

Exploring the perceived contribution of non-subject co-curricular clubs to students' moral behaviour in selected secondary schools in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: A multiple-case study

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ABSTRACT

This study examined how non-subject co-curricular clubs influence moral behaviour among secondary school students in Dar es Salaam. It examined club types, objectives, behavioural impacts, and factors affecting effectiveness, using a qualitative case study conducted from 1 June to 10 August 2026. Guided by Social Learning Theory, the study used this as the primary interpretive framework, complemented by Dewey's experiential perspective and Bronfenbrenner's ecological view of behaviour. Data were collected between 1 June and 10 August 2026 through four focus group discussions involving 24 students (six per school) and eight semi-structured individual interviews with four teachers and four club patrons/matrons. The 12 transcripts from 32 participants were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, including within-case and cross-case comparisons. Analysis revealed that schools had a broad ecology of clubs, but formal availability often exceeded regular functionality. Participants linked activities to values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, cooperation, self-discipline, and confidence, but factors such as passive delivery, uneven participation, and external influences limited their impact. Challenges included timetable conflicts, exam pressure, teacher workload, lack of supervision, guidance, resources, external support, and motivation. The study concludes that clubs can positively reinforce moral learning, but their effects are conditional rather than causal. Recommendations include allocated time, proper audits, training, resources, student leadership, inclusive participation, stronger partnerships, and behaviour monitoring.

Keywords: Co-Curricular Clubs, Moral Behaviour, Multiple-Case Study, Secondary Schools, Student Participation, Tanzania

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is expected to develop the whole person. Academic knowledge is not the sole objective of secondary schools. However, students need to be instilled with values of character, citizenship, responsibility, cooperation, self-reliance, and constructive living with others. The education policy and framework in Tanzania identify the values that schools should promote as integrity, honesty, patriotism, accountability, peace, national unity, good governance, and self-reliance (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2023; Tanzania Institute of Education, 2019). These objectives cannot be met through standard classroom or examinable subjects. Students should also have frequent opportunities to apply these values in their relationships, decision-making, responsibilities, service, leadership, and group activities.

One such opportunity is a co-curricular club. In this study, the term refers to organised, school-based activities outside regular classroom lessons that serve a learning purpose. Co-curricular Clubs include Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) Clubs, Scouts Clubs, Safe Schools Clubs, Environmental Clubs, Religious Clubs, Debate Clubs, Sports Clubs, Social Welfare Clubs, and Student Service Clubs. Non-Subject clubs focus mainly on values, in contrast to the major work of subject clubs, which is to enhance academic achievement.

The experiential nature of clubs adds educational value. Accountability learning, preparing a Drama or community project, debating respectfully about differences of opinion, regular practice, transparent decision-making, environmental action, and humanitarian action are opportunities for students to learn about accountability, cooperation, respectful disagreement, self-discipline, transparent decision-making, and service. According to Dewey (1938), experience and learning are connected and must be oriented toward purpose and reflection. Likewise, Bandura (1977) surmises that students acquire behaviour by observing credible models, imitating them, receiving reinforcement for behaviour, or predicting the consequences of behaviour. Clubs can then become the models and the environment for behaviours that the clubs hope to encourage and discourage; behaviours that can be demonstrated by the peer leaders as well as the adult patrons of the clubs.

International research links extracurricular participation to positive social, behavioural, and school-related outcomes, but the relationships are mixed depending on program attributes, activity type, and student characteristics (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Hughes et al., 2016). Further, some evidence suggests that positive associations could be driven by selection, as students who are already engaged or well-behaved are more likely to be involved (O'Flaherty et al., 2022). Having a club, in and of itself, does not prove that membership will lead to moral improvement.

The prospects and problems are similar in African studies. Niyonshuti and Mukamazimpaka (2020) found a positive correlation between students' extracurricular activities and their discipline in Rwanda. In Kenya, Integrity Clubs emphasised accountability, respect, patriotism, and integrity through debates, campaigns, peer mentoring, and community service; however, the Clubs' success relied on institutional commitment, teacher participation, resources, and administration (Nyang'au et al., 2025). The results indicate that clubs can be designed and planned for values education, but their structure and implementation are important.

Co-curricular activities in Tanzania have been linked to talent development, soft skills development, peer relationships, discipline, and reduced delinquent tendencies (Clement & Mwila, 2023; Lazaro & Anney, 2016; Mohamed & Osaki, 2022). Mgonda (2020) singled out voluntary clubs as one method adopted by secondary schools in Tanzania to promote moral character development, second only to academic work. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2025), the Safe Schools project in Kinondoni used school clubs to promote positive relationships, strengthen students' confidence, encourage responsible decision-making, and improve school attendance. Despite these indications, local evidence remains fragmented. Existing studies often combine very different activities under the broad category of "extracurricular activities," focus on discipline or soft skills rather than distinct moral behaviours, or examine a single programme, ward, or school type. Less is known about which non-subject clubs are active in Dar es Salaam schools, how their objectives are translated into practice, how students and adults understand their moral contribution, and which school-level conditions strengthen or weaken them. This study addressed that gap through a qualitative multiple-case inquiry across four secondary schools.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Secondary schools in Tanzania are expected to foster morally responsible citizens. However, issues such as bullying, dishonesty, violence, theft, absenteeism, property damage, corruption, disrespect, and other forms of indiscipline persist in schools. Co-curricular clubs related to classroom subjects can support classroom learning and school policies, and offer students real-life examples of how to be respectful, responsible, honest, co-operative, self-controlled, leaders, and service providers.

