

Bridging Policy and Practice: Insights into Civic Education Implementation in Kabwe District Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the implementation strategies of Civic Education as a compulsory subject in the senior secondary schools within Kabwe District. Utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods anchored on the convergent parallel design, the research provides a comprehensive analysis of the alignment between national policy directives and actual practices in schools through the strategies adopted by educators in the delivery of Civic Education. The findings reveal commendable adherence to national education policies, and disparities in local policy presence signal the need for comprehensive implementation strategies. Furthermore, the findings shed light on strategies schools adopted, including policy alignment, local policy development, and advocacy initiatives, emphasising the importance of fostering civic literacy and engagement beyond the classroom. Recommendations include enhancing policy alignment, strengthening local policy development, promoting advocacy and awareness, providing support and resources, fostering collaboration, and implementing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Remarkably, the findings offer novel and valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders involved in Civic Education implementation, emphasising the importance of bridging policy and practice to cultivate informed and engaged citizens, ultimately contributing to broader societal goals of democratic participation and development.

Keywords: Civic Education, Compulsory Subject, Implementation, Policy, Practice

INTRODUCTION

Civic education serves as the cornerstone for fostering an informed and active citizenry capable of contributing positively to the democratic fabric of society (Smith, Johnson, and Thompson, 2018). According to Jones and Brown, (2019), Civic education encompasses the instruction and acquisition of experiences aimed at equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective participation in democratic processes, understanding of rights and responsibilities, and engagement in community and societal issues. This means that Civic Education is concerned with the practice of imparting knowledge, skills, and values that equip citizens to enthusiastically engage in civic and democratic practices, uphold democratic principles, and contribute to the betterment of society.

However, education for responsible citizenship, often referred to as Civic Education, plays a crucial role in shaping individuals to become active and engaged members of society. According to research conducted by Smith, Johnson, and Thompson (2018), comprehensive Civic Education programs significantly contribute to the development of democratic values among high school students, fostering a deeper understanding of democratic principles and promoting active citizenship. In Zambia, the national education policy mandates

the inclusion of the subject (Civic Education) in the curriculum for senior secondary school learners (Ministry of Education, 1996). However, recent developments in the educational landscape, particularly the 2013 national curriculum framework, introduced ambiguity regarding the status of Civic Education as a compulsory subject for learners at the senior secondary school level. While the national education policy advocates for teaching Civic Education to all senior secondary school learners, the 2013 curriculum framework presents it as an optional subject for Technology, and Home economics and Hospitality curriculums (Ministry of Education, 2013). This discrepancy needed further exploration into the implementation strategies of Civic Education for the subject to be delivered to all learners at the senior secondary school level.

This inconsistency has raised concerns among educators and scholars regarding the inclusive implementation of the subject at the senior level in Zambia. Despite some evidence from local studies confirming that Civic Education is a compulsory subject at the senior secondary level (Kaumba, Kabombwe, and Mwanza 2020; Magasu and Hanangama, 2022; Muleya, 2019), there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the strategies employed by educators to implement Civic Education as mandated by the national policy. While studies such as those by Chipalo (2018), Simwanza (2017), and have explored challenges and prospects of Civic Education implementation, they have not extensively delved into the specific strategies educators used in secondary schools to ensure comprehensive implementation of the subject.

Furthermore, the discrepancy between the national education policy and the 2013 national curriculum framework left a significant gap in understanding how educators navigated this policy landscape to deliver Civic Education to learners at the senior secondary school level. This gap hindered the understanding of the inclusive delivery of the subject. As such, questions were raised about the comprehensive implementation of Civic Education to all learners at the senior secondary school level across the country. Hence the need for undertaking this study, with a focus on Kabwe District secondary schools.

Given the importance of Civic Education in nurturing informed and responsible citizens capable of contributing positively to public life (Ministry of Education, 1996), it was imperative to explore the strategies educators in Kabwe District secondary schools used to implement Civic Education as a compulsory subject. By identifying and analysing these strategies, the gaps in Civic Education delivery could be addressed to promote its effective implementation as a compulsory subject in secondary schools. Thus ensuring that learners are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to actively participate in civic affairs.

Therefore, this study was purposed to investigate the implementation strategies adopted by educators in Kabwe District secondary schools concerning the delivery of Civic Education as a compulsory subject to learners at the senior level. Specifically, the study identified and analysed the strategies adopted by educators in Kabwe District secondary schools to implement Civic Education as a compulsory subject, despite the optional status presented in the 2013 national curriculum framework. Examining these strategies using a mixed methods approach, the study aimed to fill the gap in the literature, aiming at inclusive delivery of Civic Education to all learners to promote responsible citizenship among senior secondary school learners in Zambia. Through this investigation, the study hopes to contribute to policy and practice.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Zambia, the national education policy stipulates that education for responsible citizenship referred to as Civic Education should be taught to all learners at the senior secondary school level (Ministry of Education, 1996). However, the 2013 national curriculum framework portrays an option status given to Civic Education for senior learners under Technology and Home Economics and Hospitality curriculums. Studies conducted

