

The integration of community service into educational curricula has gained significant recognition worldwide as an effective strategy for fostering social responsibility and civic engagement among learners. Kenya's Competency-Based Education curriculum is anchored on eight core values - love,

responsibility, respect, unity, peace, integrity, patriotism, and social justice - aimed at nurturing ethically grounded and responsible citizens. These values are integrated across all learning areas and school activities, with community service singled out as a key strategy for fostering their development, as outlined in the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF). While global literature has demonstrated a positive relationship between participation in community service and enhanced learner responsibility (Pong & Leung, 2023; Sotelino-Losada et al., 2021), there is a lack of evidence in Kenya, particularly in Nyamira County, on the influence of community service on learner responsibility. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between community service participation and the enhancement of learner responsibility among Junior School learners in Nyamira County, Kenya. This was intended to determine whether community service significantly contributes to learners' socially responsible behaviour.

➤ *Objective of the Study*

The main objective of the study was to answer the following research questions:

- What community service opportunities are provided to learners of Junior Schools in Nyamira County?
- What is the relationship between community service participation and learner responsibility among Junior School learners of Nyamira County?
- How do the school and community environments influence the relationship between community service participation and learner responsibility in Nyamira County?

➤ *Hypothesis*

The following hypothesis was tested to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between participation in community service and the enhancement of learner responsibility among Junior School learners:

- H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between participation in community service and the enhancement of learner responsibility among learners in Junior Schools of Nyamira County, Kenya.

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

This study was anchored on Ubuntu Philosophical Theory, which emphasizes interconnectedness, shared humanity, and communal values (Mugumbate et al., 2023). Ubuntu, as an African humanist philosophy, underscores that "a person is a person through other people" (Mugumbate, 2020), highlighting that personal growth and responsibility are nurtured through communal belonging and service. Its foundational values—dignity, justice, unity, and collective responsibility—stress that human development is inseparable from community well-being. In education, Ubuntu aligns closely with Community Service Learning (CSL) by encouraging learners to see themselves as integral members of their communities with a duty to contribute positively (Mpofu & Sefotho, 2024; Odari, 2020). CSL, informed by Ubuntu, provides opportunities for service that foster empathy, collaboration, and responsibility. Research affirms

that community service not only develops practical skills but also strengthens civic awareness and moral responsibility (Mayaka & Truell, 2021). Thus, integrating Ubuntu into CSL nurtures learners who recognize that individual responsibility is intrinsically connected to the well-being of others.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Responsibility is widely acknowledged as a foundational educational value and a critical outcome of holistic learner development. Globally, education systems view responsibility not only as a moral virtue but also as a civic competence vital for social cohesion and democratic participation. It encompasses accountability, dependability, and self-discipline, qualities that enable learners to make ethical decisions, respect others, and contribute positively to society. In this regard, responsibility is central to international discourses on education for citizenship and democracy (UNESCO, 2015).

Community Service Learning (CSL) is one of the most influential strategies for cultivating responsibility. Rooted in experiential philosophies, CSL integrates academic instruction with service opportunities, allowing learners to apply classroom knowledge in real-life contexts while internalizing civic values. Its experiential and reflective design fosters discipline, empathy, and accountability through meaningful participation in community projects. Evidence across global contexts demonstrates its effectiveness. Gregorová et al. (2024), in a multi-country quasi-experimental study, found that learners involved in service activities - such as elderly care and environmental conservation - showed higher empathy, accountability, and civic engagement than control groups. In Asia, Afzal and Hussain (2020) reported that Pakistani secondary students developed greater civic responsibility, enhanced social skills, and self-satisfaction after engaging in CSL. Similarly, a meta-analysis of nine U.S. studies by Filges et al. (2022) confirmed significant positive effects on academic outcomes and consistent gains in social responsibility. These studies highlight that responsibility is best developed through authentic engagement rather than abstract instruction.