However, clubs' moral contribution is often assumed rather than demonstrated. A school may have numerous clubs, and only a few may meet regularly. A student can sign up to be a member but may not be able to participate in the activity. Examinations can cancel activities, provide no adult supervision, and/or leave no space for moral action and reflection, using slogans. In addition, shifts in student behaviour can result from family, classroom instruction, religious instruction, peer groups, school discipline, and community experiences. Without considering participants' experiences and the organisation of clubs, it is hard to understand clubs' role. Although Tanzanian research has discussed extracurricular activities, talent development, soft skills, female participation, discipline, and safe-school programming, there is insufficient context-specific evidence to differentiate among club types and to examine moral behaviour as a multidimensional outcome in Dar es Salaam. The present study investigated what clubs existed and functioned, how students and school adults perceived their influence on moral conduct, what limitations they experienced, and what measures they considered necessary for improvement.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. Identify the types of non-subject Co-Curricular Clubs operating in the selected schools and the moral-behaviour objectives they pursued
- ii. Explore how students, teachers and club patrons perceived club participation as contributing to respect, responsibility, honesty, cooperation, self-discipline and avoidance of delinquent conduct
- iii. Examine the challenges constraining club effectiveness and the measures that could strengthen clubs' contribution to students' moral behaviour.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The Social Learning Theory, which is primarily based on observation, modelling, reinforcement, and consequences, served as a guide for the study of behaviour (Bandura, 1977). In co-curricular clubs, students watch patrons and peers, model behaviour in group activities, and are approved, corrected, and/or rewarded. The theory also allows for negative modelling. For example, when a club's leadership is unfair, dishonesty is tolerated, adult behaviour is inconsistent, or exclusion occurs, the values that clubs say they are about can be undermined. Social Learning Theory was not used as a model to test for causal effects, but rather as an interpretive framework.

The primary theory was complemented by Dewey's (1938) experiential approach, which emphasised the importance of action and reflection. Debate can be a learning ground for respectful disagreement; leadership can be a learning opportunity for accountability; and service can be a learning environment for responsibility and cooperation. However, experience does not necessarily lead to learning: passive learning, poorly supervised learning, learning that

excludes, and learning that is not accompanied by reflection can lead to undesirable behaviour. The second complementary perspective was supplied by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological point of view. Students' behaviour is shaped by their family, peers, classroom, school, and religious and community activities. This view enabled clubs to be seen as one of a range of contexts, and to use contribution language instead of implying behavioural change due to club membership.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Types of Clubs and Their Moral-Behaviour Objectives

Research focuses on co-curricular structures such as sports, religious, debate, civic, arts, environmental, peer support and student leadership clubs. As different clubs have different experiences and learning processes, they should not be treated as a single type of participation (Feldman & Matjasko, 2005). PCCB clubs focus on honesty, accountability, rights, and integrity; Scouts on service, courage, leadership, patriotism, and discipline; and Safe School Clubs on protection, gender equality, health, life skills, and nonviolent relationships. Stewardship, responsibility, tolerance, and spiritual discipline can be encouraged through environmental and religious clubs; confidence and communication through debate and arts clubs; and teamwork, perseverance, fair play, and self-control through sports. Morally, their contribution should be judged in relation to their aims, work and organisation.

In Kenya, Integrity Club activities included debate, peer mentoring, campaigns, and community service, which encouraged integrity, accountability, patriotism, and respect; however, the Integrity Club's implementation was limited by inadequate resources, teacher participation, and administrative support (Nyang'au et al., 2025). Niyonshuti and Mukamazimpaka (2020), on the other hand, noted a positive relationship between discipline and involvement in sports, religious, debate and cultural activities in Rwanda. The Kenyan study describes conditions for implementing a specific club; the Rwandan study combines various activities, making it hard to distinguish which activities led to discipline in the clubs.

Tanzanian schools also offer a range of clubs, including Scouts clubs, sports clubs, religious clubs, service clubs, arts and production clubs, environmental clubs, and student leadership clubs, as well as special clubs addressing corruption, safety, gender, violence, health, and citizenship issues. In Dar es Salaam, Clement and Mwila (2023) found a wide range of co-curricular activities, and UNESCO (2025) recorded Safe School Clubs focused on respectful and non-violent relationships. However, neither is sufficient to formalise clubs or distinguish them from informal ones that are regularly held, involve service activities, and provide meaningful involvement for students. Therefore, club availability alone does not demonstrate functionality or moral influence.