by local scholars in Zambia such as Kaumba et al., (2020); Magasu and Hanangama, (2022); Muleya (2019) provide evidence that Civic Education is a compulsory subject at the senior level in Zambia. Despite the inconsistency observed between the national education policy and the 2013 national curriculum framework, on teaching Civic Education to all learners at the senior secondary school in Zambia, there seemed to be inadequate literature to provide information on strategies educators employed to implement Civic Education as a compulsory subject. In this regard, the implementation strategies used remained unexplored. Understanding the implementation strategies is essential for addressing gaps in Civic Education delivery and ensuring that Civic Education is taught to all learners at the senior secondary school level in Kabwe District and across the country. This is with a view of producing an informed present and future generation to positively participate in all spheres of public life. It was not known how educators managed to implement Civic Education as a compulsory subject to all learners at the senior secondary school level in Zambia, particularly in Kabwe District, owing to the option status given to Civic Education in the 2013 national curriculum framework (Ministry of Education, 2013). As such this study attempted to explore the strategies that educators in Kabwe District adopted, in a bid to fill the identified gap.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) which informed this study was initially developed by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith in the early 1980s (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Since then, the framework has been continuously refined and improved upon by various scholars in the field of public policy. Notable advocates and contributors to the ACF include Paul Sabatier, Hank Jenkins-Smith, Christopher M. Weible, Daniel Nohrstedt, and several others (Weible et al., 2011; Jenkins-Smith et al., 2014). The ACF offers a pertinent lens through which to understand the dynamics of policy implementation, particularly from the perspective of Civic Education delivery in Kabwe District secondary schools in Zambia. The ACF provides a theoretical framework for examining how actors with differing beliefs and preferences interact within policy subsystems, shaping the implementation process (Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 2019).

In the case of implementing Civic Education as a compulsory subject despite its optional status in the 2013 national curriculum framework, the ACF can shed light on the role of various actors, such as educators, policymakers, civil society organizations, and community stakeholders, in influencing implementation strategies. According to the ACF, actors form coalitions based on shared beliefs, interests, and policy goals, working together to advocate for their preferred policy outcomes (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier, 1993). In the situation of Kabwe District secondary schools, educators may form coalitions to advocate for the importance of Civic Education and the necessity of implementing it as a compulsory subject, despite the policy ambiguity presented by the national curriculum framework. These coalitions may collaborate with policymakers and other stakeholders to develop and implement strategies aimed at ensuring the effective delivery of Civic Education in the district. Moreover, the ACF stresses the role of policy learning and feedback mechanisms in shaping coalition dynamics and influencing policy outcomes (Weible et al., 2011). As educators and policymakers navigate the implementation of Civic Education as a compulsory subject, they may engage in learning processes to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with this policy change. Through ongoing dialogue and feedback mechanisms, coalitions may adapt their strategies to address emerging issues and improve the implementation process. Additionally, the ACF highlights the importance of understanding external factors, such as socio-economic context, institutional arrangements, and political dynamics, in influencing policy implementation (Jenkins-Smith et al., 2018). In the case of Kabwe District secondary schools, factors such as resource constraints, teacher capacity, and community engagement may impact the implementation of Civic Education as a compulsory subject. By considering these external factors within the ACF framework, researchers can gain insights into the broader context shaping implementation strategies and outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review aims to examine existing research on Civic Education policy implementation, exploring diverse perspectives, based on empirical findings to inform effective practices and address existing gaps in the literature.

Loveline (2020) explored curriculum policy implementation in Cameroon using secondary data analysis. He identified factors crucial for successful policy enactment, such as clear goals, stakeholder involvement, adequate resources, and ongoing support for educators. While valuable, this study focused on a national perspective and relied on secondary data, which might not capture the details of implementation at the district level or the specific strategies educators use in classrooms (Loveline, 2020). Countries worldwide adopt varied approaches to Civic Education implementation, ranging from standalone subjects to integration within broader curricular frameworks. Ajaps and Obiagu (2021) highlight the prevalence of Civic Education as a standalone subject in some nations, while Nurdin's (2015) study in Indonesia underscores the integration of Civic Education into broader subjects like social studies. These diverse approaches reflect distinct national priorities, educational philosophies, and cultural contexts, influencing the effectiveness of Civic Education initiatives. Nurdin's (2015) examination of Civic Education policies in Indonesia reveals a complex landscape marked by evolving curriculum frameworks, challenges in implementation efficiency, and varying pedagogical approaches. Similarly, Erica, Cale, and Anguilar's (2018) study on curriculum implementation barriers highlights the importance of information dissemination, professional development, and stakeholder collaboration in ensuring successful program execution. Loveline's (2020) analysis of curriculum policy changes in Cameroon further underscores the significance of stakeholder involvement, resource access, and policy clarity in facilitating effective implementation.