In Africa, CSL is increasingly recognized for its transformative potential, although its adaptation often reflects Western models that may not fully align with local realities (VanLeeuwen et al., 2020). Nevertheless, regional studies affirm its value. Bhagwan (2020), examining South African undergraduates engaged in literacy and health campaigns, found that participants developed empathy, social awareness, and moral responsibility. Similarly, Maposa and Chigudu (2021), reflecting on CSL at Arrupe Jesuit University in Zimbabwe, observed that learners engaged more meaningfully when teachers, families, and communities actively supported programs, while weak collaboration reduced CSL to a compulsory activity. These findings emphasize that supportive institutional and community contexts are critical for CSL to cultivate responsibility effectively.

Kenya has embedded CSL in the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) since its rollout in 2019, with responsibility identified as one of eight core values for nurturing holistic learners (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development [KICD], 2017, 2020). Empirical research affirms this alignment. Dingili (2024), in a review of 14 studies, highlighted activities such as tree planting, drug awareness, and sanitation drives as avenues for cultivating responsibility, teamwork, and civic consciousness. However, the review also revealed challenges, including insufficient reflective practices, limited assessment frameworks, and inadequate teacher preparation. Ngwacho (2024), using a mixed-methods design, similarly found that CSL enhanced civic engagement and environmental stewardship, though weak community partnerships limited its impact. Together, these studies demonstrate both the promise of CSL and the structural barriers hindering its full effectiveness.

Despite this progress, localized evidence on junior schools remains scarce. Much of the Kenyan research has focused on senior schools or provided generalized national perspectives, overlooking younger learners. Nyamira County, with its rural setting and varied community support systems, presents a compelling context for examining how CSL fosters responsibility. Investigating this context will provide localized evidence of how CBC's core value of responsibility is nurtured, address current gaps, and inform both policy and practice in Kenya.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional correlational design to examine the relationship between community service participation and learner responsibility. This design was considered appropriate as it allowed the investigation of associations between naturally occurring variables without manipulation, while enabling efficient and ethical statistical testing through Pearson's correlation and regression. Practical considerations, including limited time, academic schedules, and the need for non-intrusive data collection, further justified this choice.

The study was conducted in Nyamira County, which consists of five sub-counties. Nyamira South, comprising 111 junior schools with a learner population of 7,963, was purposively selected. From this population, 20 schools (17.5%) were randomly sampled to capture diversity in school type and gender composition. A total of 160 learners were randomly selected from Grades 7–9 to participate. While a G*Power analysis indicated that 97 participants would be sufficient to detect a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.15$) with 80% power at the 0.05 level, the larger sample was chosen to strengthen statistical power, improve reliability, and ensure generalizability, while guarding against non-response and incomplete data. Proportionate stratified random sampling was applied to minimize bias and ensure representativeness (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Inclusion criteria required learners to be enrolled in schools offering structured community service programs, while schools without such programs were excluded. Participation was

voluntary, and no financial or material inducements were provided to maintain ethical integrity.

Validated instruments with established psychometric properties were used to measure key constructs. Community service participation was assessed using items adapted from the Benefits of Community Engagement (BACE) Scale (Miller et al., 2018), which captures perceptions of personal growth and social responsibility ($\alpha = 0.92$). Learner responsibility was measured with items from the Hemingway Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (HMAC) (Karcher, 2003), assessing responsibility toward peers, family, school, and community. Both instruments used a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores reflecting greater responsibility or participation. A pre-test with 20 learners from two comparable schools was used to assess clarity, structure, and suitability. Feedback-informed refinements in wording and layout. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha values above 0.75 for all constructs: 0.755 for community service participation, 0.763 for responsibility, 0.886 for teacher and parent influence, and 0.892 for school culture and community environment, indicating strong internal consistency.

Given the involvement of minors, ethical safeguards were prioritized. Informed consent was obtained from parents

or guardians, and assent was secured from learners. Participants were fully briefed on the study's purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature, while confidentiality was maintained through anonymized responses and secure data handling (Graham et al., 2013; UK Research and Innovation [UKRI], 2023). Debriefing was conducted after data collection to clarify issues and address participants' questions.