2.2.2 Contribution of Club Participation to Moral Behaviour

The literature suggests that adult role modelling, prosocial peer norms, school attachment, leadership, service, dialogue, behavioural practice, recognition, and supportive relationships foster moral behaviour within clubs. Hughes et al. (2016) found that extracurricular involvement was related to students' perceptions of friends' prosocial norms, which in turn were related to academic adjustment. While academic adjustment is not directly related to moral behaviour, the findings suggest that participation may be connected to positive academic outcomes through the nature of students' peer relationships.

Specific practices can foster certain morals. Duties, punctuality, leadership, service, equipment care, team-based work, collaborative projects, transparent elections, honest reporting, responsible use of money, and reporting illegal activities can foster responsibility; good leadership, team-based work, collaborative projects can foster cooperation; transparency in elections, honest reporting, responsible use of money can foster honesty and accountability; and reporting illegal activities can foster accountability. Regular routines, ongoing commitment, and positive feedback could also help develop self-discipline, and refusing to accept delinquent peer environments could help minimise exposure when participating in organised activities.

This type of relationship should not be taken as a given or as a cause-and-effect connection. In a study by O'Flaherty et al. (2022), many positive links between participation in extracurricular activities and adolescent outcomes were reduced when the effects of unchanging differences between students were taken into account. Participants and non-participants may differ in motivation, family support, prior behaviour, and/or academic engagement. Therefore, Hughes et al. (2016) suggest peer influence as a potential pathway, while O'Flaherty et al. (2022) warn that participation may limit the implications for outcomes. These studies complement each other and offer an opportunity to investigate participants' experiences alongside how they think these experiences have shaped their behaviours. However, they cannot be used to determine that clubs are the sole cause of behavioural change.

2.2.3 Constraints and Measures for strengthening Clubs

Tanzanian studies have identified a lack of facilities and materials, trained supervisors, parent support, and administrative attention as barriers to Co-curricular programmes (Clement & Mwila, 2023; Lazaro & Anney, 2016; Mohamed & Osaki, 2022). Mgonda (2020) also shows that exam pressure and the marginalisation of co-curricular

education may make voluntary clubs subordinate to academic pressure. Resources affect the quality of activities, and institutional priorities help determine whether clubs are established. Therefore, the conditions for patron and school administration participation are essential to implementation, not background information. Evidence at the regional and Tanzanian levels shows a correlation between weak involvement, supervision, facilities, and administrative support for teachers and programme functionality (Clement & Mwila, 2023; Mohamed & Osaki, 2022; Nyang'au et al., 2025). While structure and safeguarding may be provided by adult guidance, excessive control can limit students' responsibility and agency, leading to insufficient support for moral learning in students, which is expected from the role of support clubs.

The literature also suggests a measurement problem. The numbers of clubs, members, meetings, and events suggest formal activities but fail to reveal whether students were responsible, managed conflict, considered values, and transferred learning to school life. Therefore, the present study followed the same procedures as necessary for other negative cases, the absence of patrons, the roles of students, and the limitations of implementation of the discipline, but with caution regarding the disciplinary records and general impressions (as discussed in Feldman & Matjasko, 2005 and O'Flaherty et al., 2022).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach and Design

The study followed an interpretivist paradigm and used a qualitative multiple-case study design. This approach suits research questions focused on understanding club activities, moral goals, behaviours, and the conditions for implementing them. The qualitative method enabled claims to be qualified and contradictory experiences to be described. This was not a causal design, as it was exploratory and did not aim to test the effect of club membership on behaviour. The secondary schools were anonymised as a single bounded case, encompassing their respective mixtures of non-subject clubs, students involved, teachers, patrons' views, activities, and school conditions. The four cases were initially examined within each school, and patterns and key differences in case functionality, morality, participation, constraints, and caution regarding attribution were identified and studied (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Study Area

This study was limited to four secondary schools in two municipalities in Dar es Salaam: two in Kinondoni Municipality and two in Ubungo Municipality. The municipalities provided a city setting and had traditional and specialised non-subject clubs. Purposeful selection of schools involved when they ran at least one of the following non-subject clubs; they were able to provide the views of students, patrons and teachers; and they gave access during the fieldwork period. The schools were coded A-D, and the selection was not intended to obtain data representative of all schools or municipalities in Dar es Salaam.

3.3 Participants and Sample

The dataset included 32 participants. To capture similar information-rich perspectives for each case and from each of the three participant groups, we conducted equal case coverage (six student focus groups, one teacher interview, and one patron or matron interview per school). This allocation is for cross-case comparison; we do not claim statistical representativeness or saturation.

Table 1

Number of Participants by School and Category

Participant category	School A	School B	School C	School D	Total
Student focus-group participants	6	6	6	6	24
Club patrons/matrons	1	1	1	1	4
Teachers	1	1	1	1	4
Total	8	8	8	8	32

The students who took part in the school were in forms 1–6. Of the total number of participants (32), 18 were female, and 14 were male. There were six students in each focus group and 8 adult participants with 7–20 years of professional experience. A combination of participant identifiers and Role and school case. Student quotations are identified by Student-SA/SB/SC/SD-number and adult ones by Teacher-SA/SB/SC/SD or Patron/Matron-SA/SB/SC/SD. The code indicates the source but not names or identifying demographic combinations.

