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# Instruction of citizenship education in selected secondary schools in Vihiga county, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the instructional practices used among teachers and students in teaching Citizenship Education through History and Government at the secondary school level. The study adopted qualitative research with a multiple case study design. Data was collected using Observation schedules, interview schedule and focus group discussion guide. Data was analyzed using grounded theory and constant comparative technique. The finding of the study revealed the domination of classroom activities over outdoor activities. The study recommends for a curriculum review to introduce competence learning that will enhance the use of both classroom and outdoor activities.

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## Introduction

Citizenship Education has been defined by various scholars as the provision of information and learning experiences to equip and empower citizens to participate in democratic processes (Mukhongo, 2010; Print & Coleman, 2003). Scholars have identified Citizenship Education to entail knowledge about: government; constitution; human rights; justice; equality; democracy; duties and responsibilities of citizens; cultural norms; social expectations; national economic development aspirations; and historical past (Brett, 2005; Hoge, 2002; Kennedy, 2004; Marshall & Arnot, 2007).

In Kenya, Citizenship Education is integrated in the social studies at primary school level. At Secondary school level, it is integrated in a range of subjects such as Religious Studies, Geography, Life Skills and, History and Government. It is worth noting that the 2012 Education Task Force proposes that Citizenship Education should encompass History of Kenya and the Constitution. Furthermore, the Education Task Force (2012) suggests that curriculum materials to include Citizenship Education with the aim of inculcating values, which include: Patriotism, tolerance, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people; Human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized; Good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability; and Sustainable development. The Education Task Force (2012) opines for, an instructional approach that strengthens co-curricular activities including volunteerism and community out-reach services to enhance relevant values and introduction of the youth to the world of work.

Moreover, there is need for the establishment of a community out-reach service programme that promotes national unity, culture of community service and introduction

to the world of work. Furthermore, various approaches to searching for and investigating historical knowledge have been highlighted in the Kenyan History and Government syllabus. According to the Kenya Institute of Education (K.I.E, 2002), emphasis has been put towards developing independent group and individual study habits through instructional approaches such as; visitations, report writing, research, lecture method, discussion, role playing, dramatization, debates, projects and the use of resource persons.

When Citizenship Education is well taught and tailored to local needs, its skills and values enhance the democratic life for all the society members, beginning in school and radiating out (Crick, 1998). Kochhar (1992) further cautions that, even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remain dead unless quickened into life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers. However, limited knowledge exists on what actually happens in Citizenship Education in school, at the classroom level (Kerr, 2000; Mukhongo, 2010). It is thus important to establish instructional practices used to teach Citizenship Education at the secondary level. This study therefore, tried to shed light on the question: 'What are the instructional practices used in teaching Citizenship Education through History and Government at the secondary school level?'

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the instructional practices used in teaching Citizenship Education through History and Government at the secondary school level.

## Objectives of the Study

This study sought to

1) To establish instructional practices used in the teaching and learning process of Citizenship Education at the secondary level.

2) To find out factors that influence the selection and use of instructional practices in Citizenship Education at the secondary level

### Research Questions

This study aimed at answering the following research questions:

- 1) What are the instructional practices used in teaching Citizenship Education at the secondary level?
- 2) What are the factors that influence the selection of the instructional practices used in teaching Citizenship Education at the secondary level?

### Research Methodology

The study adopted qualitative research method, and a multiple case study design. It focused on four secondary schools in Vihiga County, Kenya. It employed the maximum variation strategy (Bloom & Crabtree, 2006) to select a school each from the following categories of schools; national, county, sub-county and private schools. The number of participants in the study was limited to 170 students and 4 teachers of History and Government. This was done to allow for the selection of “information-rich cases” (Patton, 1990, p. 169), which would enhance in-depth study. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study. The participants' real names were not used for this study instead pseudonyms (School “A”; School “B”; School “C” and School “D”, -for schools- and P1; P2; P3- for students) were used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents.

