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### Interrogating corruption through teaching and learning of civic education in selected secondary schools in Lusaka, Zambia

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#### Abstract

This article offers an in-depth interrogation of corruption persistence in the education sector, notwithstanding the teaching and learning of Civic Education in Zambia. The article brings out the gaps of the pedagogy and content adopted in teaching CVE by analyzing educational reforms aimed at affecting people's political awareness, beliefs, commitments, capabilities and actions as members of the community. One of the civic goals of the reforms was to eliminate corruption through civic awareness in the schooling system. Despite this aim, education malpractices in schools have persisted. The article interrogates this goal by analyzing the effect of teaching and learning CVE in relation to corruption elimination in schools.

French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of social capital provided a theoretical framework for the article. Social capital was defined as social obligations or connections, which reflect the interpersonal relations between pupils and teachers, and among teachers and education administrators. Social capital highlighted relations of trust, their function in facilitating cooperation between head teachers and education authorities. This is because the trust demonstrated in interpersonal relationships enhances

cooperation between actors involved in corrupt conduct in schools. Further, social capital means reciprocity in exchanges of gifts and educational services; namely, school places and promotions.

Methodologically, the article used an inductive and qualitative approach based on interviews and group discussions with key informants. The argument in this paper is that the philosophical policy necessity in the pedagogy and content to justify the educational reforms by introducing CVE syllabus in Zambia are weak hence the persistence of corruption in schools. It is equally contended that ignoring the linguistic perspective of corruption in localized words, titles and concepts fuels corruption persistence between and among stakeholders in schools.

The article concludes that the poorest in Zambia are most affected by corruption in the education sector because it has significant benefits to education service users resulting in the lack of interventions and weak teaching and learning foundations necessary for its elimination in schools. The article proposes a reflexive policy inquiry and political commitment to eliminate corruption in the education sector of Zambia.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Pedagogy, Informants, Teacher, Inductive, Social Capital

#### 1. Background and context

Worldwide, the education sector offers numerous opportunities for corruption because of its largest or second largest budgetary allocation items in most countries (Michelson Institute, 2006: 3) <sup>[37]</sup>. Similarly, the over increasing budgetary allocation have facilitated opportunities for corruption to abound in Zambia. There are too many reports of corruption in the education sector in Zambia from both the community and media. For instance, from 2010 to 2020, over 75 primary and secondary school teachers were dismissed for offences relating to corruption and unethical conduct (Teaching Service Commission, 2020).

According to the Michelson Institute (2006: 3-4) <sup>[37]</sup>, corruption in the education sector takes various forms, some of which are not so obvious. It includes: the diversion of funds intended for school needs; the granting of schools places to children influenced by the granting of monetary or material favours by parents; teacher recruitment, postings and promotions influenced by bribes or nepotism; private tutoring outside school hours given to paying pupils reducing teachers' motivation in ordinary classes, and reserving compulsory topics for the private sessions to the detriment of learners who do not or cannot pay for them; teachers engaging in sexual relationships with learners and examination malpractices.

In addition, corruption in the education sector occurs at the central ministerial, school and administrative level (Sen, 1999). Nevertheless, corruption occurring at the latter level is the concern for this article. However, corruption is not the cause of all evils. What appears to be corruption may in fact be incompetence by key actors in the education sector, or it may be due to inadequacies in infrastructure such as fewer classroom space for learners, weaker financial management, accounting and monitoring systems. Corruption is a discrete act by the parties involved. The most widely condemned practices- the extortion of funds is the most hidden, while more visible practices, say forced private tutoring, tend to be more tolerated.

Corruption in the education sector is very likely to occur where teachers receive little or late pay that forces them to look elsewhere for resources no longer provided by their salaries, where educational officials exercise untrammelled administrative discretion and power over their subordinates, and where the risk of detection and severe punishment is low (Michelsen 2020: 6). For De Sardan (1999), corruption also occurs where it has become generalized and normalized by politicians for lacking the political will to fight it. This provides a bad example to the rest of society in a manner that legitimizes the practice.

Where corruption is rampant, there is a great risk of the development potential of a country being undermined. The handling and training of young people who will take up the future developmental responsibilities of the country requires that teachers conduct themselves in a more professional and ethical manner. When learners become familiar with corruption at school and university levels, a central role of the education sector, namely that of instilling ethical values and behavior in young learners, corruption becomes impossible to eliminate resulting in the scourge to flourish and considered normal at all levels of society.

