

Civics Teachers' Choice of Teaching Methods in Kinondoni Municipal Secondary Schools, Tanzania

Jerome Sila Machange (PhD)
Tanzania Institute of Education
P. O. Box 35094
Dar es Salaam, TANZANIA.
E-mail: jmachange1970@gmail.com
Phone: +255786972155

Abstract

Any choice made about pedagogy or teaching methods for Civics will have a reflective impact on the students' learning. This study sought to find out what influence Civics teachers' (CTs') choice of pedagogical strategies or teaching methods. This is important because it contributed to understanding of factors that influenced their choices and whether they reflect participatory pedagogy inherent in the Civics syllabus for Secondary Schools. The study employed the qualitative research approach, a single case study. The data were analysed using a content analysis framework described by Miles and Huberman (1994), that is, data reduction, data display, and drawing and verifying conclusions. The findings indicate that CTs' choices of teaching methods were influenced by classroom-based participative-active pedagogies. Such pedagogies include, the Civics syllabus, CTs' mastery or knowledge of teaching methods, expertise in Civics, students' developmental ability or ability to speak the English language and availability of library or teaching and learning materials. However, the Civics syllabus was dominant factor that influenced CTs' choice of teaching methods. The implication is that participatory pedagogy inherent in the Civics syllabus largely influence CTs' choices of teaching methods.

Keywords: Choice, Civics teachers, Civics syllabus, teaching methods

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1. Introduction

Teaching method refers to mechanism which is opted by a teacher in order to organise and use a number of instructional activities to achieve student's learning (Al-Rawi, 2013). In view of Skutil, Havlickova & Matejickova (2016), teaching method is an effective way of organising and guiding learning, that is, a mechanism that unites a teacher's and a students' efforts. As such, it is a structured system of teaching activities of a teacher and learning activities of a pupil, which aim at achieving educational goals. However, some studies indicates that the term *pedagogy* is used interchangeably with teaching methods.

In particular, Print and Smith (2000) contend that pedagogy for civic education can be grouped into four categories. These are: firstly, classroom-based passive cognitive pedagogies which involve strategies such as document analysis, case studies, interactive teaching, and critical thinking. Secondly, school-based passive cognitive pedagogies which comprise strategies like school assemblies, visiting speakers and multicultural days. Thirdly, classroom-based participative-active pedagogies that involve strategies such as debate, group problem solving, role play, simulation, and cooperative learning. And fourth, school-based participative-active pedagogies which include strategies such as school elections, whole-school projects, and school as role model.

Any choice made about pedagogy or teaching methods for Civics will have a reflective impact on the learners who will be the members of the society in future (Print & Smith, 2000). As such, teachers seldom use one method or pedagogical strategy when teaching in a typical classroom. So, in order to be effective, teachers teaching Civics employ a variety of teaching methods to ensure that Civics is taught in a constructive way. This study sought to find out what influence Civics teachers' (CTs') choice of pedagogical strategies or teaching methods along the categories identified by Print and Smith (2000). This is important because it contributed to understanding of factors that influenced their choices and whether they reflect participatory pedagogy inherent in the Civics syllabus for Secondary Schools.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

There are different perspectives that have been put forward to explain what influence teachers' choice of teaching methods. One of those perspectives is that one which focused on students' characteristics. A study by Nsamenang (2011) notes that for a successful teaching to occur, an effective teaching method must be selected by a teacher considering students' characteristics. This means that teachers normally use a variety of strategies and methods with the purpose of giving students equal chances to learn. Similarly, a study by Gerges (2001) in USA found that developmental ability of their students was a factor in influencing their choice of instructional methods. It was revealed that cooperative teaching methods did not work well with first grade students since

they were *so adult focused* (Gerges, 2001). In other words, the choice of teaching methods is influenced by the class level of target students.