In this study, data collection and analysis was developed together in an iterative process (as shown in fig 1) so as to allow for research findings that were more grounded on empirical evidence. Data collection methods included: observation schedules, interview schedule and focus group discussion guide. The collected data was then transcribed, coded and categorized in order to inform the next focus group discussions and interviews. Data analysis was done inductively using grounded theory techniques through the constant comparative technique (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). According to Charmaz (2000 p. 515) the constant comparative method of analysis refers to, “a data analysis method of: comparing different participants' views, situations, actions, accounts, and experiences; comparing data from the same individuals with themselves at different points in time; comparing incident with incident; comparing data with category; and comparing a category with other categories.”

Finally the trustworthiness of the study was established through: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In particular, techniques such as; prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, triangulation and peer debriefing were used to establish credibility while transferability was achieved through thick description of the phenomenon. An audit trail was kept in order to ensure dependability as the research journal guaranteed confirmability.

## Procedure of Data Collection and analysis

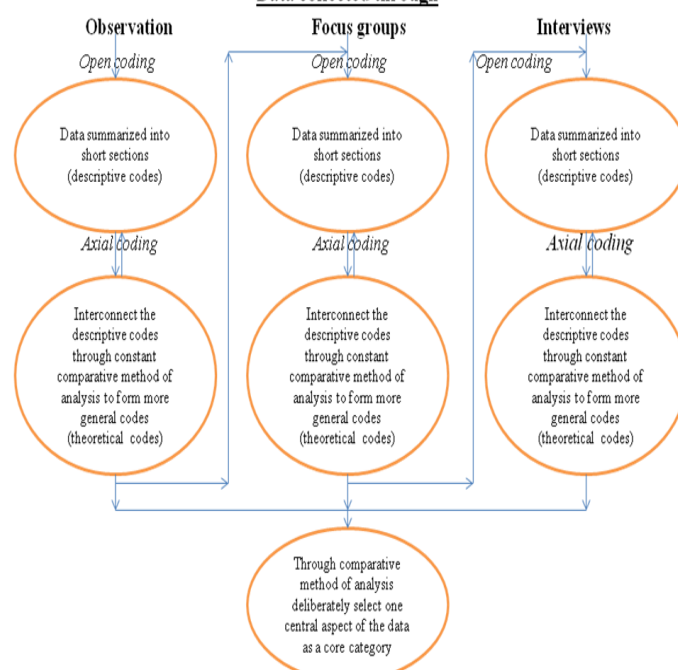


Figure.1

### Findings and Discussions

The findings are discussed below according to the research questions (RQs).

#### RQ1 What are the instructional practices used in teaching Citizenship Education at the secondary level?

The study, reported domination of classroom activities over outdoor activities. In particular, the study revealed that writing activities, verbal activities, inquiry activities and discussion activities were the main classroom activities.

Moreover, it was found out that teacher dominated in the instructional processes. The teacher played the role of an initiator rather than a facilitator of learning. For instance, the teacher initiated the verbal activities through explanations, clarifications and questions. Furthermore, it was both observed and reported that teachers played a key role in both the inquiry and discussion activities by grouping and assigning students with tasks to research on. In particular, a teacher of History and Government in School B reported that, he was the one who carried out research, generated notes and dictated them to the students. According to this teacher this activity (him carrying out research, generating notes and dictating notes) would lead to uniformity in notes among the students, something that could not be achieved if students were to be left to research and write notes on their own. It should however, be noted that, students were actively involved in generating their own notes in the other three of the four schools (schools, A; C; and D). The students' notes were later complemented with notes taken during teacher led class discussions.

This findings reinforced earlier findings by Shiundu (1980) and Imbundu and Poipoi (2013) which noted that, History and Government classrooms were dominated by instructional methods such as; lecture, discussion, question and answer, reading maps and text books and note-taking. In particular, Ogutu (1984-85) had earlier established that chalk and talk, question and answer, and discussion were the most

popular instructional practices used by teachers of History and Government, and this was confirmed in this study.