Data were processed and analyzed using SPSS version 26. Cleaning preceded analysis, and missing values were addressed through multiple imputation to preserve variability and reduce bias (Schafer, 2017). Pearson's correlation was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between participation and responsibility. Multiple regression tested the hypothesis of a significant positive relationship, controlling for teacher influence, parental role modelling, and school culture as confounders (Field, 2018). In addition, one-way ANOVA and independent t-tests compared responsibility levels across groups with varying degrees of community service participation. These techniques provided a rigorous examination of how community service relates to learner responsibility in Nyamira County.

IV. PRESENTATION DISCUSSIONS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

➤ *Participants' Gender*

Learners were asked to indicate their gender and the findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Learners' Gender (N=141)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	71	50.4
Female	70	49.6
Total	141	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2025

The near-equal representation of male (50.4%) and female (49.6%) respondents ensures that the relationship between community service and responsibility can be generalized across genders. This inclusivity aligns with CBC's emphasis on holistic learner development. Literature affirms responsibility as a universal value fostered through service, not limited by gender (Afzal & Hussain, 2020; Gregorová et al., 2024). These findings confirm that

structured community service nurtures civic responsibility and accountability equally among all learners.

➤ *Parents' Level of Education*

Participants were asked to provide data about the level of education of their parents. Findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Responses on Parents' Level of Education (N=141)

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Primary School	24	17.0
Secondary School	60	42.6
College	57	40.4
Total	141	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2025

Most learners' parents had attained secondary (42.6%) or college (40.2%) education, suggesting supportive environments for the development of responsibility. This aligns with literature showing that parental influence complements school-based CSL in nurturing civic values

(Bhagwan, 2020; Ngwacho, 2024). These findings imply that higher parental education likely strengthens learners' appreciation of community service as a pathway to responsibility and citizenship.

➤ *School Community Service Opportunities Learners Participated in*

The learners indicated the school community service opportunities they have participated in, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 School Community Service Opportunities Learners Participated in (N=141)

School Opportunities	Frequency	Percentage
Tree planting	77	54.6
Assisting the elderly	55	39
School gardening	69	48.9
Visiting the sick	55	39
Religious-based service	49	34.8
Cleaning the school compound	69	48.9
Peer teaching	55	39
Community clean-up	53	37.6
Charity work (e.g. food donations)	34	24.1

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings revealed that learners most frequently participated in tree planting (54.6%), school gardening (48.9%), and compound cleaning (48.9%), alongside assisting the elderly (55%), visiting the sick (55%), peer teaching (55%), and community clean-up (53%). These activities highlight schools' emphasis on practical, visible tasks that foster responsibility and environmental stewardship, while also nurturing empathy and civic accountability beyond the classroom. This integration of service aligns with the CBC's value-driven orientation and resonates with Dingili's (2024) findings on CSL in Kenya,

Afzal and Hussain's (2020) evidence from Pakistan, and the Ubuntu philosophy that emphasizes interdependence and collective responsibility (Mugumbate et al., 2023). Taken together, the findings affirm that CSL functions as a holistic, experiential approach that nurtures responsibility through reciprocal school-community engagement.

➤ *Home Community Service Opportunities Learners Have Participated in*

The learners indicated the home community service opportunities they have participated in, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Home Community Service Opportunities Learners have Participated in (N=141)

Home Opportunities	Frequency	Percentage
Fetching water for the family	72	51.1
Assisting younger siblings with schoolwork	59	41.8
Caring for sick family members	42	29.8
Helping with laundry	46	32.6
Helping with house cleaning	66	46.8
Tending to the family garden	54	38.3
Helping with meal preparation	61	43.3
Religious or church-based service	53	37.6