3.4 Sampling Procedures

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to include those with first-hand knowledge of non-subject clubs. Participants were current club members who could speak about club activities and how they thought they contributed to the club, and/or teachers who supervised the clubs and/or patrons/matrons with broader classroom and school perspectives. The school leaders helped the researcher identify individuals who were not available during the recruitment process, interview, or focus group meeting but met the above criteria. The researcher described the research and obtained direct consent/assent. The study was voluntary, and students faced no repercussions for declining to participate or for their jobs.

3.5 Methods and instruments of data collection.

There were two approaches used.

3.5.1 Focus Group Discussions

Six students were invited to each of the four focus group discussions, held at each school. The guide was structured around the three research questions and informed by the literature on club functionality, moral behaviour, participation, and implementation conditions. It covered the clubs and activities available, values, what was communicated, how the objective was perceived to contribute to the target group, contradictory experiences, operational challenges, and support and improvement measures. Students were allowed to compare, extend, and challenge each other's accounts of a social activity in the focus groups.

3.5.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Four club patrons/matrons and four teachers were interviewed individually using a semi-structured approach. The interview guide focused on clubs, both active and nominal; ethical goals; observed behaviours; other factors that might contribute to behaviour; challenges with resources and supervision; participation patterns; and ways to improve. The same types of prompts were used for all cases, and follow-up questions were provided to qualify claims and provide examples. All sessions were held with the researcher, between 1 June and 10 August 2026. Interviews and focus groups were conducted privately in each participating school, excluding school leaders and non-participating staff. Audio recording was used to facilitate accurate transcription of sessions with participants' consent. The Kiswahili language was used mainly in the discussions, with some English terms. The researcher avoided claiming the benefits of club participation, using neutral probes and inviting disagreement.

3.6 Data Preparation

The transcription of the interview and focus group tapes was compared with the tapes to determine whether any important words were missed. Files were organised in the following order: School/Participant category/Research question. The names of schools and/or potentially identifying combinations of participants' names and dates were anonymised prior to analysis and reporting. This study translated quoted passages from Kiswahili into English; the translation aimed to reflect the semantic context and make the text easier to read without losing emphasis. Analytically significant Kiswahili phrases were retained. Any obvious transposition was corrected lightly without changing the meaning.

3.7 Thematic Analysis

The data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019, 2021), with only one author conducting the analysis. Coding was largely inductive and semantic, and it was used to explain the data rather than as a coding system. The coding process was guided by Social Learning Theory rather than being a part of the coding system. These iterative stages of analysis were: repeated reading of transcripts and summarising case material; initial coding of segments of meaningful material; clustering of similar codes into candidate themes; comparison of themes within and between the Schools A-D and participant groups; negative or qualifying accounts; and refinement of themes against the transcripts. Themes were clearly stated, with extracts translated, and they were connected to theory and literature. Theme importance was judged by the frequency with which it was mentioned in the cases, the intensity of the expression of the theme, the relevance of the theme and its qualification of the dominant interpretations. Frequency was used as contextual evidence, not as evidence of meaning.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

This was done after ethical clearance and permission for research were granted prior to data collection. Because double-masked review is being maintained, the name of the institution that approved this manuscript and the institution's reference numbers have been omitted from this manuscript and will be included in the accepted manuscript. All subjects aged 18 years and older gave informed consent. We obtained consent from a parent/guardian and student assent for students under 18. Participation was voluntary, and there were no penalties for declining to participate or dropping out.

The sessions were private; confidentiality and its limits were discussed in focus groups, and a safeguarding response was provided if issues of inappropriate behaviour were raised and caused distress. Access to audio files and transcripts was restricted to the researcher through security measures. All reporting used case and participant codes.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview of Themes

Nine interconnected themes emerged from the analysis (Table 2). The first 3 covered the type of club, club goals, and club activities; the next 3 covered how the club was perceived in terms of its morality and the limits of that morality; and the final 3 covered institutional constraints and priorities for strengthening. This cross-case comparison, presented briefly in Table 3, will inform the detailed presentation of themes.

Table 2

Themes organised by Research Question

Research question	Themes
Types and moral objectives	(1) Broad club ecology but uneven functionality; (2) Club-specific yet overlapping moral aims; (3) Experiential and public moral pedagogy
Contribution to moral behaviour	(4) Moral values practised and repeatedly reinforced; (5) Cooperation, confidence, and relationships through collective activity; (6) Behavioural prevention accompanied by strong attribution caution
Constraints and strengthening	(7) Institutional marginalisation and weak coordination; (8) Resource, guidance, and capacity deficits; (9) Uneven participation and the need for motivation, inclusion, and accountability