Concerning the outdoor instructional activities, this study found out that these activities were also being utilized in teaching of Citizenship Education, although to a limited extent when compared to classroom instructional activities. The main outdoor instructional activities cited across the four cases were debates and role playing. Concerning debates, all the four cases reported of carrying out debates.

These debates were often centered on contemporary issues such as; drug abuse, terrorism, and devolved government. However, there existed difference in the frequency of carrying out the debates with some schools reporting that they carried out debates on weekly basis (School B, C and D) whereas one school had only had a debate session once a year (School A). School C unlike the other three schools reported that, its student participated in regional debate contest where they emerged victorious as revealed in the student focus group excerpt:

**P1:** Also on debates we have been able to attend national debate contest and it has given us more vision of how people out there debate. We have had an opportunity to watch good debaters. And we are happy to report that in the recent Nzoia region contest we were able to emerge number one... of those who represented our school three are in this class and all of them take History and Government, I being one of them.

Across the four schools (cases) it was reported that prefects were elected by the students. The election process differed among the schools with some reporting 'absolute democracy' -for example school C where elections were conducted by Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (I.E.B.C. the body permitted to conduct elections in Kenya) - while others reported 'guided democracy' - for example school D where voting was through acclamation and at times winners were robbed of their victory in favour of less popular candidates but who were friendly to the school administration. According to Nasibi and Kiio (2005), the instructional practice in which the students try to clarify a situation by acting out roles of the participants in the situation is referred to as role playing. Therefore the students in the four schools role-played the roles of electoral officials and voters. It should however be noted that, across the four cases the students failed to link the outdoor instructional practices to the instructional process of Citizenship Education through History and Government. Moreover, it was observed that form four History and Government student in school D through role playing drafted a school budget while learning the topic, "*Public Revenue and Expenditure*."

It was further discovered that, field trips were being used in three of the four schools (schools B, C, D). These field trips were organized on annual basis due limited funds and time. In contrast, no use of fieldtrips was reported in school A. Students complained of that money donated for a fieldtrip by the area member of county assembly was converted to carter for break time porridge. Similar findings were revealed when studying the use of symposia in instructing Citizenship Education. It was found that, three of the four schools (schools B, C, D) only used symposia at the fourth form level. This was in line with school tradition that had scheduled the symposia to be a fourth form activity. On the contrary, the use of symposia was impossible in school A, due to inadequate funds. Further, the study established that reading of newspaper was undertaken by students of schools B, C, and D. However, students in school A complained that they

had no access to newspapers for the school in the school library. A further closer look at the data collected revealed that watching of documentaries was only used in two of the four schools (School B and C), while service learning was only recorded in school C.

K.I.E (2002), recommends that outdoor study approaches such as: visitations, report writing, inquiry, discussion, role playing, dramatization, debates, projects and the use of resource persons be used in the teaching of Citizenship Education through History and Government. However, in this study only discussion and inquiry were frequently utilized by teachers across the four cases. Whereas, a study by Mukhongo (2010) on pedagogical exercises presented in social studies instructional materials revealed that, most of the instructional practices in both students' textbooks and teachers' guides required students' engagement in active learning process through the use of practices such as debates and role play; This study established that classroom instructional practices dominated the instructional process with outdoor practices such as visitations, role play and debates being rarely used. Most of the cases reported that they used debates once a week while visitations and role play were used on annual basis. Similar findings were shared by Imbundu and Poipoi (2013) where they noted that financial shortage had restricted the use of field trip to only once a year, and that, this had limited students' exposure to the practical experiences in History and Government.