Globally, efforts have been made to deal with corruption in the education sector though these have not yielded the expected results. According to the 2011 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report on corruption in the education sector, anti-corruption strategies in education have involved both preventative and prosecutorial measures. For prosecutorial measures this has involved increasing the cost of violations, through more severe punishments for educators, staff and students, and increasing the probability of violations being detected, for instance, by higher transparency in recruitment, hiring, firing, accreditation processes and exam protocols.

On the prosecutorial side, the use of non-state actors in Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) to examine the flow of funds and materials from the donor or government to frontline delivery units such as schools has also been recommended. The first country to carry out PETS was Uganda in 1996 (a case closely studied by Reinikka and Svenson, 2004) This ground breaking survey revealed that less than one third of intended non-salary public spending reached the schools in the early 90s, and that the bulk of the non-wage resources was retained and used by the district authorities. This required investigating how funds were used by district authorities and prosecuting erring officers where wrongdoing is established.

In terms of the prevention of corruption, the introduction of Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) in Gambia provided an objective means of tracking and ranking teachers by seniority, language skills, specialisation,

and other relevant factors. The information prevented appointments based on personal connections and other invalid grounds (Department of State Education of Gambia 2001, in B. I. Spector *et al.* 2005)

The main preventative measure recommended has been the use of professional associations or unions to introduce clear codes of conduct for school staff that describe what constitutes corrupt practice, especially when proper professional conduct differs from otherwise widely accepted social norms, and the involvement of parents and civil society in education in order to build a sense of ownership necessary for holding administrators accountable for providing quality education and a fair use of educational funds.

For instance, Section 45 of the Teaching Profession Act No. 5 of 2013 in Zambia provides for the development of the code of professional conduct for teachers by the Teaching<sup>1</sup> Service Commission in consultation with the Teaching Council of Zambia. The code of ethics clearly outlines the values and principles which must be embraced by the teachers to promote professionalism in teaching. The Act also provides the disciplinary processes for teachers engaging in professional misconduct whether serving in the public or private education sector in Zambia. It still remains to be seen through periodic reviews how effective this code has been in dealing with cases of corrupt practices in teaching.

What the foregoing measures seem to omit is an all-important part of what drives corrupt behaviour anchored on socialization, norms, peer effects and beliefs about what others (i.e., simply, the pedagogical process in teaching learners) do in a situation susceptible to corruption. These behavioural and contextual mechanisms have been under-researched and should be examined in each individual context as embedded in anti-corruption regulations and laws of Zambia. A better understanding of the embeddedness of corrupt practices in social norms in Zambia, for instances, is what provides a better understanding for the generalisation of corruption and its normalisation.

Nevertheless, there is no one single definition of corruption that can be applied to all circumstances. There are many plausible definitions of corruption. Joseph Nye published a famous one over 50 years ago that has now become the classical definition of corruption: 'behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence'. De Sardan (1999:24) criticizes this definition as being too narrow and excessively concerned with the illegality of such practices, defined from a modern, Western point of view (these practices can be perfectly legal in other historical and social contexts). Nevertheless, the illicit character of these diverse practices, from a juridical point of view, must apparently remain an unavoidable element of this definition, seeing that the law of African countries is in this respect directly copied from current French and English law. In reality, the core of the sociological problem of corruption is to be situated in the distance between juridical condemnation of certain practices and their frequency, their banalization or the

<sup>1</sup> The process of giving instructions, knowledge and experience. It all about "how" and "what" is taught. It is to show or present ideas to those in need of it. See Packer Palmer (1998:4)

normalization of these practices that has been made possible by the example of big-time corruption by politicians in high places to members of society who fail to demonstrate capacity on their part to carry out any kind of credible campaign in favor of the public welfare or the public service and hence lends cultural legitimacy to corrupt practices.

In similar fashion, the civic education<sup>2</sup> syllabus in Zambia has ignored the broader sociological definition of corruption as “context-based” which means different things to different people in different contexts such as ideology, culture or others. What this means from a sociological viewpoint is that corruption is deviation from the norms of particular people in a given society. For instance, nepotism may not be regarded illegal in some societies because it is not considered to be a serious moral wrong in those societies, but rather as a practice that facilitates a legitimate form of networks of mutual assistance beyond kith and kin to include acquaintances, friends and ethnic fellows. Though considered illegal, bribery that has become generalized may be considered to be a practice that facilitates a legitimate form of gift-giving in a situation where one suffers from a lack of an activatable solidarity network (Phiri, 2017)<sup>[47]</sup>.