Table 3

Cross-Case Comparison of Club Functionality, Contribution, and Constraints

Case	Club functionality and activities	Contribution evidence	Constraints and qualifications
A	PCCB and Scouts were described as the most consistent; students also reported songs, drama, debate, leadership, and service.	Integrity slogans, responsibility, service, and moral discussion were reported; one student saw no improvement in cooperation.	Clubs met at the same time; allocated time and patron attendance were inconsistent; guidance and membership access were limited.
B	Many clubs were listed, but adults identified PCCB and Scouts as especially active; environmental and religious activities were also described.	Students reported memorable anti-corruption slogans, responsibility, stronger relationships, and teamwork.	Formal availability exceeded regular activity; wider influences made direct behavioural attribution difficult.
C	Adults distinguished active PCCB and Scouts from clubs that existed mainly by name; practical methods included games, <i>ngonjera</i> , discussion, and debate.	Students associated participation with confidence, expression, and cooperation.	Some leaders relied on one-way preaching, and some students reported no personal improvement in cooperation.
D	PCCB, Scouts, and other clubs communicated integrity, accountability, courage, patriotism, resilience, safety, and related values.	Adult evidence referred to punctuality, cleanliness, and self-expression; student examples identified club-specific moral aims.	Clubs depended heavily on patrons' and student leaders' creativity.

Theme 1: Broad Club Ecology but Uneven Functionality

Students named different clubs in the four schools, including PCCB/TAKUKURU or anti-corruption clubs, Scouts, Safe School Clubs, environmental clubs, religious groups (UKWATA, TYSS, CASFETA, ASA, etc.), debate clubs, sports, social-welfare groups, and entrepreneurship groups. The entire club ecology was thus broader than what is normally considered “sports and academics.”

However, adult accounts repeatedly distinguished clubs that existed by name from active clubs. At School C, a teacher stated, “Here we have the PCCB club and Scouts; the others exist in name, but they are not active” (Teacher-SC). A School B patron similarly said that many clubs existed but that PCCB and Scouts were the active ones. School A adults also identified PCCB and Scouts as the most consistently functioning clubs, even though students listed a wider range of clubs. This distinction is analytically important. Student lists reflected awareness and formal availability, whereas patrons and teachers focused more narrowly on routine operations. The finding indicates that a school's club list can exaggerate students' actual access to sustained participation.

Theme 2: Club-Specific yet Overlapping Moral Aims

There was a clear emphasis on each club, although the overall moral purpose overlapped significantly.

Table 4

Club Types and Principal Moral-Behaviour Objectives

Club type	Principal objectives described by participants
PCCB/TAKUKURU	Honesty, Integrity, Accountability, Rights, Justice, Reporting wrongdoing and Rejection of corruption
Scout	Courageous and resilient scouts, patriotism, preparedness, peace and discipline
Safe School	Self-awareness, self-respect, child protection, gender awareness, life skills, preventing early pregnancy and marriage
Environmental	Stewardship, conservation, cleanliness of the environment, planting of trees, responsibility
Religious groups	Obedience, love, humility, tolerance, spiritual discipline, respect for God and others.
Debate/arts	Communication, confidence, listening, social awareness, peaceful discussion
Sports/social welfare	Teamwork, solidarity, Care, perseverance, constructive participation

A School D student summarised the purpose of anti-corruption as: “In PCCB we learn integrity, accountability and we learn to oppose corruption” (Student-SD-01). Another said, “Scouts stood out on the strengths of ‘courage, patriotism, and resilience’” (Student-SD-04). The School B student who joined the environmental club connected the club with “care of the environment and cleanliness”, and religious clubs were connected with obeying God and conducting oneself morally. The participants also identified overlaps. The learning methods were similar-debate and discussion but “content is what differs”, said a School B student. A School A student also said that Clubs utilised songs, drama, and debate, and that the content differed depending on the Club. There were, then, no separate ‘moral programmes’ in clubs: there were overlapping areas which involved the translation of the general values of the school into a variety of practical fields.

Theme 3: Experiential and Public Moral Pedagogy

Communication and activities towards morals were carried out in a participatory manner. For each case, participants mentioned debate, group discussion, drama, songs, ngonjera (dramatic/poetic recitation), games, dance, prayer, case examples, slogans, and environmental work, tree planting, cleaning, community service, national events, and occasional study visits. The methods were compared with the traditional teaching methods. A School C teacher said that club learning was more practical than theoretical, as they discussed, played games, did ngonjera and held debates (Teacher-SC). A School A patron highlighted the importance of leadership roles, assigned duties, and service to the community as activities that help students understand responsibility and life in society.

The school also shared club messages through the following: morning parade, school assembly/baraza, meetings, official announcements, leaflets, club rules, and guidance from student leaders and the patron. This led to repetition in both the club and school environment. At the same time, it occasionally confused where the influence on behaviour originated, as the same moral messages were reinforced in clubs, the classroom, assemblies, RE, and through school rules.

Theme 4: Moral values Practised and Repeatedly Reinforced

Students included participation in respecting teachers and others, obeying legitimate rules, knowing their rights, being on time, caring for property, taking responsibility, being self-aware, being honest, and wanting to let others know if they see something wrong. Clubs seemed to be present to practice and remind them of it on several occasions.

Slogans against corruption in the Clubs were particularly memorable. Club slogans are in our hearts, for instance, ‘corruption is the enemy of justice’ and ‘corruption is the enemy of development’, said one of the School B students (Student-SB-04). The same theme of corruption being the enemy of development and rejection of corruption was emphasised at School A as a reminder of honesty and integrity. Other students talked about not taking another classmate's pen, not being afraid of making mistakes, keeping public property safe, reporting when something is taken or when someone is corrupt, and respecting other people's rights.