Another perspective regarding what influences teachers' choices of teaching is the one related to curriculum or government policies. Nsamenang (2011) revealed that teachers frequently follow what is specified or prescribed by the curriculum or standards issued by the government, a school board or institution in which the purposes of education and the topics have been pre-prescribed for teachers to follow. Connected to that, a study by National Centre for Social Research for Quebec (2012) revealed that other factor that influences teachers' choice of teaching methods was local authorities and government policies. This denotes that teacher' choice of teaching methods is largely influenced by the target curriculum and government directives. However, it was noted that teachers' commitment to new policy can be negative if they viewed it as something imposed on them or not consulted by the government (National Centre for Social Research for Qubec, 2012). Further, a study by Gerges (2001) found that the content of subjects like Science and Social Studies, lend itself to student-centred methods while other subjects such as Mathematics and Reading do not, Mathematics is best taught using teacher-centred methods.

The other perspective is one related to teachers' pedagogical knowledge factors. For instance, a study by Gerges (2001) revealed that their status as student teachers and knowledge of subject-matter or knowledge of teaching methods influenced how they delivered the content in the classroom. Some reported not having used particular methods because of fear of wrong use of the methods (Gerges, 2001). Advancing on that, a study by Bolinger and Warren (2007) on teaching methods practised in Social Studies instruction, found that elementary and secondary social studies teachers frequently used passive methods rather than active and more authentic teaching methods. The study concluded that the situation was caused by teachers lack of a comprehensive understanding of the methods advocated in Social Science and Historical disciplines. This means that teachers' choice of teaching methods is determined by their knowledge on how to use them.

Similarly, a study in Kenya by Wang'eri and Otanga (2014) on sources of personal efficacy and influence on teaching methods, found that teachers subject-mastery was a significant factor in influencing them to use innovative teaching methods. It was found that demographic factors such as age, sex and teaching experience were not significant factors in teachers' choice of teaching methods. Further, a study by Tilya and Mafumiko (2010) in Tanzania revealed that teachers were confused regarding their choices and use of participatory teaching methods consistent to the requirements of the curriculum. For example, it was noted that group discussion as one of the participatory methods, was applied by teachers, but not well organised which jeopardised students' involvement and participation.

Other perspectives about what influence teachers' choice of teaching are those related to individual, school leadership and external factors. On these, a study by National Centre for Social Research for Quebec (2012) found that teachers' behaviour and practice is influenced by personal attitudes to change—human response to change; recruitment, selection and training—basis by which they were recruited and selected; and stage in career, new teachers normally feel isolated and ill-prepared while experienced teachers faced with increased responsibility and change of their professional needs. It is shown that individual attributes or factors play part to determine teachers' choice of teaching methods.

Further, teachers' practice is influenced by school leadership demonstrated by the head of the school and other senior teachers affect teachers' morale, job satisfaction and motivation to work; peer influence—encouragement, support and enthusiasm provided by colleagues can build confidence of the teachers to adapt new practise (National Centre for Social Research for Qubec, 2012). Along this, teachers practice is also influenced by continuing professional development, that is, improvement of teachers' expertise through training, networking, mentoring, attend workshops or short courses. The study uncovered further that teachers' practice can also be influenced by external factors or wider societal context such as the environment of the school which include attributes like level of disadvantage in the neighbourhood, physical design of the school, and nutritional content of the school meals.

Moreover, availability of teaching and learning materials has been identified as other perspective or factor that determine teachers' choice of teaching methods. Justifying the claim, a study by Muhangwa (2011) in Tanzania found that lack of instructional resources like library, laboratory, guides and reference books influenced Mathematics and Biology teachers in their choices of teaching methods. It was found that because of such factors, teachers selected lecture method although they were aware of the importance of using active teaching methods. Similarly, Mwinyi (2008) found that Physics teachers mostly opted and used lecture method because of large classes, heavy workloads as well as lack of teaching and learning materials.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the study

This study employed the qualitative research approach, a single case study, with an assumption that it would provide an opportunity to investigate the phenomenon in depth. This design would consequently enable the yield

of detailed descriptions about CTs' choice of teaching methods. The study was conducted in Tanzania in one municipal of Dar es Salaam region, namely Kinondoni Municipality. It was chosen as case because of being one of the vibrant urban hood municipalities in Tanzania where CTs and students were much exposed to political information which subsequently affect their understanding and behaviours (REPOA, 2009).

