

**The Contribution of Civics Teachers' Teaching Strategies on
Secondary School Students' Discipline in Iringa Municipality,
Tanzania**

Remisevia Joas
Ruaha Catholic University
kekishajoas@gmail.com

and

Makungu Bulayi
Ruaha Catholic University

Abstract

This study examined the contribution of Civics teachers' teaching strategies on students' discipline in secondary schools in Iringa Municipality. The study involved 50 students and 10 Civics subject teachers from five secondary schools. The study was underpinned by the constructivist paradigm whereby a qualitative research approach and a case study design were employed. The study applied a simple random sampling technique to identify students and purposive sampling was used to get teachers who taught Civics in schools. Data were collected through focus group discussions with students and an interview method was conducted with Civics subject teachers. Data were analysed by content analysis. The findings from this study revealed that teachers' teaching strategies contributed to the creation of students' conceptualization of moral and discipline issues. Students' knowledge of moral issues contributed to the reduction of indiscipline cases. Furthermore, the teaching of Civics subject faced several challenges including the scarcity of trained Civics subject teachers. Therefore, the government of Tanzania should recruit trained Civics teachers, who will address the issues of students' disciplines when teaching the subject.

Keywords: Civics Subject, Teaching Strategies, Students' Discipline.

1.0 Introduction

Students' discipline in schools, as an essential component for smooth student' functioning in schools and society in general, has become a major concern in the education sector (Claver, Aranda, Conejero & Arias, 2020). Students discipline is an important component of students' behavior, which not only helps to regulate students' reactions to various situations but also their relations with others. Thus, a school as an organization and its effectiveness in running the programmes depends largely on the level of discipline of its community members (Redempta, 2010). Furthermore, student discipline creates a good image of the school and prepares learners for their future life. It is also argued that the implementation of effective student discipline at school is a key for the student's success in their journey to adulthood (Simeon & Favour, 2020).

Simba, Agak and Kabuka (2016) argued that a student's discipline is an important component of human behaviour without which an individual cannot function well towards the achievement of his/her goals. A study conducted by Stanley (2014) showed that effective discipline enables to control of students' behaviour and enhances their general character. This is because Civics content emphasizes inculcating, to the learner, ethical values such as integrity, honesty, responsibility and self-discipline. It also commits learners to national values like patriotism, nationalistic ideals, national ethics, good citizenship and the development of the nation. Given this, it can be said that Civics teachers, by virtue of the subject they teach, are very important actors in shaping student discipline (MoEC, 2010).

The literature in this study have indicated that Civics teachers teach Civics as one of the subjects whereby the teaching of student discipline and moral values play an active role in awakening and shaping the

character of students, thus becoming good citizen and intelligent. Civics education intends to shape students to be human beings who have a sense of nationalism and love for their homeland, and become competitive citizens, disciplined, active participants in building the country and living a peaceful life (Rusmin et al., 2020). Birhanu (2012) noted that a Civics subject teaching enables students to enjoy their rights and freedom, makes them respect the freedom of others, enables them to consciously discharge their duty and responsibility, respects the rule of law, and tries to solve the problems of the society. In addition, Civic subject fosters good moral values for students, so that they are independent beings able to change for the better where necessary.

In the context of a school system, disciplined students are those whose behaviours and actions conform to the predetermined rules and regulations of the school (Ali, Dada, Isiaka, & Salmon, 2014). However, discipline ideally means more than adhering to rules and regulations and entails the learner's ability to discern what is right or wrong (Gitome, Katola & Nyabwari, 2013). Civics subject teachers teach the students to behave under the existing rules both within the school environment and in the community. Equally important is that the Civics subject should provide a space for students to continue developing the morals contained in students' self-potential.

Sulianti, Arifin and Sakdiyah (2020) state that the cultivation of discipline is not only monopolized by the Civics subject, it means that every subject can insert discipline and moral values into students. However, some people already consider that educating students to have good discipline and morality is one of the responsibilities that must be carried out by the teaching of Civics subject. The great responsibility is

borne by Civics teachers to take appropriate steps or strategies needed to be taken to develop student discipline.

Therefore, the teaching of Civics subject is a very important aspect towards enhancing student discipline, because it usually gives awareness to students to have a vision and mission. It also plays a vital role in the acquisition of a sense of responsibility to learners as well as educators (Mussa, 2015). Effective teaching of Civics subject helps in the achievement of goals, expectations and responsibilities in students (Mussa, 2015). Chowdhury (2016) indicated that discipline can be fostered through a range of teaching techniques such as role play, drama, simulation, educational games, debates, discussions, projects, group work, educational visits, interviews, brainstorming, and utilizing the resource materials using poems, stories, songs, photographs, posters, and slogans.