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings revealed that over half of the learners reported engaging in household responsibilities such as fetching water (51.1%), cleaning (46.8%), meal preparation (43.3%), assisting siblings (41.8%), gardening (38.3%), laundry (32.6%), and caring for the sick (29.8%). Such consistent involvement demonstrates how responsibility is cultivated through everyday family roles, reinforcing the CBC's emphasis on values nurtured both at home and in school. These practices provide a natural foundation for extending responsibility into structured community service, thereby strengthening civic engagement and accountability. The findings resonate with Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes relational interdependence (Mugumbate et al., 2023), and with Fuligni (2023) and Ngwacho (2024), who

observe that consistent participation in family duties fosters empathy and moral growth. This suggests that learners' domestic roles meaningfully complement formal values-based education.

➤ *Relationship Between Community Service Learning and Learner Responsibility*

• *Learner Participation in Community Service*

Learners were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements measuring their participation, experiences, and perceptions of community service activities organized by their schools. The responses are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Learner Responses to Likert Statements on Participation in Community Service (N=141)

Statement	Range	Mean	Std. Dev
I regularly participate in school-organized community service activities.	3	4.21	.764
I enjoy helping others through community service.	3	4.34	.725
I have taken part in cleaning, planting trees, or assisting the elderly through school projects.	2	4.50	.683
My school encourages us to participate in community service programs.	2	4.37	.741
I feel that I contribute positively to the community through service activities.	2	4.50	.733
Average		4.38	.729

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings show that learners strongly agreed they participate in cleaning, tree planting, and assisting the elderly (M = 4.50), feel they contribute positively to the community (M = 4.50), enjoy service (M = 4.34), and are encouraged by their schools to engage (M = 4.37). The high overall mean (4.38) and low standard deviations highlight consistent and positive learner perceptions of community service as meaningful and enjoyable. These outcomes align with the CBC's vision of nurturing responsibility and citizenship through experiential learning. They also support Dingili (2024), Afzal and Hussain (2020), and Ngwacho (2024), who

affirm that structured, school-supported CSL strengthens intrinsic motivation, accountability, and civic responsibility. The results, therefore, confirm theoretical claims that values-based education is most effective when embedded in practice.

• Learner Responsibility Scale (PRS) Statements

The learners indicated the extent to which they agreed with the learner responsibility scale statements, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Learner Responses on Responsibility Scale (PRS) Statements (N=141)

	Range	Mean	Std. Dev.
I complete my class assignments and homework on time.	2	4.11	.794
I help my classmates when they need assistance	2	4.43	.600
I take care of school property and materials responsibly.	4	4.37	.741
I take responsibility for my actions and mistakes	2	4.38	.682
I take good care of the environment around me	2	4.37	.691
I participate in community service activities willingly	4	4.36	.698
Average		4.34	.701

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings indicate that learners consistently exhibit responsibility across personal, academic, environmental, and community domains. They strongly agreed that they help classmates (M = 4.43), take responsibility for mistakes (M = 4.38), care for school property (M = 4.37), protect the environment (M = 4.37), and willingly participate in community service (M = 4.36). Responsibility was also evident in the timely completion of assignments (M = 4.11). With an aggregate mean of 4.34 and low standard deviations, the responses reveal strong consensus and consistency in learners' responsible behaviour. These outcomes align with Kenya's CBC, which emphasizes holistic value formation across school and community life. They reinforce the Ubuntu philosophy that responsibility is relational and nurtured through collective accountability (Mugumbate et al., 2023). They also confirm Afzal and Hussain's (2020) view that CSL

strengthens civic responsibility, Ngwacho's (2024) findings on contextual engagement in Kenya, and Fuligni's (2023) assertion of school and family roles in adolescent responsibility. Taken together, the results affirm that responsibility is not taught abstractly but practiced daily, supporting theory and literature highlighting experiential, community-linked learning as central to fostering accountable citizenship.