Students also discussed changes in their self-management. They spoke about coming to school on time, the importance of time, not being lazy, small tasks in the school environment, school rules, and self-awareness. The student-SB-06 commented that Scout training had helped the student to become “responsible and abhorred to laziness.” One of the School D teachers noted the following observable changes: Punctuality, cleanliness and self-expression.

These stories align with social learning: repetition of slogans, peer examples, set roles, and set performances create expectations. However, slogans seemed to take on significance in these contexts when coupled with action. Statements about environmental cleaning, leadership, reporting wrongdoing, and care for property suggested moral practice (as opposed to messages alone).

Theme 5: Cooperation, Confidence, and Relationships through Collective Activity

Collective performance and collective tasks were strongly related to cooperation. They composed songs and acted them out with other students; they did sports, debated, discussed, and did environmental/community work. One student (Student-SB-02) said, "I think we have more relationships within the clubs than in the classroom. These connections were built through teamwork, friendship, peer support, conflict resolution, and positive attitudes.

Clubs also provided opportunities for confidence and expression. At School C, students mentioned that engaging in clubs helped them improve their speaking skills, showcase their talents, and build courage. This contribution is morally significant because students who can voice concerns, report injustice, discuss disagreements, and be involved in decisions are more likely to be responsible agents.

The results were not necessarily great. One School A student did not see improvement in their cooperative skills. One of them commented that there were sometimes arguments. Some students at School C stated that the leaders do not involve them and only preach to them (Student-SC-04), and that they do not find it personally helpful to cooperate (Student-SC-05). In these negative cases, it was found that although these children were exposed to passive delivery, it does not automatically strengthen their relational competence. Cooperation was most likely when activities were interdependent and involved, rather than one-way and based on the teacher's expertise and involvement.

Theme 6: Behavioural Preventions Accompanied by Strong Attributions Caution

Students and adults felt that clubs prevented bullying, stealing, corrupting of students, truancy, fighting, vandalism, disrespect, having sex at an early age, pregnancy and early marriage. Clubs were identified as a place to explore, through case studies, drama, religious teaching, debate and life skills education, the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. Safe School activities focused more on self-protection, gender awareness, and avoiding early pregnancy and marriage, while PCCB clubs focused on corruption and integrity. Students suggested that the clubs could provide a positive purpose for those who are gifted or less academically inclined to attend and provide a positive way for them to improve their behaviour. Religious and integrity clubs were mentioned as supporting the rules in school and in the nation. Clubs can thus be used as a preventative setting through positive activities, positive peer influences, adult support, and moral messages. All eight adult informants qualified their claims of behavioural effect, however. A member of the School A patron said:

"You cannot draw a straight line and claim that membership of a club made this particular student well-behaved. Morality spans many areas and depends on family, school rules, and other influences. However, the clubs help students learn through practice and provide a platform for discussing honesty and how to avoid misconduct." (Patron—SA 20 July 2026)

The School B patron was even more cautious and stated that no "direct change" could be identified, as a child's behavioural issues have many causes. A School D teacher noted that most non-members had good morals, but some club members had not changed. Teachers also mentioned that, in the classroom, subjects taught similar values and, at home, upbringing reinforced similar values, so it was difficult to determine the source of the change. Thus, the theme could be divided into two parts: clubs were always seen as helpful reinforcement and a place to practice, but there was no evidence of moral improvement resulting from club membership. Good behaviour was not only not obligatory, but was not even guaranteed by participation.

Theme 7: Institutional Marginalisation and Weak Coordination

The most common constraints were time conflicts. There was some overlap between club periods and lessons, examinations, national events, assemblies and other school events. Students reported cancellations or reduced sessions, and sessions being held when students were tired. Students with more than one club were required to choose which club to attend, as club times often overlapped.

"Clubs are held at the same time, so we do not go to other clubs, but we would like to" (Student-SA-06) was part of the feedback from a student at School A. Another reported that this provision of time was not adhered to and sometimes teachers did not attend. Both adults and participants were concerned about teacher workload and the institutional emphasis on classroom subjects in relation to the problem. Linkages within the school leadership, teachers and patrons, student leaders, and external facilitators were also weak. Because students' reports of unusual external trips matched adults' reports of poor collaboration with other teachers and poor staff support, the pupils' responses to these questions were consistent with adults' responses. Permission, scheduled time, and meeting space (where available) were the typical forms of support schools offered. However, participants reported no significant sustained material or instructional support from the school administration, parents, or other organisations.

Theme 8: Resource, Guidance and Capacity Deficits

Participants in all four cases reported a lack of premises, funding, transport, learning resources, club rules, leaflets, ICT equipment, televisions, projectors, microphones, speakers, drums, sporting equipment, and other equipment

needed to implement the projects. Some clubs held meetings outdoors because they lacked rooms. Resource limitations were particularly important, as participants viewed club learning as practical and performative.