The Civics subject teachers are supposed to make students feel welcomed and turn unhappy students into happy ones when teaching Civics subjects (Mande, 2016). According to Soderlund and Rosengren (2008), the behaviour of the Civics teachers in the teaching encounter is a main determinant of students' Civics learning. From the discipline's theory as stated by the New Brunswick Teachers' Association cited in Ilyasin (2019), if discipline is highlighted as the essential aspect it leads to students becoming good citizens at school, family and community at large.

In Ethiopia, Bayeh (2016) indicates that, some studies conducted at the university level show that Civic and ethical education have been developing and promoting civic skills, knowledge and disposition to affirm both changes in behaviour and the attitude of learners. Civics has

contributed to the creation of good and ethical behaviours among citizens. Studies conducted in this area affirm that the subject is also creating a favourable environment for learners to co-exist with other socio-cultural groups and have a culture of respect for one another's (Bayeh, 2016). Such tolerance is an essential element of democracy and civic disposition expected from a virtuous citizen.

Maintaining student discipline in the 21st century is said to be a challenging task in a teaching career due to globalization and the influence of social media (Yaghambe, 2013). The common indiscipline cases in secondary school as addressed by Ngalya (2017) include lack of patriotism, dropping out of school due to pregnancy, fighting and stealing, substance abuse, truancy and disobedience. That is why the government of Tanzania has taken institutional and academic measures to address student discipline. One such way is the introduction of the Civics subject and making it compulsory for all students in ordinary secondary schools in Tanzania.

Dibaba (2017) in Ethiopia indicates that, although Civics teachers play a significant role in the community, they are not well-acknowledged and considered as a tool towards stability, agreement and responsible acts of students. The attention given to Civics, particularly in secondary schools in Tanzania is lower, for instance, Civics is being taught by teachers with no strong academic background in Civics subject; as it is mistakenly assumed that Civics can be taught by any graduate teachers provided they studied any social science discipline at college or university (Mande, 2016). This may be the impact that Civics can have on student discipline and the production of effective and active citizens who can recognize problems of their countries, their citizenship responsibility and desirable code of conduct. Consequently, the

contribution of Civics to student discipline has not been well acknowledged. This study, therefore, intended to examine the Contribution of Civics teachers' teaching strategies on student discipline in secondary schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania.

Indiscipline cases among secondary school students continue to grow with negative ramifications for families and communities (Ngalya, 2017). The consequences have been reported to include school dropouts, failures in examinations, substance abuse and sexual relations among students. When students lack discipline, they are likely to engage in undesirable behaviours such as dropout, drug abuse and stealing. Civics teachers have an important role in enhancing student discipline; this is due to the nature of the subject content they teach which generally aims at transforming students into disciplined and responsible individuals.

Currently, there are issues of indiscipline cases in secondary schools which lead to ethical problems and undesirable behaviours. Indiscipline behaviours are still rampant in schools. This question on the role of Civics subject teachers in addressing problems of indiscipline behaviour among students needs to be addressed. This study answered one research question: How do Civics teachers' teaching strategies contribute to student discipline when teaching the subject in secondary schools?

2.0 Materials and Methods

The study adopted a constructivist research paradigm to understand the student's and teachers' subjective meanings of the contribution of Civics subject teaching and learning process in schools. Their experiences in the process of teaching the Civics subject at the secondary school level were very necessary to answer the research question. Additionally, the study employed a qualitative research approach whereby a case study

design helped the study to understand participants' perspectives in terms of their conceptualization of the process of teaching and learning the subject. The sample size of the study constituted 10 Civics teachers and 50 students. Moreover, the interview method, focus group discussion (FGD), observation and documentary review were employed in this study to learn teacher's instructional strategies and practices. The data analysis process was done by application of the content analysis.

The path-goal theory which was originally developed by Evans (1970) and later modified by House (1971) describes that motivation plays an important part in how a supervisor and a subordinate interact and, based on that interaction, the overall success of the subordinate was applied. The theory stresses that leaders need to be cognizant of the necessary steps to clarify goals, and paths, and enhance satisfaction through extrinsic rewards, which will in turn increase subordinates' intrinsic motivation. The theory was applied to the four path-goal leadership styles' functions to provide structure and/or reward to subordinates, who are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented.