From the local context, Mulenga and Ng'andu (2022) in Lusaka, Zambia, sheds light on the challenges surrounding Civic Education Teaching Resources and Teacher Preparedness for Secondary School Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) implementation. Despite receiving in-service training on CBC, teachers were found to be inadequately utilising recommended teaching methods, while teaching resources were lacking and teachers lacked a deep understanding of how to effectively employ them for CBC implementation. These findings highlight significant gaps in teacher preparedness and resource provision, crucial for the successful implementation of Civic Education as a compulsory subject. To address these challenges, the study recommends retraining teachers with the necessary skills for competency-based learning, emphasising learner-centred approaches in both in-service and pre-service training, and facilitating the provision of adequate teaching and learning resources by the Ministry of Education. This study underscores the importance of addressing teacher preparedness and resource provision in ensuring effective Civic Education instruction in secondary schools, thereby contributing to the development of informed and civically engaged citizens in Kabwe District secondary schools to implement Civic Education as a compulsory subject.

The study conducted by Magasu, Muleya, and Mweemba (2020) delves into the examination of teaching strategies employed in Civic Education lessons within secondary schools in Zambia. It employs a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing semi-structured interviews and document analysis as data collection methods. The findings reveal a variety of teaching strategies employed by teachers, including lectures, discussions, and group work. Additionally, the study uncovers challenges faced by teachers in implementing these strategies effectively, such as large class sizes and limited access to teaching resources. The study offers recommendations to address these challenges, including the need for teacher training on innovative teaching methodologies and the provision of adequate resources for effective Civic Education instruction. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the current setting of Civic Education teaching strategies in Zambian secondary schools and offers practical recommendations for improvement. However, the study

is silent on implementation strategies adopted for the delivery of the subject. Despite valuable contributions from existing literature, there remains a notable gap in research concerning the specific strategies for Civic Education implementation in Kabwe District secondary schools. This was the aim of this study to address the identified gap by employing mixed methods approaches, integrating local context considerations, and emphasising theoretical grounding to provide actionable recommendations for effective Civic Education implementation. By bridging this gap, scholars can contribute to the advancement of knowledge and inform evidence-based strategies in Civic Education policy implementation regarding Civic Education as a compulsory subject in Kabwe District and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a pragmatic paradigm, integrating both positivist and interpretivist perspectives to effectively address research objectives (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016; Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). A mixed-methods approach was utilized, incorporating qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain rich insights (Poht and Munce, 2020). A convergent parallel design was employed, allowing for the simultaneous collection and integration of numerical and descriptive data sets (Ivankova, Plano, and Clark, 2018). Conducted in all 32 secondary schools in Kabwe District, Central Province, Zambia, the research targeted a diverse population including trained teachers of Civic Education, school administrators, heads of department social sciences, civic education section heads and two key informants from the Ministry of Education. A total sample size of 319 participants, with 215 individuals involved in quantitative data collection through an online survey using a web questionnaire containing closed-ended questions (Saunders et al., 2019). A total of 104 participants were included in face-to-face individual interviews and focus group discussions to collect qualitative data captured by a recorder. The individual interview method utilised interview guides as instruments, incorporating open-ended questions to allow for in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives (Saunders et al., 2019). Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted using a focus group guide as an instrument to facilitate group interactions and elicit diverse viewpoints (Saunders et al., 2019). Data analysis involved descriptive statistics techniques for quantitative data presented in tables and figures. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2019; Kiger and Varpio, 2020) and data was presented thematically supported by excerpts from the data. Rigorous pilot testing and credibility checks were conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of research instruments and findings (Ivankova, Plano, and Clark, 2018).

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical principles such as informed consent, respect for autonomy, and confidentiality were rigorously upheld throughout the research process. Anonymising data and obtaining ethical clearance underscored the commitment to ethical integrity and participant protection. (Mathers, (Howe and Hunn, 2018).

RESULTS

In this section, the study results are presented, commencing with the response rate of respondents, followed by an overview of the demographic characteristics of participants who engaged in the online survey. The variables under examination encompass gender, age range, highest level of professional qualification, and work experience. Subsequently, the key findings are delineated and discussed under two separate headings, aligned with the study objectives.

- **Respondent's Response Rate**

Figure 1 presents the respondent's response rate based on the data obtained from the field.