## 2. Problem statement

To what extent has Zambia’s educational reforms policy fought corruption in learning<sup>3</sup> and teaching civic education in schools? The Education sector is an area that is very susceptible to corruption mainly for three reasons. First, it has an attractive structure for patronage and manipulation of local sentiment due to a high visibility representation. Second, decisions are often made by head teachers and their deputies who can influence them according to their will. Third, most of the time, funds are spent in small amounts with weak accounting and monitoring systems, enabling division of funds, carelessly. Beside financial losses and ineffective systems, the real damage occurs when a new generation grows up believing that personal success comes through favoritism, bribery or fraud, rather than hard and honest work (Chapman, 2005)<sup>[7]</sup>. Therefore, how much has the teaching and learning of civic education done to eliminate corruption in the education sector in Zambia is the core question in this article?

## 3. History of teaching and learning of Civic Education (CVE) in Zambia

In Zambia, the Ministry of Education (MoE) conducted curriculum reforms beginning from early childhood up to tertiary level and adult literacy (MoE, 2013). These education reforms took place in 2013 and led to the introduction of CVE at junior secondary school in grade 8 and 9 stages. This implied that the civic education syllabus was integrated into the social studies curricula at secondary school level. But at senior secondary school level, CVE was first piloted in 2004 in some selected secondary schools in three provinces of Zambia (Lusaka, Central and Northern) whose first Grade 12 candidates sat for their final

examination in 2006 while other provinces (Copperbelt, Eastern, North western, Southern and Luapula) were catered for in the second pilot phase in 2007 (Magasu, Muleya and Mweemba, 2020)<sup>[35]</sup>. The educational reforms were meant to enhance the provision of quality education where learners are expected to acquire critical educational elements, namely, worthwhile skills, appropriate attitudes and values, as well as applicable knowledge which makes up competences (Mulenga and Kabombwe, 2019). Unfortunately, the philosophical policy necessity and the pedagogy to justify the educational reforms for introducing CVE syllabi in Zambia are missing. Dunn (2018)<sup>[16]</sup> on policy reforms states that they are representations of problem situations, which are diffuse sets of worries, inchoate signs of stress, or surprises for which there is no apparent solution. For example, what Knowledge and problem did CVE intend to solve that required knowledge about the antecedent conditions of a problem situation? Was it about school dropouts as an antecedent of unemployment or knowledge about corruption and democracy in schools whose achievement would lead to more citizen’s political participation? In short, the educational reforms of introducing CVE at senior secondary school level lacked substantive relevance to eliminate corruption.

## 4. Common approaches of teaching and learning CVE in Zambia

When CVE was introduced in schools, the aim was to prepare responsible, active, accountable, and knowledgeable citizens, committed to the fundamental values and principles of democracy in Zambia (Center for Civic Education, 1994)<sup>[6]</sup>. Teaching methods identified to achieve this aim included: lecture method, debate method, discussion method, education tours, community engagement, and pupils’ management boards (Mainde *et al*, 2019). Sadly, the proposed methodology ignored the practical assumptions that justify the use of these methods needed in corruption elimination. From observation, the civic policy aim was meant to appease political actors and authorities that funded the education sector at the time in question but never to reduce corruption in schools. The policy reform is mute about corruption content in CVE which is core to civic awareness of citizens for democratic values to prevail. According to USAID (2002)<sup>[61]</sup> the goal of Civic Education was to encourage a lasting change in democratic behavior among learners. This meant that more active methods necessary in the teaching of the subject were introduced. The question to ask is: if that is the case, how come corruption pandemic, namely nepotism and examination leakages in schools are still rampant? For Konopka *et al* (2015) on CVE, he advocated for active learning procedure because of its capacity to increase the understanding and retention of information to learners. He argues that the active learning pedagogical approach is necessary for the development of higher-order cognitive skills to learners because it enhances critical thinking and the problem-solving technique among them. Further, Daka, Namafe and Katowa *et al* (2019)<sup>[12]</sup> propose the use of participatory and interactive methods as best-suited in delivering better and long-term results in teaching and learning CVE. They contend that such methods of learning and teaching promotes retention of learnt content. Unfortunately, the scholars ignored learning through role play (that which involves the victim) as an appropriate approach for teaching

<sup>2</sup> The ability to acquire skills, knowledge in human beings and some animals. It is also a process that leads to change in behavior and understanding of complex phenomena.

<sup>3</sup> In broadest terms, CVE means all the processes that affect people’s beliefs, commitment, capabilities and action as members of the community. This includes all forms of civic learning such as service learning and action civics.

typologies of corruption absent in CVE syllabus in schools. In agreement with Weltman (2007:7-8) <sup>[62]</sup> who defines “active learning as a method where students are actively or experientially involved in the learning process”, the CVE pedagogical approach and content is elusive on how to explain corruption increase from those involved, let alone, to eliminate it in schools. Nothing is clear about how the active learning process through student’s participation in the teaching and learning corruption would help to reduce it. The issue is that participatory learning where the teacher is no longer a depository and transmitter of knowledge but a facilitator to help learners discover more through active participation would be helpful to combat corruption if the views of those involved are not glossed over. This shows the failures in the education reforms that confined CVE to political pandering and appeasement than taking the subject as a multidisciplinary approach to solving societal problems, namely “corruption” in the education sector.