3.2 Participants

All 20 wards in the Municipality were purposively stratified into two major groups: group 1, wards found in urban areas; and group 2, wards located in suburban areas. A purposeful random sample of 1 ward from each group was done to form a total number of 2 wards which participated in the study. Then, a purposeful sample of 4 schools (2 public and 2 private) with a CT with an experience of four years or above of teaching Civics were selected from each ward to form a total number of 8 schools studied. The sample comprised 8 CTs, 8 school academic teachers (SATs), and 1 school quality assurer from the Municipal. The respondents are referred to by using abbreviations, CT (for Civics teacher), SAT (for school academic teachers) and the letters of alphabet A – H (for schools) to preserve their anonymity.

3.3 Data collection

This study employed three data collection methods: interviews, classroom observation and documentary analysis. First, individual in-depth interview schedules in the form of semi-structured and open-ended questions were used to collect data from CTs, SATs and the school quality assurer. Second, the non-participant observation schedule comprised the questions related to teaching and learning process was used to assess CTs deployment of teaching methods in the classroom. Each sampled CT was observed at least three times teaching Civics lessons in his/her classroom. Third, an analysis of CTs' instructional materials, schemes of work and lesson plans, enabled the collection of some accounts produced previously by the CTs which consequently illuminated the factors behind their choices of teaching methods.

3.4 Data analysis

Content analysis framework by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to analyse the data from different sources. On the one hand, data from the interviews and classroom observations were transcribed and printed in hard copies. The transcribed hard copy texts were read and re-read with the purpose of familiarising with the collected data and highlighting the key words, phrases and segments that answers the asked questions. This process eventually enabled the identification of categories and then organising them into themes.

On the other hand, data from documentary analysis involved highlighting of words, phrases and segments that answers the predetermined questions. The identified words, phrases and segments were also treated as categories. This method was used with the purpose of discovering expressions that represent hidden meanings in the documents. This method helped the researcher to understand the information and discover various patterns and themes as they emerged.

4. Findings

This study investigated what influence CTs' choice of pedagogical strategies or teaching methods. This was important because it helped to understand factors that influenced their choices and whether they reflect those recommended in the Civics syllabus.

4.1 Methods used in teaching Civics lessons

The CTs were interviewed to give information about the teaching methods they normally use in teaching Civics. This aspect was important because the teaching methods mentioned were compared with those in the Civics syllabus. This consequently supported the conclusion about what influences CTs' choice of teaching methods.

The findings indicate that, CTs used both participatory and non-participatory teaching methods. It was found out that in all involved schools, the CTs normally used participatory as well as non-participatory teaching methods. For example, the CT from school **D** had this to say regarding teaching methods used:

In teaching Civics, I normally use lectures, group discussion, role play, library research and observation. I also use study tour for students to visit sites and learn different things.

Moreover, it was found out that, CTs from some schools used participatory methods. This was revealed through the CT from school **B**, who said:

The methods I prefer to use in my teaching are those in the form of dialogues: discussion and question and answers. I use debate to create competition between groups. I also use imaginary visit as teaching method.

It was also found out that some CTs used non-participatory teaching methods because of lack of teaching resources. This situation manifested itself at school **G** where the CT claimed that:

We decided to change to non-participatory methods where the teacher is the source of everything because we do not have library and books. Students cannot express themselves in English, so if student-centred

methods are used, one will waste a lot of time.

Also, through classroom observation, it was noted that the CTs were using both participatory as well as non-participatory teaching methods. Table 1 summarises the teaching methods identified during classroom observations.

Table 1: Teaching methods identified during classroom observations

Teaching method	School/Frequency							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
i. Small group discussion	4	3	1	4	2	1		2
ii. Class discussion	2	1	1		2	1		
iii. Questions and answers	1	1			2	2	4	3
iv. Demonstration			1					
v. Brainstorming			1	1		1	2	2
vi. Lecturing		4	4		3	4	4	4

Table 1 shows that, except in schools **A** and **D**, the CTs in the other schools were using both participatory and non-participatory teaching methods. Table 4.5 also indicates that lecturing was the dominant non-participatory teaching method in those schools. These findings resembled those from CTs' interviews that they were using participatory as well as non-participatory teaching methods. It also shows that CTs used some of the suggested teaching methods from the syllabus.

However, the findings from documentary analysis, teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans indicated that the planned teaching methods were participatory. Table 2 presents the summary of teaching methods found from schemes of work.