The study findings are in agreement with findings reported by Evans (2006) which revealed that, Canadian and English teachers (Citizenship Education teachers from England) acknowledge the need to use performance-based strategies such as: use of radio interview on the concept of human rights and, simulation of local government decision making. However, was noted that evidence of these performance-based strategies is less noticeable in practice with information being largely transmitted from the teacher to the student through teacher-led 'chalk-and-talk' discussions. Closer home, a study carried out by African Social Studies Programme (ASSP) in seven African countries revealed that, outdoor instructional practices were only talked about in schools but were not translated into use. Instead, instructional practices were teacher driven and dominated by the chalk-and-talk styles of teaching (Mhlauli, 2012).

It is worth noting that scholars have argued against the undue dependence on expository oriented instructional approaches, (domination of classroom activities over outdoor activities) which tend to encourage passive learning (Kiio, 1999; Ruto & Agumba, 2013). In particular, Oduma (2005) observes that, these expository oriented instructional approaches leave learners disadvantaged for they are forced to remain passive in the lesson. For Sifuna (2000), the teaching of human rights and democratic education must be developmental in nature. This means that Citizenship Education content must become more and more complex as a learner moves from a lower to a higher grade. Sifuna (2000) thus argues for the adoption of participatory instructional methods to teach Citizenship Education. According to Kerr (2000), the instructional process of Citizenship Education should lend itself to a broad mixture of teaching and learning approaches, ranging from the didactic to the interactive, both inside and outside the classroom. In a similar view the constructivist theory advocates for an active process in learning. According to this theory, learners should construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current or past

knowledge (Bruner, 1966). Thus for constructivists, learning should be adaptive as it integrates new knowledge with the existing knowledge and allow for generation of innovative idea or work.

According to Mukhongo (2010), young people in Africa should be trained on how to live in a democratic and pluralistic society due to the intolerance and violence prevalent in African countries.

The author further argues for a Citizenship Education instructional process that goes beyond memorization and passive learning. For Mukhongo (2010) the instructional process should not only encourage regurgitation of basic information but also instill critical thinking skills that will enable students to be aware of their social context. It is thus recommended that Citizenship Education teachers should adopt active instructional practices and also create conducive class and school environment for the implementation of democratic and human rights education.

## **RQ 2 What are the factors that influence the selection of the instructional practices used in teaching Citizenship Education at the secondary level?**

In this study, contextual factors emerged as prime factors in the selection and use of instructional practices. The contextual factors related to the availability of adequate: time, funds, personnel, and instructional facilities. For instance, School C History and Government teacher while recognizing the place of contextual factors in the selection and use of instructional practices lamented that:

**Teacher:** Yes they affect, because what you have talked about, charts I do not know why the school does not purchase, maybe it is due to the funds. Like if I say let me take you out for a field trip, you need some money but you know of inadequate funds, so it really gives me a hard time to continue with my activities (recommended instructional practices). Like the issue of library, you know I can only get attached to *Evolving World* (History and Government text book) when there are so many History and Government books. So it affects...

For school B History and Government teacher, the amount of time available to cover the syllabus was of more importance when selecting and using instructional practices in Citizenship Education. The teacher argued that:

**Teacher:** As you know time is limited. You cannot concentrate on time consuming activities such as group work... Remember, you have a syllabus to cover within a certain period of time. So you have to use a method that will enable you cover it within the stipulated period irrespective of the understanding of the student.

Comparable findings have been recorded by comparative studies carried out on citizenship, civics and education for democracy (Kerr, 2000; Morris & Cogan, 2001; Torney-Purta et al. 1999). These studies have revealed that context was particularly important in reviewing Citizenship Education and that contextual factors relating to: historical tradition; geographical position; socio-political structure; economic system, and global trends, had a major influence in the definition of and approaches to Citizenship Education. The present study shares similar findings as it was established that, contextual factors relating to availability of time, funds, personnel and instructional facilities plays a key role in the selection and use of recommended instructional practices in Citizenship Education. Johnson and Morris (2010), cites Freire (1972) as having emphasized on the importance of local contextualization in the instructional process. Similarly,

Magudu (2012) observes that the challenges associated with Citizenship Education in Zimbabwe emanate from the context in which it is being taught. He argues that the prevailing socio-political environment in the country does not allow for the proper implementation of the Citizenship Education curriculum. For the socio-political environment bears immense influence on the rationale for, and content of the Citizenship Education curriculum.