➤ Teacher Influence and Role Modelling

Learners were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements assessing how their teachers influence and model responsibility through participation in and encouragement of community service activities, and their responses are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Teacher Influence and Role Modelling (N=141)

Statement	Range	Mean	Std. Dev.
My teachers inspire me to help others at school and at home	2	4.30	.725
My teachers take part in school and community clean-ups	2	4.40	.596
My teachers teach me and my peers the importance of community service	2	4.40	.676
Average		4.37	.666

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings indicate that learners strongly agreed their teachers participate in school and community clean-ups (M =

4.40), teach the importance of helping others (M = 4.40), and inspire them to assist peers both at school and at home (M =

4.30). The aggregate mean of 4.37, coupled with small ranges and low variability, reflects consistent agreement among learners that teachers play a central role in modelling responsibility. These results highlight the significance of teachers as exemplars of values, not only transmitting knowledge but also demonstrating responsibility through practice. This aligns with the CBC's emphasis on teacher role modelling as a key driver of values formation. The findings also support Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which underscores observational learning, and Ngwacho (2024), who found that learners internalize responsibility more

effectively when teachers actively engage in service. Thus, teacher influence emerges as a critical mechanism for embedding responsibility within learners' daily experiences.

➤ *Parent Influence and Role Modelling*

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements measuring how their parents influence and model responsibility through guidance, encouragement, and everyday household practices. Responses are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Learners' Responses on Parental Influence and Role Modelling (N=141)

Statement	Range	Mean	Std. Dev.
I learn to be responsible by observing my parents' actions	2	4.42	.678
My parents ask me to help do different activities at home	2	4.40	.642
My parents encourage me to be respectful, kind, and helpful to others.	2	4.47	.742
Average		4.43	.687

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings reveal that learners strongly agreed their parents encourage them to be respectful, kind, and helpful (M = 4.47), assign them household tasks (M = 4.40), and model responsibility through their own actions (M = 4.42). With an aggregate mean of 4.43 and low variability, the results demonstrate that parental influence is both strong and consistent. These outcomes underscore the critical role of the home as the primary environment where responsibility is nurtured through guidance, daily practices, and example. This aligns with the CBC's emphasis on values cultivated jointly at home and in school, ensuring that responsibility is reinforced across multiple contexts. The findings further resonate with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977),

which emphasizes observational learning, and with Fuligni (2023), who highlights the family's role in cultivating moral responsibility. Thus, parental modelling complements school-based initiatives, reinforcing responsibility as a shared value within both familial and educational settings.

➤ *School Culture on Learner Responsibility*

Respondents rated their level of agreement with statements evaluating how their school culture promotes responsibility through encouragement, collaboration, and recognition of responsible behaviour. The data obtained are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 Learners' Responses on School Culture and Learner Responsibility (N=141)

Statement	Range	Mean	Std. Dev.
My school encourages learners to be responsible for their actions	3	4.26	.760
Teachers and learners work together to keep our school clean and safe	3	4.35	.717
My school rewards learners who show responsibility and help others	2	4.26	.781
Average		4.29	.753

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings show that learners strongly agreed their schools encourage responsibility through collaboration in maintaining cleanliness and safety (M = 4.35), promoting accountability for actions (M = 4.26), and rewarding responsible behaviour (M = 4.26). With an aggregate mean of 4.29, small ranges, and low variability, responses were consistent, indicating broad consensus on the supportive role of school culture. These results affirm that a positive school environment - characterized by cooperation, encouragement, and recognition - significantly fosters responsibility among learners. This aligns with the literature emphasizing the role of supportive school contexts in values formation, in which structures and practices reinforce the internalization of civic and moral responsibility (Ngwacho, 2024; Dingili, 2024). The findings also align with Social Learning Theory

(Bandura, 1977), which highlights how values are strengthened through modelling and reinforcement, and with Ubuntu philosophy (Mugumbate et al., 2023), which underscores collective responsibility. The consistency of responses suggests that responsibility is not only taught but embedded in everyday school practices, making school culture a critical driver of values education.