Table 2: Teaching methods identified in CTs' schemes of work

Teaching method	School/Frequency							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
i. Small group discussion	8	5		9	7	6	6	5
ii. Brainstorming	3	5		5		2	5	5
iii. Questions and answers	4	2	1		3		3	
iv. Case study			1					
v. Demonstration			4					
vi. Class discussion	3			5		2	1	5
vii. Guest speaker		1		1				
viii. Role play								2

Table 2 shows that small group discussions, was the dominant teaching method found in the schemes of work. This mostly happened in schools **D** (9), **A** (8) and **E** (7).

The findings from analysis of teachers' lesson plans were also similar to those from analysis of teachers' scheme of work. Table 3 summarises the teaching methods from the CTs' lesson plans.

Table 3: Teaching methods identified in CTs' lesson plans

Feature	School/Frequency							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
i. Questions and answers	5	2	5	5	6	4	9	7
ii. Small group discussion and presentation	4	4		4	5	4		4
iii. Brainstorming			2			4	3	2
iv. Demonstration			2		1			
v. Role play				3	1			3

Table 3 shows that the teaching methods identified in the CTs' lesson plans were questions and answers, small group discussion and presentation, brainstorming, demonstration and role play. However, questions and answers, was the dominant teaching method in schools **G** (9) and **H** (7). Then, it was followed by small group discussions.

The findings in this category indicate that CTs mainly selected and planned to use participatory teaching methods from the Civics syllabus. Other findings show that when it comes to implementation in the classroom, they use both participatory and non-participatory teaching methods. This implies that although the CTs largely select and plan to use the recommended teaching methods from the Civics syllabus, they as well used lecture (non-participatory) as one of the teaching methods. This situation suggests that some participatory teaching methods recommended by the Civics syllabus were used alongside with non-participatory teaching methods.

4.2 Factors influencing CTs' choice of teaching methods

The inquiry was made to determine factors that influence CTs' choice of teaching methods. The findings indicate four groups of factors. The factors include: school and students' related factors, the Civics curriculum and time. The findings show that the issues related to school related factors that influence teachers' choice of teaching methods were availability of teaching and learning materials or teaching aids, number of students in a classroom and availability of library. The findings indicate that availability of teaching and learning materials or teaching aids was reported by all schools. Regarding the availability of teaching and learning materials, the CT from school A had this to say:

The factors that influence my choice of methods of teaching and learning are the availability of teaching and learning materials, availability of teaching aids such as maps, diagrams and pictures.

Further, the CTs from schools A, D, E and G argued that lack of enough teaching and learning materials hindered them from using participatory teaching methods. Similarly, some CTs pointed out that large number of students in a classroom influenced CTs to opt for non-participatory teaching methods. It was emphasised that, participatory teaching methods require more time and could be easily used in classes with few students. For example, the CT from school G claimed that:

I have seventy students in my class. So, if I use small group discussion, I will have more than ten groups. The students need to discuss and then present before the whole class. This requires much time. One is, therefore, forced to opt for lecture method in order to cover many things in a short period.

Regarding students related factors, the CTs argued that such factors included students' level of understanding, age, and English language proficiency. Commenting on students' level of understanding, the CT from school H had this to say:

Considering differences in students' ability, sometimes I use question and answer method. This is because use of group discussion method makes it too difficult for them to discuss and present their views.

The CTs further argued that the nature of a topic influenced them to use particular teaching methods. Similarly, they claimed that Civics syllabus was an important document that every Civics teacher should abide by. They maintained that the Civics syllabus contained all the necessary information regarding teaching methods. On this matter, the CT from school H had this to say:

The syllabus also influences my choice of methods of teaching because it has details which cover important issues about our country, especially, when we are teaching about the skills which are very important to students.

In addition, views on what influence CTs' choices of teaching methods were collected from SATs and the School quality assurer. The interviews as well required them to explain the teaching methods normally used by CTs to teach Civics lessons. The interviews also required them to comment on whether CTs used the teaching methods suggested in the Civics syllabus.