In the study, it was also found out that teachers' conceptualization of Citizenship Education also guided their selection and use of the recommended instructional practices. For example, all the teachers shared the opinion that, while instructing Citizenship Education it was more important to cover the syllabus and prepare for national examinations than to develop students' citizenship values. In particular the teacher of History and Government in school D had this to say;

**Teacher:** We cannot have outside activities because here (that is when teaching form fours) we look at syllabus coverage and revision for K.C.S.E.... Especially for a candidate class you find that out of class activities are so minimal.... The choice of the instructional practice to use goes hand in hand with exams.

Similar views were shared by school C teacher of History and Government who reported that:

**Teacher:** Like with our current 'circumstances' we have decided only to embark on teaching and learning (classroom instructional practices) and cover the syllabus for at the end of the day we are also preparing next year's candidates... so many of our programs (outdoor instructional practices) have died and we are concentrating on what we refer to as academics.

The teachers thus employed instructional practices that only enhanced knowledge of the values in the students with little attention on development of the citizenship skills and values. In a similar view, a study by Namasasu (2012) reported that, the examination-driven curriculum led to teachers adopting instructional practices that were largely characterised by rote learning and limited practical citizenship-oriented activities. The study findings are contrary to views by scholars who argue that, instructional practices selected and used in Citizenship Education should strive at generating civic skills, developing of democratic values, positive attitudes towards legal forms of participation, instilling social responsibility, and cohesion (Finkel & Ernst, 2005; Morris & Cogan, 2001). In particular Mukhongo (2010) opines that, instructional practices selected and used in Citizenship Education should aim at instilling critical thinking skills in students that will enable them be aware of their social context. Therefore, while selecting an instructional practice in Citizenship Education, the teacher should aim at an instructional practice that will place the student in different learning situations, stimulate them to be inquisitive and critical about the society, and equip them with skills for functioning in today's increasingly complex and global environment (Jotia & Matlale, 2011).

As noted earlier on in *RQ 1*, most of the outdoor instructional practices were used in schools B, C, and to some extent school D. A keen look at the contextual factors of the four schools revealed a disparity in the availability of instructional facilities among the schools. It was further noted that schools that fairly enjoyed ample instructional facilities such as; Schools B and C (a private and national school respectively) employed more outdoor instructional practices

while those schools that had limited instructional facilities such as; school A (a sub county school) employed more classroom-based instructional practices. For instance, both the teacher and students in school A agreed that, their use of outdoor activities such as fieldtrips and symposia had been hampered by the limited funds and inadequate means of transportation (they did not have a school bus).

In a similar study Ogutu (1984-85) found out that, lecture method (a classroom-based method) was more popular in *Harambee* (community-sponsored) Schools than in Government and Private-sponsored schools.

#### **Limitation of the study**

This study being a qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the main research instrument. Thus, the research design includes the interpretation of the findings which may be affected by the researcher's personal experiences and biases. Nevertheless, efforts were made to minimize this limitation through systematic keeping of a researcher journal. This enabled the researcher to reflect on what was observed and heard during the instructional process, interviews and interactions with the participants throughout the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Also the research employed triangulation of investigators where by both the researcher and one research assistant collected, analyzed and made comparisons of the research results to determine consistency (Stake, 2006).

#### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The study findings revealed domination of classroom activities over outdoor activities. There was also a strong influence of contextual factors on the selection and use of instructional practices. Finally, inadequacy in instructional resources was noted to affect the use of recommended instructional practices in Citizenship Education. The study thus recommends for:

1. A curriculum review introducing competence learning that will enhance the use of both classroom and outdoor activities.
2. A re-conceptualization of History and Government teacher training to include teaching of Citizenship Education in different instructional contexts.

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