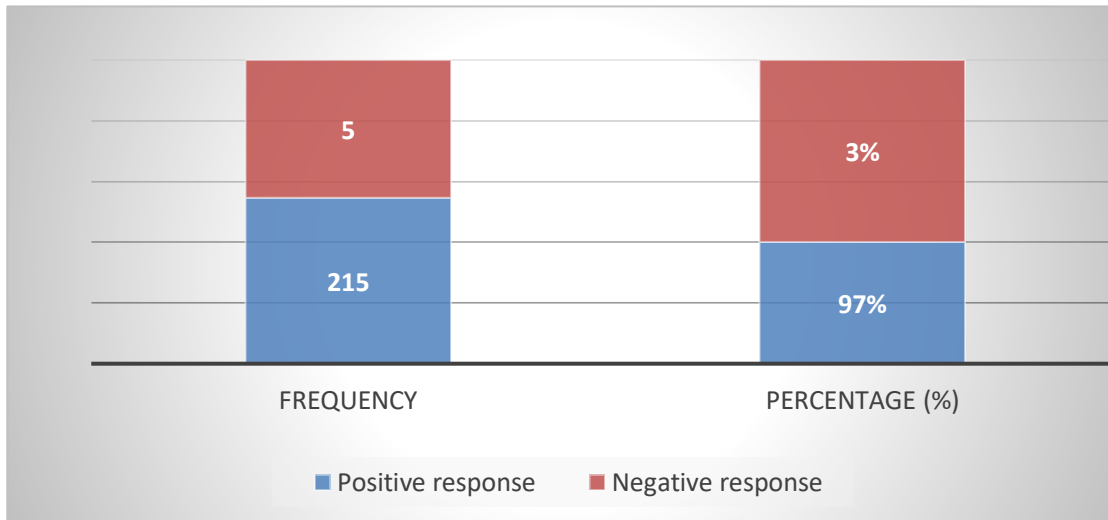


Figure 1: Respondents' Response Rate Source: Field Data. 2023

The quantitative survey was administered through a WhatsApp group, aiming for a sample size of 220 participants. Remarkably, there was a robust response rate of 97%, with 215 individuals completing the online questionnaire, as illustrated in Figure 1 above. This notable engagement underscores the effective execution of the survey instrument and reflects positively on participant involvement. Only a minimal proportion, constituting 3% (n=5), did not submit responses, indicating negligible barriers to participation. According to Norouzian (2020), a response rate of 50% is generally deemed sufficient for quantitative research, highlighting the exceptional level of engagement achieved in this study.

• Participant Demographics in the Online Survey

The table below provides a comprehensive depiction of the demographic profile of the participants.

Table I: Demographic Characteristics of the of the Participants

Variables	Category	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	115	54
	Female	100	46
Age	18-28	34	16
	29-39	67	31
	40-50	67	31
	51 and above	47	22
Qualifications	Diploma	24	11
	Bachelor's Degree	172	80
	Master's Degree	17	08
	Other	02	01
Work Experience	0-5	60	28
	6-10	84	39
	11-15	26	12
	16 and above	45	21

Source: Field Data, 2023

The analysis of demographic characteristics indicates that males constituted 54% (n=115) of the total participants, while females comprised 46% (n=100). Regarding age distribution, 62% (n=134) of respondents fell within the 29-50 age range, with 31% (n=67) evenly distributed between 29-39 and 40-50 years. Conversely, the least represented age group included participants aged 51 years and above, comprising 22% (n=47) of the sample, while the youngest age bracket of 18-28 years constituted only 16% (n=34) of respondents. In terms of professional qualifications, 80% (n=172) held bachelor’s degrees, while only 1% (n=2) possessed higher professional qualifications. Regarding work experience, the majority of participants (39%) had 6-10 years of experience, with the least represented group (12%) having 11-15 years.

● **Presentation of Main Findings**

Having utilised a mixed-methods approach and a convergent parallel design, this study concurrently presents quantitative and qualitative findings under two main headings derived from the research objectives. The quantitative results are presented first, followed by the qualitative findings. However, the study was purposed to identify the strategies utilised by Kabwe District schools in implementing Civic Education as a compulsory subject at the senior secondary level. Researchers aimed to address the following question: “What strategies did Kabwe District schools employ for implementing Civic Education as a compulsory subject at the senior secondary school level?”

● **Quantitative Findings on Implementation Strategies Adopted by Schools Kabwe District**

This section outlines quantitative data obtained from 215 participants who completed an online questionnaire. Before investigating implementation strategies, the researchers needed to establish whether Civic Education was compulsory at the senior level if schools had local implementation policies, and if policy Implementation was being monitored by the Ministry of Education. Results are categorised into three variables: Compulsory Subject, Local Policies, and Implementation Monitoring, each variable offering options for Affirmative Response, Negative Response, or Neutral response. The findings are summarised in the cluster chart below.