➤ *Community Support and Learner Responsibility Statement*

Participant learners were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements assessing how the community influenced and supported their sense of responsibility through involvement in service activities. Their responses are presented in Table 10.

Table 10 Community Support and Learner Responsibility (N=141)

Statement	Range	Mean	Std. Dev.
My local community members inspire me to be responsible and respectful	2	4.31	.688
The community supports school projects like tree planting and cleaning	2	4.22	.622
My religious leaders inspire and challenge me to do good to my neighbours	2	4.25	.785
Average		4.26	.698

Source: Field Data, 2025

The findings show that learners strongly agreed their local community members inspire them to be responsible and respectful ($M = 4.30$), that the community supports school projects such as tree planting and cleaning ($M = 4.22$), and that religious leaders inspire and challenge them to do good to their neighbours ($M = 4.25$). With small ranges and low variability, responses were consistent, highlighting the significant influence of community and religious actors in shaping responsibility. These results align with literature emphasizing the role of communal and cultural contexts in value formation, where broader social networks reinforce civic responsibility beyond the classroom (Ngwacho, 2024). They also affirm the Ubuntu philosophy, which views responsibility as a communal construct nurtured through

interdependence and shared moral guidance (Mugumbate et al., 2023; Odari, 2021). The findings suggest that community and religious support systems are not peripheral but central to embedding responsibility, complementing school initiatives and ensuring that values promoted within the CBC are reinforced in learners' lived social environments.

➤ Hypothesis Testing

A Pearson's correlation was used to test the study hypothesis that; there is a significant positive relationship between participation in community service and the enhanced learner responsibility in Junior School of Nyamira County, Kenya. Findings are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Pearson Correlation Coefficient Matrix (N=141)

		Participation	Responsibility
Participation	Pearson Correlation	1	.561**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	141	141
Responsibility	Pearson Correlation	.561**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	141	141

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Data, 2025

The correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between participation in community service and learner responsibility ($r = 0.561$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that higher involvement in service activities is strongly associated with greater levels of responsibility among junior school learners. The finding aligns with the CBC's emphasis on experiential learning as a pathway for instilling accountability, discipline, and civic values. It resonates with Afzal and Hussain (2020), who found that structured service projects enhanced civic responsibility and social skills, and with Ngwacho (2024), who confirmed that participation in community service under CBC nurtures responsibility and civic engagement. These results further support Social Learning Theory (Bandura,

1977), which argues that responsibility develops through modelling and engagement in real-life contexts, and Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes collective responsibility (Mugumbate et al., 2023). Based on this evidence, the study demonstrates that community service is not peripheral but a vital pedagogical tool for values education, confirming its potential to consistently cultivate responsible citizenship among learners.

➤ Regression Analysis

To assess the relationship between community service participation and learner responsibility a regression analysis was also conducted as presented in Table 12.

Table 12 Unmoderated Regression Analysis

Table 12. Unmoderated Regression Analysis						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.561 ^a	.315	.310	.39528		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Participation						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.976	1	9.976	63.851	.000 ^b
	Residual	21.718	139	.156		
	Total	31.694	140			
a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility						

b. Predictors: (Constant), Participation						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.076	.285		7.296	.000
	Participation	.515	.064	.561	7.991	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility						
Source: Field Data, 2025						

The regression analysis confirmed that participation in community service significantly predicts learner responsibility ($\beta = .561$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 31.5% of the variance. The model was statistically significant, $F(1, 139) = 63.851$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that increased engagement in service activities makes a measurable contribution to learners' responsibility. The coefficient ($B = 0.515$) further demonstrated that for every one-unit increase in participation, responsibility increased by an average of 0.515 units. These results affirm the CBC's vision that experiential learning cultivates responsibility, accountability, and civic values in junior school learners. They also resonate with Afzal and Hussain (2020), who found that structured service projects enhanced civic responsibility, and with Ngwacho (2024), who demonstrated that CSL promotes

responsibility and civic engagement in Kenyan schools. The findings are consistent with Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes communal responsibility as foundational to moral development (Mugumbate et al., 2023). Taken together, the regression results underscore that community service is not peripheral but a significant pedagogical strategy for nurturing responsibility in line with CBC's values-based education goals.