A lack of operational guidance was also critical. Some clubs did not have a syllabus, manual, activity plan, and/or clear description of the responsibilities of the patrons and students. We plan for ourselves; we do not have a guide or a syllabus that guides us; that was a School A student's comment (Student-SA-05). School D patron and student leaders had to be highly inventive when it came to clubs, a School D matron said. Workload, insufficient preparation, unclear roles, lack of recognition and lack of supervision limited teacher capacity and continuity. Individual creativity seemed to matter more to patrons than consistent guidance. Social Learning Theory suggests that when there are fewer or less well-supported patrons, opportunities for credible modelling, feedback, and fair reinforcement decrease, and the likelihood of clubs becoming irregular, adult-dominated, and/or ceremonial increases.

Theme 9: Uneven Participation and Need for Motivation, Inclusion, and Accountability

Poor enrolment and low club membership numbers affected club viability. Weak participation was attributed to the voluntary nature of membership, competition among several clubs, interest in clubs in subjects examined, lack of incentive, tiredness, lack of interest in performance, and joining a club because friends joined. Some clubs were understaffed, while others were still overstaffed. A few students were members of multiple clubs which were held at the same time. One school: A student also stated that some clubs required them to see the club leader to become a member.

Adults noticed that some students came in for other reasons, such as avoiding punishment and/or completing classwork during a club period. These stories illustrate the validity of the assumption that 'attendance' equates with 'engagement'. In all cases, students and adults correlated motivation to meaningful activities, adult visibility, recognition, even opportunity, leadership opportunities, and a sense of the school's value of participation in a club - not just financial. Participants suggested certificates, educational visits, learning equipment, improved venues, more time, more frequent visits by external professionals, training of patrons, follow-up of attendance, and increased supervision. An underlying call was for greater institutional involvement and genuine student involvement.

4.2 Discussion

This section discusses the results in terms of the theoretical perspective and the literature. The main argument is that co-curricular clubs can be considered 'experiential moral-learning' settings. However, their contribution to implementation, meaningful participation, and the wider school ecology depends on implementation quality.

4.2.1 Availability is Not the Same as Functionality

The study found a wide variety of club types, in line with Tanzanian studies and literature (Clement & Mwila, 2023; Lazaro & Anney, 2016; Nyang'au et al., 2025). Often, adult participants limited the list of clubs they felt were active to PCCB and Scouts, although some clubs were active, such as Safe School and Environmental clubs. This shows a disparity between the formal provision and lived provision. This is important from a policy and research point of view. A school might have a club in its register that appears to provide holistic education. However, there is no evidence of meetings or activities, students attending the club, or students learning in the club. For this reason, monitoring of functionality should evaluate the time protected for meetings, the actual number of people, the activities that take place, the presence of patrons, student roles, and evidence of reflection or service. The finding also lends credence to literature cautioning that the presence of a policy or programme does not replace evidence of implementation.

4.2.2 Clubs Translate Values into Distinctive Domains of Practice

While all the clubs encouraged general concepts of discipline, co-operation, love, and responsibility, they expressed these in different moral spheres. PCCB clubs linked morality to justice, rights, public property, honesty, and corruption. Scouts associated this with courage, service, patriotism, and preparedness. Environmental clubs linked responsibility to cleanliness and stewardship. Safe School Clubs linked responsibility for good behaviour to dignity, safety, gender, self-awareness, and healthy relationships. Religious clubs linked it to obedience, humility, love, and tolerance. This aligns with the conceptual choice not to lump all co-curricular activities together. It also concludes that moral education is not just a list of abstract virtues; values have meaning in the context of specific practices and societal problems. Nyang'au et al. (2025) also reported that value-based campaigns, debate, peer mentoring and service were other strategies used to bring integrity to life in Integrity Clubs. UNESCO's Safe School experience (2025) also links clubs to nonviolence, confidence, positive choices, and healthy relationships.

4.2.3 Experiential Learning and Social Modelling: Explain the Perceived Benefits

Students' examples were closely related to Social Learning Theory. They recalled slogans, monitored peer behaviour, collaborated in teams, took responsibility, and followed instructions from patrons and student leaders. They stated that being on time, treating things well, reporting wrongdoing, co-operation, confidence, and obeying rules were

attributes of theirs. It is reasonable to expect that these will be consequences of frequent modelling and reinforcement (Bandura, 1977).

The results also support Dewey's (1938) concept that learning takes place through experience. Students had opportunities to rehearse behaviours through debate, drama, song, environmental activities, games, leadership, and community service. The distinction between active involvement in an activity and merely "preaching" is significant. When students were only listening, some indicated little change in their level of cooperation. In contrast, when engaged in interdependent activities, they more frequently used language that reflected friendliness, teamwork, communication, and confidence. Effective moral pedagogy, therefore, appeared to involve a connection between dialogue, action, and reflection within the clubs. The peer dimension is similar to that outlined by Hughes et al. (2016), who found that prosocial peer norms link participation in extracurricular activities to adjustment. Moral expectations can become socially visible and shape desired relations within the club. Groups can also generate exclusion and/or disagreement, however. Adult facilitation and/or inequities in participation may also affect the data and cannot be resolved without adult facilitation and inclusive norms.