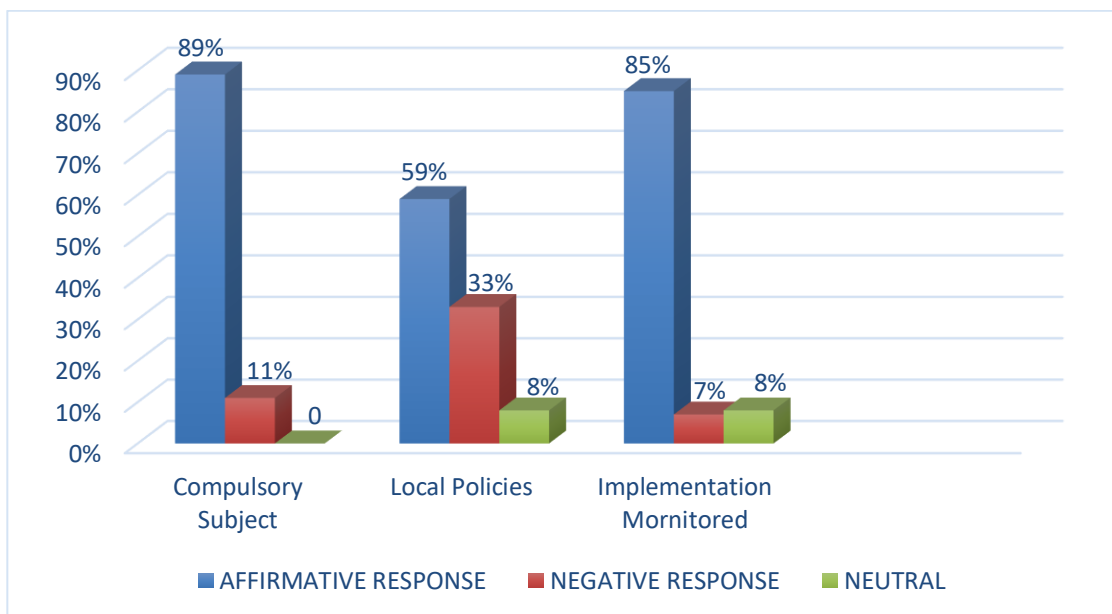


Figure 2: Implementation of Civic Education at Senior Level Source: Field Data,

The responses depicted in Figure 2 above reflect aspects of Civic Education implementation as a compulsory subject in Kabwe District secondary schools. Out of 215 participants, 89% (n=191) affirmed

that Civic Education was compulsory in their schools, aligning with national policy. However, 11% (n=24) indicated otherwise, suggesting inconsistent enforcement. Concerning local policies, 59% (n=125) confirmed their existence, showing efforts to align practices with national policy, while 33% (n=72) lacked such systems. Additionally, 8% (n=18) were unsure. Regarding monitoring, 85% (n=184) reported oversight by the Ministry of Education, yet 7% (n=14) indicated no monitoring. Furthermore, 8% (n=17) were unsure. These findings highlight both adherence to policy and potential gaps in enforcement and local support systems.

The findings reveal that while the majority of Kabwe District schools adhere to the national policy by offering Civic Education to senior learners, inconsistencies exist in local policy support and monitoring by MoE enforcers, suggesting areas for improvement in Civic Education implementation across the district.

Furthermore, researchers needed to understand the guiding principle behind schools' decisions to offer civic education either as a compulsory or optional subject to senior secondary school learners in Kabwe District. Participants were presented with options as depicted in Figure 3 below, to select the option applicable for their school. The responses from 215 individuals are illustrated in Figure 3 below:

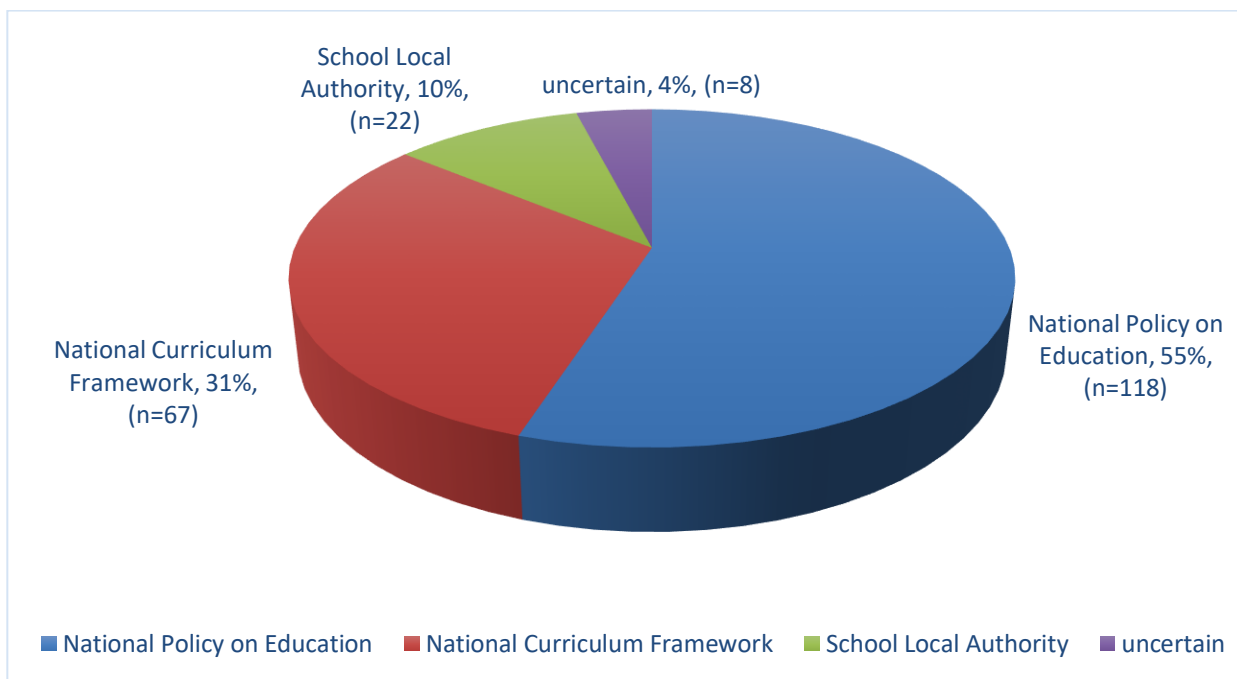


Figure 3 Implementation Guide on Civic Education

Source: Field Data, 2023

The data from Figure 3 reveals that a majority of respondents (55%) adhered to the national policy, making Civic Education compulsory at the senior secondary level. However, 31% based their implementation on the national curriculum framework, indicating some variation in interpretation. Additionally, 10% relied on school authorities' decisions, suggesting autonomy in curriculum planning. Nonetheless, 4% expressed uncertainty about the implementation basis, highlighting a need for clarity. These findings underscore the importance of consistent monitoring and adherence to national guidelines for ensuring high-quality Civic Education delivery in Kabwe District schools.