➤ Moderated Model

A moderated regression analysis examined whether school and community support influenced the relationship between community service participation and learner responsibility. Findings are presented in Table 13.

Table 13 Moderated Model

Table 18 Moderated Model						
Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.561 ^a	.315	.310	.39528		
2	.725 ^b	.526	.516	.33104		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Participation						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Participation, School and Community, Z						
ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.976	1	9.976	63.851	.000 ^b
	Residual	21.718	139	.156		
	Total	31.694	140			
2	Regression	16.681	3	5.560	50.740	.000 ^c
	Residual	15.013	137	.110		
	Total	31.694	140			
a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Participation						
c. Predictors: (Constant), Participation, School and Community, Z						
Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.076	.285		7.296	.000
	Participation	.515	.064	.561	7.991	.000
2	(Constant)	11.597	2.272		5.105	.000
	Participation	-2.018	.517	-2.198	-3.900	.000
	School and Community	-1.989	.536	-2.450	-3.712	.000
	Z	.533	.120	4.823	4.447	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Responsibility						
Source: Field Data, 2025						

The moderated regression analysis showed that in Model 1, participation significantly predicted responsibility ($R = .561$, $R^2 = .315$, $F(1, 139) = 63.851$, $p < .001$), explaining

31.5% of the variance. When school and community support and the interaction term were added in Model 2, explanatory power increased substantially ($R = .725$, $R^2 = .526$, $F(3, 137)$

= 50.740, $p < .001$), accounting for 52.6% of the variance. Although the individual coefficients for participation and support turned negative, the interaction effect was strongly positive ($B = .533$, $p < .001$), meaning that the impact of participation on responsibility is greatly amplified when supported by school and community contexts. These results align with values-based education literature, particularly Dingili (2024), who highlights that learner transformation is most effective within synergistic school-community environments. They also resonate with the Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes that responsibility is nurtured through collective support and shared moral guidance (Mugumbate et al., 2023). In my interpretation, the findings confirm that CSL achieves its fullest impact when embedded within collaborative ecosystems of schools, families, and communities.

V. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The study revealed that junior school learners in Nyamira County are exposed to a wide variety of community service opportunities both within their schools and at home, each contributing to the nurturing of responsibility in line with the aspirations of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Within the school environment, learners were frequently engaged in activities such as tree planting, gardening, cleaning the school compound, assisting the elderly, visiting the sick, and peer teaching. These activities highlight a strong orientation toward environmental stewardship, social care, and collaborative learning. They not only provided learners with practical experiences but also reinforced values of empathy, accountability, and mutual support. Beyond the school setting, learners were equally active in domestic and caregiving roles, including fetching water for their families, helping with household chores such as cleaning and meal preparation, assisting younger siblings with their schoolwork, tending gardens, and caring for sick relatives. These responsibilities cultivated important values of duty, empathy, and discipline, showing that the home environment played a complementary role in reinforcing responsibility alongside school-based initiatives.

The study also showed that learners' engagement in community service was motivated by diverse influences. Some learners expressed a personal interest in helping others, while others were inspired by parents, siblings, religious leaders, and teachers. These findings underscore the interplay of personal, familial, and institutional factors in shaping responsibility. Importantly, learners reported a sense of pride and enjoyment in their contributions, demonstrating that community service was not seen as a burden but rather as a meaningful and fulfilling opportunity to contribute positively to their communities. This observation aligns with earlier findings by Afzal and Hussain (2020) and Raykov and Taylor (2018), who established that community service enhances social skills, empathy, and civic responsibility. Moreover, the findings are in harmony with the Ubuntu philosophy, which emphasizes interconnectedness and collective responsibility, highlighting that responsibility is cultivated not in isolation but within a shared communal framework.