Equally, Zambia’s Curriculum Framework of 2013 encourages teachers and teacher-educators to use methods that promote active learner participation and interaction. The use of these methods encourages learners to reflect, think and do rather than reproduce from rote learning. Magasu *et al* (2020) <sup>[35]</sup> concurs that the teaching of Civic Education should expose the learners to real life situations so that they learn from their life experiences. Exposure to real life situations will help trigger reflection and thinking, and make education relevant to society. In this regard, teachers and teacher-educators should use teaching approaches that allow learners play an active role in the learning process (Kakupa *et al*, 2015 <sup>[27]</sup>; Daka, and Changwe, 2020). Active teaching methods include all the participatory, interactive, and learner-centered teaching methods. Active pedagogical approaches include all opportunities provided by schools and class teachers in engaging learners in meaningful learning experiences such as group discussions, role plays, debates, field trips, classroom deliberations, service-learning and other active teaching strategies to facilitate their development as politically and socially responsible individuals (Homana *et al*, 2006) <sup>[22]</sup>. Active teaching methods involve the use of the mind, not just the memory. It is the process of discovery in which the learner, and not the teacher, is the main agent (Adler, 1982). However, the aim of the methodology is mute on the reflective understanding of specialized fields and content that require practicum skills needed to learn and teach it, namely corruption. Teaching corruption as a specialized topic, in CVE holds an important place in CVE as a multidisciplinary foundation to help curb corruption in schools. The reforms failed to describe all social phenomenon which contains threads of social life that can influence corruption in schools. There are no simultaneous expressions in the pedagogy and CVE content to provide civic awareness of corruption effect to participants in schools.

### 5. Corruption in education, Zambia

In Zambia, there are too many reports of corruption in the education sector by the media and yet little efforts have been made to analyze its causes and effects on quality education. This is because reforms have not factored in Civic Education as the possible tool to facilitate the elimination of corruption in the education sector. Education reforms of introducing civic education did not aim at improving attitudes and norms of citizens and professional incentives

of teacher and teacher-educators that should have been enshrined in the pedagogy and content of the subject. This means that the pedagogy is silent on how the corruption topic for CVE would be taught to strengthen citizens’ moral awareness and participation in demanding for accountability from educational institutions in order to reduce different types of corruption in the education sector. Equally, there has never been anti-corruption reforms targeting the pedagogical process in the education sector in Zambia. Therefore, nobody has been ethically conscious of the pedagogy and content of civic education that can contribute to the ongoing fight against corruption in the country. This paper provides answers to how corruption can be eliminated through teaching and learning CVE in Zambia. However, as William (1999) <sup>[63]</sup> stated, it is rather important to see the definition of corruption in each cultural context. The specific causes of corruption can differ in each country depending on the circumstances and the characteristics of state and society. In the preceding paragraphs, the paper has examined the general causes of corruption in the education sector and suggested the compulsory approach to the teaching and learning of civic education in secondary schools to eliminate it.

### 6. Theoretical framework

In terms of the theoretical framing of this article, Bourdieu’s (1986) <sup>[3]</sup> “social capital” provides the guiding light in interrogating corruption in the education sector in Zambia. Bourdieu’s theoretical underpinning of social capital is necessary for this article, because it helped in understanding relations between teachers, pupils and among many actors in the education sector. For Bourdieu, social capital refers to the social obligations or connections, which reflects the interpersonal relations in specific groups (*ibid*). For this article, social capital, assisted to functionally display certain norms of social structure in education. Social capital enables individual teachers and pupils inside the social structure to promote their actions and activities that encourages corruption to flourish in schools. Putnam (1993) <sup>[49]</sup> referred to social capital as characteristics of the social organization, including trust, norms, or networks.