However, a question was asked based on strategies that schools adopted for implementing Civic Education as a compulsory subject for learners at the senior secondary school level. Participants were provided with options to select the strategies that their school adopted. The following are the variables examined: Emphasis on Civic Education (CE); Prioritising CE; Curriculum Selection; and No Strategies. The responses are presented in Figure 4 below:

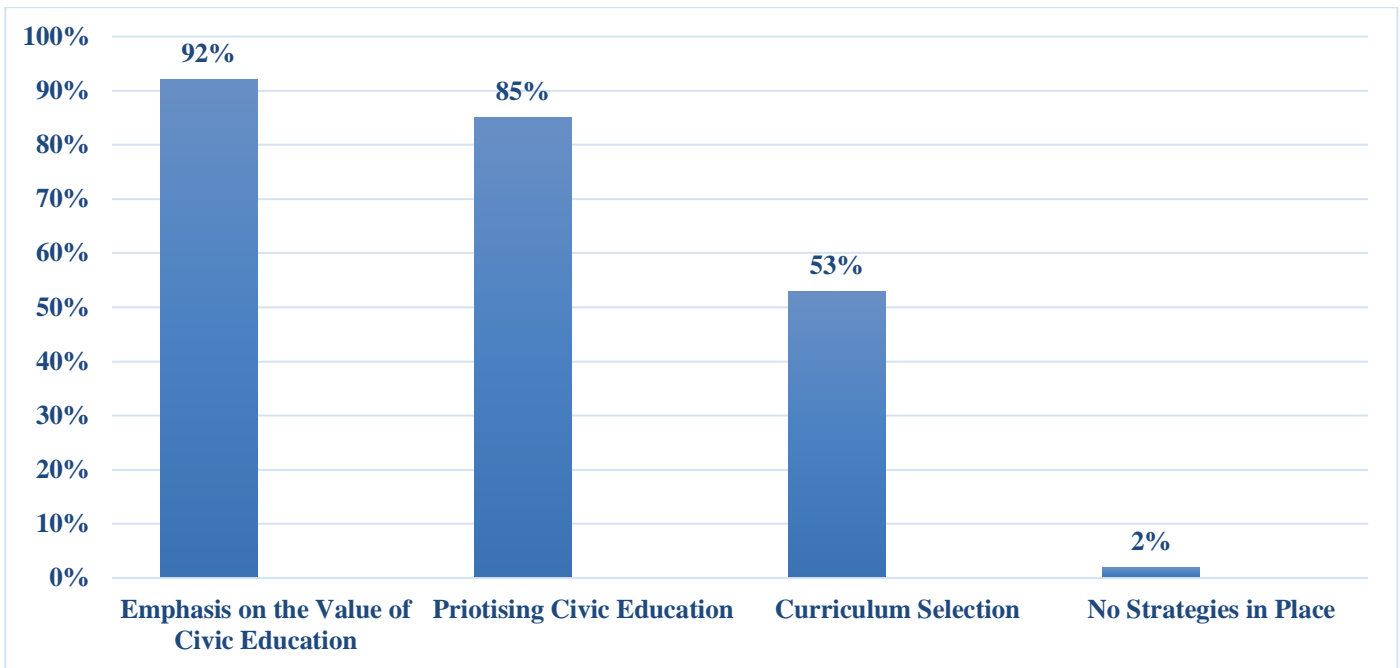


Figure 4: Implementation Strategies Adopted Source: Field Data, 2023

Results in Figure 4 above indicate that 92% (n=197) of responses emphasised the value of Civic Education, with 85% (n=182) prioritising it among other social science subjects, and 53% (n=115) reporting its integration as a compulsory subject in curriculums. However, 2% (n=4) of schools lack specific implementation strategies. These findings underscore the importance of comprehensive approaches to ensure quality Civic Education delivery in Kabwe District’s senior secondary schools.

• **Qualitative Findings on Implementation Strategies Adopted by Schools**

Qualitative data was gathered from 104 participants, comprising 24 individual interviews and 80 focus group participants with 8 groups, highlighting strategies adopted for implementing Civic Education as a compulsory subject in Kabwe District secondary schools. Four main themes emerged as strategies adopted as; understanding the value of Civic Education, harmonization of the national policy on Education and the curriculum framework, establishment of the local policy, selection of subject combination and timetabling.

1. Understanding the Value of Civic Education: Regarding this theme, participants unanimously stressed the stated theme as the strategy adopted. They believed that stakeholders involved in the implementation of Civic Education needed to be well informed on the value of the subject for them to support the implementation process. Below is the excerpt from a teacher of Civic Education from school H to support the above theme:

The fact that the 2013 curriculum framework shows that Civic Education is not a compulsory subject, as a school we saw the need to come up with a strategy to help our school authorities and other teachers who did not train in Civic Education, understand the value of Civic Education to be taught as a compulsory subject, in line with the National policy on education (Field Data, 2023).