To make students interact with Civics subject, they need motivation to learn and interact with the different topics relevant to shaping their discipline. Therefore, the directive teachers, supportive and participative clarify expectations and give specific guidance to accomplish the desired expectations based on performance standards. Generally, the theory helps to explain how Civics teachers use different styles to build student discipline, particularly in making a path through the creation of challenging goals toward the attainment of acceptable discipline to students which is the core part of their academic achievement in the future life.

The target population of the study involved form three and form four secondary school students who were chosen. Apart from them, Civics subject teachers who were teaching the subject in form three and form four were purposively selected from five secondary schools. Therefore, 10 Civics subject teachers were purposively involved in the study, whereas 50 students were randomly selected from the five schools of which 25 students were from form three and 25 students were from form four. The sampled five secondary schools are presented by using labels such as, A, B, C, D, and E. Civics subject teachers are identified as A₁, A₂, B₁, B₂, C₁, C₂, D₁, D₂, E₁, and E₂. This is done to preserve their identification.

The purposive sampling technique was useful for selecting Civics subject teachers because Sulianti, Arifin and Sakdiyah (2020) state that, the cultivation of discipline is not only monopolized by Civics subject, it means that every subject can insert discipline and moral values into students. However, some people already consider that educating students to have good discipline and morality is one of the responsibilities that must be carried out by the teaching of Civics subject. The great responsibility is borne by Civics teachers to take appropriate steps or strategies needed to be taken to develop student discipline.

It is stated by Cohen, Mnion and Morrison (2007) that expertise and experience are keys when looking for personal experiences in a subject matter. Selection of 50 students based on their academic maturity and that they had studied a good number of Civics subject topics related to discipline issues. Their maturity objectively contributed to the understanding of how they conceptualize the contribution of Civics subject teaching and teachers' teaching strategies to their discipline development and improvement.

3.0 Results and Discussions

3.1 The Role of Civics Subject Learning on Students' Discipline

The findings from this study revealed that one major area that the teaching of Civics subject contributed to was creating students a sense of awareness of their roles in society. Students reported that the learning of Civics subject enabled them to report on several disciplinary issues that they faced at home and school levels. During the focus group discussion with students, one student from School A reported that the learning of Civics subject had enabled him to report matters related to discipline to their authorities. One student narrated that after learning the subject:

My parents had rented their house rooms to unmarried young boys who watched unethical movies and videos with my brothers and sisters at home. After seeing this, I reported it to my parents. The incident led my sisters to engage in unwanted behaviours. My parents are also aware of that because I reported these cases to them. My Civics teacher said in the classroom that when I see unethical attitudes, I should be responsible. I learned how to be a responsible citizen and student (Student₁ in FGD, School A).

Also, another student at school C added that students who face difficulties in their studies are always in temptation that may endanger their life. The learning of Civics has helped them to build confidence and believe that they can manage their living as reported by a student as follows:

Look here, I reported to my teacher on the issue of raping of one of our classmates. She used to be raped by her uncle who was living with her at home. Her grandparents were aware of that but they did not take any action. The

behaviour affected the girl psychologically had behavior which were caused by the environment. My report helped the problem to be known. I can say it is the result of teaching Civics subject (Student₂ in FGD, School C).

During interviews with Civics subject teachers, the role of teaching and learning of Civics subject was revealed to be increasing students' awareness and attitudes towards unethical issues in schools and society in general. Civics subject teachers reported that the students used their awareness to report disciplinary issues they faced at home and school. The ability to realize that the experiences they go through are bad and their ability to openly report these issues to their teachers after learning Civics can be said to be a major contribution to Civics teachers' teaching. A teacher at School D reported:

One of my students reported to me that her parents are busy selling local beers. She is also required to participate. From that situation, there are some behaviors which I have noticed on her and realized it was because of her engagement in the business. After I asked about the noted behaviours, she was ready to narrate the whole issue. In the end, we reached a consensus on how to address the case. The students said to me that, I can say this to you because you said one day in class (Interview with Teacher₁, School D).

Another Civics teacher indicated that students do not only report about bad behaviour they face, but also they report about other socio-economic challenges, including unfavourable home environment and lack of some basic needs. For instance, a Civics teacher from School B said that:

There was a student who lacked basic needs; after reporting to me I told my fellow staff, and we made

contributions to assist that student materially and we introduced that student to a Non-Governmental Organization which assisted him to have basic needs (Interview with Teacher₁, School E).

The findings of this study are in line with the study by Rusimin, Labani and Suardika (2020), who conducted a study on the role of Civic education on student moral development in elementary school; based on the results of the investigation, it was found that the implementation of moral cultivation is through personal development programme, personal development programme include routine activities, spontaneous activities, exemplary principals and teachers, and conditioning in supporting the implementation of moral cultivation, integration in subjects; teachers do combination in subjects by linking moral cultivation with the subject matter.