4.2.4 Clubs Reinforce Behaviour but Do Not Independently Cause It

One important point in the study is the consistent caution about adults. Patrons and teachers did not deny the club's value; instead, they argued that the value was not simply due to the club. They noted similarities in the values taught at home, in the classroom, as part of religious teaching, as part of school rules, as part of assemblies, and in wider society. Not all well-behaved students were members of the club, nor were all members different. On a theoretical and empirical basis, this interpretation is correct. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological view of behaviour suggests that behaviour results from interactions among various environments. Additionally, O'Flaherty et al. (2022) identified several associations between extracurricular activity and adolescent outcomes that diminished in magnitude even after controlling for stable individual differences, indicating the potential for selection bias. The current study, therefore, is qualitative rather than quantitative (effect-size or causal) and, as such, makes a contribution claim.

Clubs are seen as a reinforcer, a practice environment, and a relational context. They can provide more frequent and salient moral learning opportunities and may also offer opportunities not present in the classroom or home. However, to be a member of a church does not mean one is obliged to be morally good, or good, and vice versa. Future evaluations need to compare participants and non-participants, analyse pre-evaluation behaviours, measure participation intensity, include direct observation, and consider change over time.

4.2.5 Institutional Conditions Determine Whether Potential Becomes Practice

The most frequent time constraints (time conflict), academic pressure, weak supervision, load of teachers, guidance and assistance, poor resources, and low motivation are similar constraints that emerged in the past from studies in Tanzania (Clement & Mwila, 2023; Lazaro & Anney, 2016; Mgonda, 2020; Mohamed & Osaki, 2022). This indicates that the problems are not limited to the four schools. The results also indicate interdependencies between constraints. Low attendance rates seemed to stem from student attitudes. However, students indicated that patron absence, delivery of boring/repetitive material, exam time, poor timing, poor equipment, and not being recognised were connected to low attendance. Weak supervision could stem from several factors, including teacher workload and unclear institutional responsibility, and not necessarily from laziness. Resources matter because practicals require learning materials and space. Predictable inactivity occurs when a system is used that does not require preparation, time, or tools to provide a club name.

Ecologically, a group's effectiveness depends on how well it is aligned. When the school regularly changes club time for lessons marked for exams, it indicates that moral and social aspects are not a priority. Teaching integrity while keeping school procedures unclear is not a good combination. Leaders can talk the talk, but if they do not walk the walk, then student voice is diminished. A school should support strengthening clubs rather than relying on just one club patron.

4.2.6 Motivation as Meaning, Recognition, and Agency

One of the most common suggestions from participants was about 'motivation', but it was not offered in terms of prizes. Some of these things, such as certificates, trips, and equipment, could support participation. However, there was also a need for significant activities, visible adult commitment, fair access to opportunities, leadership opportunities, and appreciation of the value of club learning. The results show that students' agency is a viable condition of moral learning. Students need to be involved in identifying issues, organising activities, taking turns in leadership roles, using appropriate resources effectively and efficiently, reviewing performance and linking club learning with issues of the school and/or community. These responsibilities provide opportunities to learn to be accountable, cooperative, fair and serving rather than just hearing moral messages.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The schools chosen had a range of clubs, but they were not very useful. PCCB/TAKUKURU and Scouts were the most active clubs, while others such as safe school, environmental, religious, debate, sports, and social welfare had variable activities. While the emphasis varied, these clubs shared common values: integrity and patriotism, self-respect, care for the environment, tolerance, communication, teamwork, and service. Students practised these values through activities such as debates, drama, songs, games, leadership, and environmental and community service. This involvement helped develop respect, responsibility, punctuality, honesty, confidence, co-operation, care for property, and good behaviour.

This study was not an experiment proving that clubs bring about moral behaviour. Adults identified factors beyond the family, including teachers, rules, peers, religion, and community, as factors affecting students' conduct. Clubs are viewed as contributing to moral development; the quality of the programme and participation in the club determine the extent of this contribution.

Timetable conflicts, examinations, teachers' workload, inconsistent patron attendance, lack of guidelines, lack of facilities, poor external support, low participation, and low motivation limited the clubs' effectiveness. Overall, non-subject co-curricular clubs provide good opportunities for moral learning, but are not guaranteed to be effective. To make clubs work, new clubs need protection, suitable adult supervision, student involvement, practical experiences, inclusion, adequate resources, and alignment with the wider school culture.

5.2 Recommendations

School leaders should conduct annual audits to identify active, irregular, and nominal clubs, documenting meeting frequency, attendance, responsibilities, patron involvement, activities, and constraints. They should protect co-curricular periods from routine replacement and minimise timetable conflicts. Authorities and leaders must clarify patron responsibilities, recognise workloads, establish succession plans, and provide training in facilitation, safeguarding, inclusion, conflict resolution, and ethics. Schools should also provide resources like safe meeting spaces, manuals, stationery, storage, activity materials, and shared equipment. Future research should include non-club members and diverse stakeholders, using observation and longitudinal or mixed methods to evaluate behavioural development and the sustainability of implementation improvements.

Declaration of Interest

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