In examining the relationship between community service participation and responsibility, the study found a statistically significant and positive association. Learners who actively engaged in service activities displayed higher levels of accountability, empathy, and self-discipline, which were not only observable in their attitudes but also in their behaviours. These results confirm that participation in community service is an effective avenue for cultivating both personal and social responsibility. The findings also highlighted the role of supportive environments in reinforcing these outcomes. Teachers, by modelling responsible behaviour and providing encouragement, and parents, by guiding and reinforcing positive values, amplified the impact of service participation. These insights justify the integration of structured, value-driven community service programs into junior school curricula as a practical means of advancing character formation and civic responsibility. They also resonate with Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development, which emphasizes growth in moral reasoning through social engagement, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which underscores the importance of observation and modelling in developing prosocial behaviour. Supporting evidence from Ronen and Shemer-Elkayam (2015) further affirms that structured community service fosters empathy and responsibility, reinforcing the argument that CSL is a powerful tool for responsible citizenship.

The study further demonstrated that school and community contexts significantly moderated the relationship between community service participation and responsibility. Schools that fostered a culture of cooperation, encouragement, and recognition provided fertile ground for the internalization of responsibility as a value. Teachers emerged as pivotal role models by engaging in service themselves and encouraging learners to reflect on their experiences. Beyond the school, the wider community, including religious leaders, reinforced these lessons by supporting school projects and encouraging kindness, respect, and accountability. This interaction between schools and communities ensured that responsibility was deeply embedded in learners' lived experiences rather than taught in abstract terms. These findings are consistent with research by Coelho and Menezes (2021), who emphasized the importance of community involvement in strengthening service learning, and with studies by Ngwacho (2024) and Lillo (2016), who found that well-supported CSL fosters civic engagement and responsibility. The Ubuntu philosophy provides a framework for interpreting these findings, emphasizing collective responsibility and interdependence. The results ultimately suggest that community service, when supported by schools, nurtures responsible learners and strengthens the social fabric of the wider community.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that learners actively engaged in various school- and home-based community service activities, and that this participation was associated with high levels of personal and social responsibility. A statistically significant, moderately strong positive correlation ($r = 0.561$) was found between community service participation and

learner responsibility, and regression analysis indicated that participation accounted for 31.5% of the variance in responsibility levels. Notably, when school and community support were introduced as moderating variables, the model's explanatory power increased to 52.6%, underscoring the critical role of a supportive environment in shaping responsible behaviour.

These findings affirm theoretical perspectives drawn from the Ubuntu philosophy and Social Learning Theory, both of which emphasize the communal and relational dimensions of moral and civic development. Within the context of Kenya's Competency-Based Education, the results support integrating structured community service as a viable pedagogical approach to instill core values and cultivate responsibility in learners. The study concludes that learner responsibility is not merely a product of individual disposition, but is significantly shaped by contextual factors such as school culture and community engagement. Therefore, deliberate collaboration among teachers, parents, and local communities is essential in institutionalizing community service as an educational strategy that fosters holistic character formation and responsible citizenship.

RECOMMENDATION

➤ *Recommendations for Educational Practice*

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, recommendations are made for educational practice and for further research to strengthen the role of community service in nurturing learner responsibility.

- Teachers should integrate structured, curriculum-aligned community service into classroom instruction to promote accountability, empathy, and civic engagement among learners.
- Educational stakeholders—including school heads, teachers, parents, religious leaders, and local authorities—should collaborate through initiatives such as clean-ups, charity drives, and service clubs to reinforce responsibility beyond the classroom.

➤ *Recommendations for Further Research*

In light of the findings and limitations of this study, the following directions for further research are proposed:

- Future studies should use longitudinal designs to assess the sustained impact of community service on learner responsibility.
- Comparative studies across different school types and community contexts should be conducted to examine variations in how community service nurtures responsibility.

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