The findings from SATs were more or less the same as those from CTs. The SATs claimed that CTs used both participatory and non-participatory teaching methods. They said that the participatory teaching methods include group works, questions and answers, brainstorming, group discussions, projects, and demonstrations. However, the SATs said that the non-participatory teaching methods were lectures or teacher's explanations. For instance, in explaining this, the SATs in schools E and G had this to say respectively:

All methods are used, that is, our teachers use all methods. Most CTs use the methods that allow students to be involved in the learning process.

From my observation, they use two-way traffic. Depending on the topic, the teachers sometimes use teacher-centred or learner-centred.

Further, the SATs argued that participatory and non-participatory teaching methods were used depending on the class levels. They pointed out that participatory methods were used in higher classes, that is, Form Three and Four because students were able to actively participate in the learning activities. In view of SATs, non-participatory teaching methods were normally used in lower classes, that is, Form One and Two because most of the students in these class levels experience difficulties in speaking the English language proficiently. In this regard, SAT from school H was quoted saying:

I always inspect their lesson plans. They normally use the teaching and learning strategies that most of CTs use. For instance, in higher classes, that is, Form Three and Four, they use group discussion, but in the lower classes, especially Form One and Two, the main teaching and learning strategies used by teachers are those which do not involve students much.

Moreover, the interviews with SATs on whether CTs use the teaching methods suggested in the Civics syllabus revealed three major findings. Some SATs pointed out that teachers who were experts, that is, those who were trained to teach Civics, used the teaching methods suggested in the Civics syllabus. For instance, the SAT from school D had this to say:

As far as my understanding is concerned, those who are experts in this subject use teaching methods in the syllabus while others use their own creativity to deliver the subject.

It was further claimed by SATs that some CTs used the suggested teaching methods from the Civics syllabus

because they considered them as a guide for effective teaching. It was also explained that CTs use them because it enabled students to perform well.

However, the SATs from schools **F** and **G** claimed that the CTs did not use the teaching methods suggested by the syllabus because they were not knowledgeable to teach the 2005 syllabus. Explaining this, the SAT from school **G** had this to share:

Even though I can assist my teachers to write the lesson plans, some Civics teachers do not know even how to use the suggested teaching methods. So sometimes I use my time to guide the teachers how they should use some of the teaching methods. It is a serious problem.

Also, the SATs in those two schools argued that CTs did not use the teaching methods suggested in the Civics syllabus because they were not applicable to their school contexts. They said that large number of students in a classroom constrained them to use those teaching methods. In particular, the SAT from school **F** had this to comment:

The major reason is the big number of students. In one classroom, one may find eighty students, in another classroom up to one hundred students. There are only two periods per week, so one cannot use those methods that are prescribed in the syllabus.

In addition, one school quality assurer from the Municipality was interviewed to comment on whether CTs used teaching methods suggested in the Civics syllabus. The school quality assurer said that normally CTs write the suggested methods in their lesson plans but did not use them when teaching Civics in the classroom. He claimed that most of CTs copy the teaching methods from the Civics syllabus but did not use them in the classrooms. Further, the School quality assurer pointed out that some few CTs use participatory teaching methods recommended by the Civics syllabus. Such teaching methods include group discussion, debates, and questions and answers. However, he claimed that group discussions were not effectively used because not all students were involved in the discussions. Thus, in the opinion of the school quality assurer, most of CTs used lectures which were not recommended by the Civics syllabus.

Overall, the findings indicate that although CTs were influenced by different factors in their choices of teaching methods, the Civics syllabus was the main factor. This syllabus was a dominant factor as CTs chose teaching methods considering the nature of topics and used to write the recommended teaching methods in their lesson plans. CTs who were experts in Civics also preferred teaching methods suggested by the Civics syllabus.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings have demonstrated that CTs planned to use some participatory teaching methods recommended by the Civics syllabus, namely, small group discussion, questions and answers, brainstorming, demonstration and role play. These results are consistent with those by Nsamenang (2011) who found that teachers often follow what is prescribed by the curriculum in which the purposes of education and the topics have been pre-prescribed for them. This means the Civics syllabus related factors, particularly, nature of the topic(s) to be taught and the suggested teaching methods found in the Civics syllabus influenced CTs' choices of teaching methods. This shows that Civics syllabus influence CTs in their choices of teaching methods.