One of the section heads for Civic Education from school F was quoted as follows:

One of the strategies we have taken as a school to ensure Civic Education is taught to all learners is, to make sure that our administrators, members of staff and learners understand and acknowledge the value of Civic Education through sensitisation within the school.... (Field data, 2023).

The above theme and excerpts underscore the critical role of awareness and comprehension among educators, learners, and school authorities regarding the value of Civic Education in the educational system.

2. Harmonisation of the Education Policy and 2013 Curriculum Framework: In line with this theme, educators in sampled schools highlighted the need for alignment between the national education policy and the 2013 curriculum framework, particularly regarding Civic Education to be taught to all senior learners at the secondary level. The Head of the Department of Social Sciences interviewed from school B submitted the following response:

What I can say is that...in as much as some learners may be excluded from learning Civic Education as it appears in the 2013 curriculum framework, our efforts as a school are directed towards ensuring that the National Policy on Education is reflected in the curriculum at the school level. We are committed to harmonising the guidelines contained in both documents....(Field data, 2023).

Still, in trying to validate the response on harmonisation of the National Policy on Education and the curriculum, one of the head teachers interviewed from school D responded as follows:

As a head teacher, I am so passionate about Civic Education. When I came to this school last year, I found Civic Education being offered as an option subject. To accommodate Civic Education as a compulsory subject, in this school, we have actively worked towards aligning our curriculum with the guidelines outlined in the National Policy on Education.... (Field data, 2023).

Similar to the above quote, one of the teachers of Civic Education interviewed from the same school (D) as above, stated as follows:

Our head teacher is so passionate about Civic Education and he has made it a point that the subject is taught to all learners.... We were told to harmonise the National Policy and Curriculum Framework to accommodate all learners ensuring no class is left out in learning Civic Education. (Field data, 2023).

The above statements reflect the conscious efforts of schools to align the 2013 curriculum with the guidelines outlined in the National Policy on Education as a strategy adopted to offer Civic Education as a compulsory subject.

3. Establishment of the Local Policy on Civic Education: This theme underscores the importance of aligning local policies with national standards and tailoring them to address unique educational challenges as one of the strategies adopted. For instance, one of the head teachers from school C during the interview stated as follows:

One of the strategies of ensuring Civic Education is taught to all learners at the senior level is our approach which involves careful planning of the school curriculum, ensuring that Civic Education remains a compulsory subject for all learners over three academic years. This local policy underscores our commitment to ensuring continuity in offering the subject to all learners even when there are changes in the school leadership (Field data, 2023).

The evidence noted in the response below from key informant 2 provides information on the notion that schools had the flexibility in the way they allocated Civic Education at the senior secondary level as contained in the quote below:

What I can say is that schools have adopted different strategies to offer Civic Education as a compulsory subject or optional at the senior level. This is because the learners under Technology Home Economics and hospitality are not completely excluded from learning Civic Education, but still, the subject appears as

an optional subject. However, it appears almost all the schools in Kabwe District have opted to offer Civic Education as a compulsory subject at the senior level. (Field Data, 2023).

The above excerpts reflect the proactive steps taken by schools to establish local policies that align with the guidelines outlined in the National Policy on Education. Planning of the school's local curriculum underscores the commitment to prioritising Civic Education within the local context.

4. Selection of Subject Combination and Timetabling: In line with this theme, results show practices such as adjusting subject combinations to include Civic Education, reducing practical subjects under vocational pathways, and extending learning time by adding extra periods on the timetable.

Key informant 1 submitted the following response during an interview:

The careful selection of subject combinations and effective timetabling practices enable schools to prioritise Civic Education alongside other essential subjects. (Field Data, 2023).

As a way of emphasising the above theme, one of the heads of the department interviewed from school A stated as follows:

To accommodate all classes for Civic Education, we have strategically designed subject combinations at the senior level to include Civic Education, ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to engage with the subject. (Field data, 2023).

A head teacher from school B submitted the following response:

When I came to this school, I found Civic Education being offered as an option subject. Considering the importance of the subject, I instructed my HoDs and the timetable committee to include Civic Education on the timetable to ensure they select curriculums with Civic Education combination. (Field Data, 2023).

The statements above emphasise deliberate efforts by schools to strategically integrate Civic Education into learners' subject combinations, highlighting the importance of the subject. The adjustments to the timetable demonstrate a commitment to fostering a balanced learning environment that effectively incorporates Civic Education with other essential subjects.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study collected and analysed both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the implementation strategies adopted by secondary schools in Kabwe District to implement Civic Education as a compulsory subject at the senior secondary level. Through this analysis, key insights were gained, which revealed both strengths and areas needing improvement in the delivery of compulsory Civic Education. The results unveil a compelling narrative regarding the implementation of Civic Education in Kabwe District's senior secondary schools. Quantitative findings underscore a commendable adherence to national education policy, affirming the integration of Civic Education into the curriculum as a compulsory subject (Ajaps and Obiagu, 2021). This robust adherence underscores schools' acknowledgement of Civic Education's pivotal role in nurturing informed citizenship and active civic engagement among learners, as observed by Jones and Brown, (2019). However, the analysis reveals areas warranting attention for further improvement. While the majority of schools demonstrate alignment with national policy directives, disparities exist in the presence of local policies or support systems (Johnson, 2018). This gap signals the need for comprehensive implementation strategies that bridge both national and local educational contexts (Doe and Roe, 2021). Tailored approaches, considering local policies while adhering to overarching policy frameworks, can enhance the efficacy and uniformity of Civic Education delivery across the district (Garcia and Martinez,

2017).