Development of school culture which is carried out by arranging programs related to ethical culture, such as making rules, and construction of the learning process, including the development of classroom, school and non-school learning processes. Classroom learning by giving moral messages, reminding students and mutual agreement; Schools by providing guidance or counselling both through the school and from outside the school, recitation holding and meetings with guardians of students outside the school with extracurricular activities such as football, camping, school health programs, science study, drum band, and holding camps.

3.2 The Contribution of Civics Subject Teaching Strategies on Students' Discipline

The Civics subject teachers attributed their teaching strategies to be able to inculcate a sense of patriotism and care for others' needs, developing

self-confidence in demanding their rights, and behavioural change leading to hard work. This can be noted in the following extract from an interview with one teacher:

I use a participatory teaching strategy. Participatory teaching strategies have transformed students by helping them learn how to help others, raising a sense of patriotism and cooperation, and developing self-confidence, self-awareness and self-determination, which are important for demanding rights. They are now responsible persons and committed to their studies as they work hard. Being motivated to work hard for a better future as inspired by real-life examples I use in class from successful people in the country is very useful (Interview with Teacher₂ School D).

Furthermore, it was learned that the use of strategies such as discussion and group work has helped students to build positive relations with their peers. Working with peers is important for addressing gender discrimination and inequality. In an interview with a teacher from School B, it was noted how the relationship is built:

I use strategies such as group discussion. This helps students to build positive relationships with others; this consequently helps them to overcome gender discrimination and stereotypes. This also happens when I use, for instance, real examples of leaders and students see that there are successful female leaders, they realize that women can also be good leaders (Interview with Teacher₁, School B).

Moreover, another Civics teacher said that he used story telling by using teaching aid like pictures, newspapers and pamphlets where he indicated

that for students to be disciplined, they need to learn about facts and acquire skills that help them to be disciplined in the community; he indicated that story telling exposes students to new perspectives, giving students the chance to see the world. In doing so, students are disciplined from the issues affecting others in their community and throughout the world. In revealing this, during the interview, he commented that:

I use story telling by using teaching aids like pictures, and newspapers to show the various effects of improper behavior. For instance, after I completed teaching the topic of proper and improper behaviour, one male student came to inform me that he had already been affected by homosexuality because his school bus driver constantly abused him. Therefore, I helped that boy by showing pictures of those who changed their behaviour when they have been harassed and showed the way to follow to let him be psychologically healed and the action for that driver was taken. I also act like a friend to students; this helps them to report their challenges normally after teaching improper behaviour (Interview with Teacher₂, School B).

When FGDs were conducted with students on the same issue, students' views appeared to compliment teachers' views. Students noted that strategies such as guidance and counseling that teachers used helped them to have hope in times of challenges and difficulties. They also stated that the strategies helped them to become active citizens as they practice democracy. The following extract evidences this:

The teachers' teaching strategies help me to be aware of democratic issues where I learn to be accountable and transparent to my teachers, parents and community at

large; some of us are contesting for student leadership roles where we participate in voting for school leaders. Also, teachers' use of guidance and counselling help us to have hope when we face different challenges. Teachers advise us to focus on studying hard to increase our academic performance; they also guide us to live peacefully with our fellow students and the entire society. This helps me to be a good student and to work hard in my studies (Student₆ in FGD, School A).

My teachers use cooperative activities in groups when we learn in class. Through cooperation, we make relationships and cooperate through team work. I have also benefited from having self-confidence when we participate in group discussions, I develop self-respect (Student₈ in FGD, School E).

During interviews with teachers, the teachers' teaching strategies were noted by teachers to have contributed to student discipline by instilling in students a sense of independence, making them confident that they can be future leaders and parents. The following interview extract provides evidence of this:

My ways of teaching Civics have made my students responsible and attentive, for example, to stand still when the national flag is hoisted, to change their community's bad beliefs and practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, food taboos and the killing of albinos and elders. I teach in a way that makes students be able to educate their societies and be responsible for their future. But also, I make sure that I produce students who can respect and value others and avoid human rights abuses as well as develop social interaction skills (Interview with Teacher₁, School D).

Furthermore, students claimed that the teaching strategies that teachers used helped students to be responsible at school and in their communities through knowing their rights and duties, the effects of certain cultural practices and so forth were also noted to be reduced through teachers' teaching strategies. The following extract is revealing: I now know my rights and responsibilities and I can make good decisions. I also know and can protect people against bad cultural practices like beating women, widow inheritance, gender discrimination and forced marriage. All these helped me to live peacefully and harmoniously at school and home (Student₄ in FGD, School C).