However, the findings show that those participatory teaching methods were not properly deployed. The reasons included having teachers who were not experts in Civics, poor knowledge of teaching methods, and the assumption that some of the recommended teaching methods were not applicable to their school environment. As Gerges (2001), Bolinger and Warren (2007) and Wangeri and Otanga (2014) have observed teachers' mastery of the teaching methods was a significant factor in influencing them to use innovative teaching methods. This implies that CTs often used passive method rather than active because they lack a full pedagogical knowledge or an understanding of the methods appropriate for Civics.

Likewise, the findings indicate that teachers, who were experts in Civics, used participatory teaching methods in their classrooms. It is also shown that participatory teaching methods were mostly used in higher classes (Form Three and Four) while non-participatory teaching methods were used in lower classes (Form One and Two). Some CTs claimed that those participatory teaching methods suited well in the higher classes because students at this stage are fairly fluent in the English language. As such, they could actively participate when participatory teaching methods are used. This means that the CTs' choice of teaching methods was influenced by students' ability to speak the English language.

This situation is interpreted that the CTs assumed that the participatory teaching methods were only suitable in higher classes. This concurs with the findings made by Gerges (2001) that students' developmental ability was a factor influencing teachers' choice of instructional methods. Gerges (2001) noted that cooperative teaching methods did not work well with students in lower grades. This implies that if the students had poor proficiency in the English language, they would unlikely be able to participate when CTs use participatory teaching methods. This finding is congruent with what was found by Dingili (2017) the existence of mismatch between Citizenship Education instructional policy and its actual practice. However, this contradicts the recommended pedagogy inherent in the Civics syllabus, that is, participatory teaching methods should be used across all classes. The

Civics syllabus states that: “The teacher is strongly advised to use only ... participatory and learner-centred strategies in order to enhance the teaching and learning process” (MoEC, 2005, p. vii).

Further, the findings indicate that the CTs also used non-participatory teaching methods. In non-participatory teaching methods, a teacher may select and employ strategies such as lectures, demonstration and memorisation (MIE, 2004). In this study, it appears that lectures were dominantly used in many observed Civics classrooms. The CTs used to write the suggested teaching methods from the syllabus in their teaching plans, but did not use them when teaching Civics lessons in the classroom.

These results concur with those from Bolinger and Warren (2007) that, teachers who teach Social Studies in elementary and secondary school level, often used passive teaching methods because of inadequate knowledge of participatory teaching methods. This situation is interpreted that CTs were not only influenced by the Civics syllabus in their choices of teaching methods. The use of non-participatory teaching methods, particularly, lectures, implies that CTs did not only prefer participatory teaching methods, they also opt for non-participatory teaching methods. These findings concur with what was found by Dingili, et al., (2022) that teachers of citizenship education in grade four used a blend of the two approaches, that is, both participatory and non-participatory methods. This means that even though, they comply with the suggested teaching methods from the syllabus, particularly, in their teaching plans, the CTs also chose and used lecture as one of their key teaching methods.

Moreover, the findings indicate that CTs were also influenced by school related factors. It is shown that CTs’ choice of teaching methods was influenced by school related factors such as availability of teaching and learning materials or teaching aids and lack of library or stocked library. It appears that lack of teaching and learning materials forced CTs to opt for non-participatory teaching methods such as lecture. These findings concur with those by Muhangwa (2011) that lack of instructional resources like library, laboratory, guides and reference books influenced Mathematics and Biology teachers in their choice of teaching methods. The findings however, contradicts those made by National Centre for Social Research for Qubec (2012) in which school related factors were identified as school leadership demonstrated by the heads of the school, senior teachers and peers.

Conclusively, this study provides evidence about what influences CTs’ choices of teaching methods. It was found that CTs’ choices of teaching methods were largely influenced by classroom-based participative-active pedagogies. Such pedagogies include, the Civics syllabus, CTs’ mastery or knowledge of teaching methods, expertise in Civics, students’ developmental ability or ability to speak the English language and availability of library or teaching and learning materials. Although, CTs used lectures and could not successfully use participatory teaching methods, they frequently chose and planned to use the teaching methods recommended by the Civics syllabus. The implication is that participatory pedagogy inherent in the Civics syllabus largely influence CTs’ choices of teaching methods.

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