Qualitative insights delve deeper into the strategies employed by schools to ensure effective Civic Education implementation as a compulsory subject. Themes such as understanding the value of Civic Education, harmonising policy frameworks, establishing local policies, and strategic subject combination and timetabling emerge as crucial pillars supporting implementation efforts (Lee and Kim, 2019). Acknowledging the value of Civic Education underscores its significance in shaping responsible citizenship and active participation in democracy (Wilson, 2018). The emphasis on policy alignment highlights schools' concerted efforts to integrate national directives seamlessly into the educational landscape (Thompson and Nguyen, 2020). However, the establishment of local policies serves as a vital supplement, addressing unique district-level needs and fostering a more comprehensive approach to Civic Education delivery to all senior learners (Brown and Miller, 2016). Moreover, the qualitative findings shed light on advocacy and awareness initiatives aimed at promoting Civic Education beyond classroom boundaries (Choi et al., 2021). By strategically integrating Civic Education into subject combinations and timetables, schools create a balanced curriculum that prioritises civic literacy alongside other essential subjects (Clark and Lewis, 2019).

While quantitative data indicate a high level of policy adherence, qualitative insights unveil the complex strategies schools employ to navigate implementation challenges. Discrepancies between the two datasets underscore the dynamic nature of policy implementation, wherein formal adherence coexists with localised strategies tailored to specific contexts (Adams and White, 2017).

Addressing identified gaps necessitates collaborative efforts between schools and education authorities. Providing resources and guidance to schools lacking specific strategies, fostering communication and coordination among stakeholders, and clarifying policy directives can bolster Civic Education implementation efforts (Harris and Smith, 2022). In essence, the synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data paints a comprehensive picture of Civic Education implementation in Kabwe District. By leveraging policy alignment, local engagement, and strategic interventions, schools can foster an educational environment that cultivates informed and engaged citizens, thereby advancing the broader goals of democratic participation and societal development.

The established strategies adopted align with the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) which informed this study, as it emphasises policy learning, coalition-building, and stakeholder engagement (Thompson and Nguyen, 2020). In line with the ACF theory, discrepancies between quantitative and qualitative data highlight the dynamic nature of policy implementation, requiring collaborative efforts to address identified gaps (Adams and White, 2017). Overall, the synthesis of findings underscores the importance of policy alignment, local engagement, and collaborative interventions in promoting Civic Education and advancing democratic participation in Kabwe District (Harris and Smith, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The results reviewed some inconsistencies between policy and practice. The current practices in secondary schools in Kabwe District regarding the implementation of Civic Education at the senior level are that some schools have responded to the national policy on education by offering the subject to all senior learners, while some schools are offering it as an optional subject in line with the 2013 national curriculum framework. In this regard, there is a need to bridge the gap between policy and practice. The study unveils novel insights into the subject's integration into the curriculum as a compulsory component, showcasing schools' commitment to nurturing informed citizenship and civic engagement among students. However, disparities in the presence of local policies highlight the need for comprehensive implementation strategies bridging national and local contexts. Findings underscore schools' strategies, including policy alignment, local policy development, and advocacy initiatives, to ensure effective Civic Education delivery as a

compulsory subject to all learners at the senior secondary school level in Kabwe District and beyond. These insights emphasise the importance of fostering civic literacy and engagement beyond the classroom, ultimately advancing broader societal goals of democratic participation and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. The government through the Ministry of Education to develop clear guidelines and directives at the national level to ensure consistent implementation of Civic Education across all schools in Kabwe District and beyond. This would be achieved by ensuring compliance with the given directives by monitoring the implementation process.
2. Schools to establish local policies that complement national directives and address district-specific needs, fostering a more comprehensive approach to Compulsory Civic Education implementation. This calls for school administrators to be committed to ensuring the framing of the appropriate local policy that would positively respond to the national policy on education.
3. The Ministry of Education to provide support and guidance, training, and resources to schools lacking specific strategies for effective Civic Education implementation, ensuring equitable access to quality education for all learners. This recommendation requires that the policy enforcers support all schools in needy areas.
4. The Ministry of Education to facilitate communication and coordination among stakeholders, including schools, education authorities, and community organisations, to promote a collaborative approach to Civic Education implementation. This can be achieved through the efforts made by stakeholders at the local level to properly coordinate the implementation process.
5. The Ministry of Education to establish monitoring mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of Civic Education implementation strategies, allowing for continuous improvement and refinement based on feedback and evaluation results. This could be achieved through proper coordination between the stakeholders at the national and school levels.

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