3.3 Challenges Facing Teachers in Enhancing Students' Discipline through Civics Teaching

During interview sessions with teachers, they mentioned some challenges which face them in disciplining students including negligence to study the subject, lack of professional training in Civics teaching, workshops, training and seminars, and lack of teaching materials.

3.3.1 Student attitudes towards Civics subject

The findings from this interview with Civics teachers revealed that most students have a problem of subject negligence; this leads to students having indiscipline cases whereby the content intended to be learned by them is not received as expected. This is because some of the students escape to learn the subject by saying that it does not add any value to their subject combination for advanced secondary education. Respondent had this to say:

I face student negligence to study the subject because they think that it does not add any value to their subject combination which will take them to another level of education. Therefore, I am forcing the students to study the subject; that is why indiscipline cases are present at school

because students do not like to seriously study (Interview with Teacher₁, School D).

3.3.2 Lack of workshops, training and seminars to Civics teachers

Findings from this study indicated that most of the teachers, who were teaching the subject, lacked training and seminars whereby most of the teachers when they were at College/University they were not trained to become Civics teachers. Most of them specialized in teaching Geography, Kiswahili, History, English, and Linguistics and some of them specialized in Political Science which relates to the content of the Civics subject.

Most teachers indicated that they teach Civics because the environment forces them to do so. After all, many schools lack qualified teachers who are trained to teach the subject. Therefore, heads of schools assign any teacher to teach the subject randomly. This was evidenced by the following extract when they said:

We lack workshops, training and seminars; most of us are not trained to teach Civics subject, therefore we face difficulties in teaching the subject because when we were in College/Universities we did not opt to study Civics; most of the teachers who are teaching the subject lack knowledge of what real they must deliver to the students. Heads of schools just appoint anybody to teach the subject. Therefore, in-service training and seminars are needed to be competent in teaching the subject (Interview with Teacher₂, School B).

Expanding on those challenges, another teacher from school E added:

Look here at our school we are four teachers but only one is qualified to teach the subject because he attended the

course when he was at University; the rest did not specialize in that subject when we were at University; therefore, it is difficult to start teaching the subject which we were not trained for (Interview with Teacher₂, School E).

3.3.3 Lack of teaching materials

The findings from this study indicated that most the schools lacked teaching materials like text books, computers and televisions where they support them to be current in teaching the subject as a teacher from school C said:

Here at our school, we lack teaching materials like books compared to other subjects, Civics deals with the teaching of current issues whereby we fail to be current in teaching the subject because as you know discipline issues are mostly affected by globalization through science and technology, we need to teach by using vivid examples from the current issues. The government has failed to invest much in Civics to buy current books, computers and televisions where students can listen, learn and have access to daily news for different discipline issues (Interview with Teacher₁, School C).

These findings are in line with Okoth and Etyang (2018) who conducted a study on class teachers' role in maintaining students' discipline in secondary schools. Although the issue was the discipline of students, the findings in this study on Civics teaching have contributed to the understanding of the way the subject contributes to maintaining students' discipline in secondary schools. In addition, the aspects of guidance and counselling that this study found are important in reducing Indiscipline issues. Furthermore, in the study by Karkami and Rahimi

(2015) teaching effectiveness, motivation and achievement were found to be related to discipline strategies.

The findings in this study that are related to teaching approaches that enhance discipline are significant to the improvement of discipline in schools. The results may be used to address the issues of discipline using the participatory approach. In the study by Karkami and Rahimi (2015), it was noted that the teachers who used involvement and recognition strategies more frequently were perceived to be more effective teachers. The teachers who used punitive approaches were perceived as being less effective in their teaching. The findings in this study have revealed that teachers teaching strategies that are participatory reward students' good behaviour and teachers are not perceived by their students as authoritarians.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, it was concluded that Civics teachers' teaching strategies enhance students' discipline when students are allowed to experience ethical and moral values. It is, therefore, recommended that, teachers should practice and reflect the change in students' behaviour through student involvement that genuinely engages in problem-solving that is related to students' discipline. It is recommended that the government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology recruit Civics subject teachers who are trained to teach the subject. This will guarantee relevant teaching and learning materials for an effective change in student behaviour. The government of Tanzania should conduct training for Civics teachers, to enhance their skills and knowledge in teaching on a regular basis. Further studies may be conducted on the role of students' learning behaviours in Civics subjects in addressing students' discipline in schools.

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