From field research carried out at *Munali* and David Kaunda secondary schools, interviews with head teachers and pupils revealed that the core values lie in enforcing norms of “help” to friends and relatives supported by the parent teachers association (PTA) for school places. In agreement with Deth (2003) <sup>[14]</sup>, there are two aspects of social capital that can be identified, namely structural and culture. The structural aspect consists of connections and networks, and the cultural aspect involves trust and values, as well as obligations or social norms (*ibid*). The structural and cultural aspect of social capital are embedded in them many dimensions of social behavior namely, trust, exchanges, norms and connections (Petty and Ward 2001) <sup>[48]</sup>. This means that social capital comprises relations of trust and that its function facilitates cooperation between teachers and parents and among teachers and pupils. This is because of the trust involved in the interpersonal relationships that lubricates “cooperation” facilitating corruption in schools. Equally, social capital means reciprocity and exchanges (Petty & Ward, 2001) <sup>[48]</sup>. The reciprocity and exchange process promotes trust between the actors, namely head teachers, pupils and parents. Social capital creates primary and collusion beneficiaries of corruption in schools. These

are head teachers and their deputies. In schools, corruption is also facilitated by reciprocity. There are two kinds of reciprocity: specific reciprocity (refers to the exchange behaviors that are proceeded at the same time and in an equal value) and diffuse reciprocity (refers to a continuing relationship of exchange that the repayment is not completed one-time but being repaid and balanced over time) (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993)<sup>[10, 49]</sup>.

Nevertheless, social capital was found necessary for this article because it helped to uncover corrupt activities by teachers, parents and pupils in a network of the education sector. Such connections consist of many different types, for instance: the exchange of limited information; giving of school place favors between teachers and parents; or buying and paying activities in the business of school uniforms as the pedagogical process to learning and teaching. This shows that social capital is an informal and unwritten social norm that can facilitate cooperation between teachers and higher authorities and fuels corruption in schools. It shows that teachers and pupils, teachers and education administrators always want to build a relationship because the education administrators have authority over teachers. The establishment of social capital is necessary for benefits of teachers' promotions. This sort of relationship is the teacher's social capital, when established. Initially, the teacher may provide certain favors to the higher education official. Then the official may payback with resources, (i.e., recommendation for promotion) to an urban school that is needed by the teacher. After the first "collaboration" is successfully completed, a special tie like this may continue and transform into social capital for both the teacher and the district education board official.

Therefore, in terms of civic education, its content is imbued with social capital unnoticed by teaching authorities. CVE is a form of social investment embedded with personal resources and benefits. It is an important personal resource which helps the learners and the teachers understand their social power. Social capital is enshrined in CVE like a kind of intangible personal resource that enables teachers and parents gain special benefits such as "knowledge of good governance resources", that is limited to others. This implies that CVE has the same characteristics enshrined in social capital.

In summary, Bourdieu's social capital theory in this article is relevant because it holds the same characteristics of CVE content, mostly glossed over by teachers and learners as core to eliminating corruption in secondary schools. The keywords in social capital, namely trust, reciprocity and exchange, norms and sanctions, and connections, should have been similar to what is embedded, though missed in the content for the discipline of CVE in Zambia.

## 7. Methodology and design

Firstly, this article employs the subjectivist ontology<sup>4</sup> because the teaching authority perception on corruption may be subjectively influenced by their teaching and learning methodological experience in CVE. Secondly, it also used an interpretive epistemology<sup>5</sup> for considering specific phenomena in analyzing influencing factors of corruption in

schools. Besides this, the article employed the inductive<sup>6</sup> approach to interrogate the gaps that fuel corruption notwithstanding the teaching and learning of CVE in Zambia. Finally, a qualitative design was used for this article through interviews and observation of events in the selected schools.

The paper argues that teaching CVE is not a routine phenomenon like any other subject taught in the school system. Instead, the paper examines corruption by interrogating the teaching and learning process of CVE. The argument is that the teaching process used for teaching CVE is ineffectiveness to eliminate corruption, in schools is due to glossed over corruption content in education reforms of 1995, that would have provided a solace to reduce corruption in schools. This is a subjective discourse and discursive phenomenon because corruption means so many things to different societies. Nevertheless, the paper answers this assumption by taking an interpretive position for purposes of understanding the ignored content and the weak procedure in teaching and learning CVE in schools. The article suggests to consider the semiological process and philosophical content of corruption taught in schools as worthy being interrogated being the only remedy that can eliminate corruption in schools. The article holds valuable perspective on CVE content as the best approach to eliminating corruption in schools. For example, it considers CVE as an influential subject for the elimination of malpractices in schools if properly packaged in terms of the pedagogy and content process that is missing in the educational policy reform documents in Zambia.

Thirdly, the paper adopts an inductive approach to beef up the ignored content and the teaching process that can eliminate corruption in schools. Reasonably, the inductive approach was used to establish new concepts influencing corruption in schools. For example, how do teachers and learner understand CVE content addressing the persistence of corruption in schools? In addition, a qualitative technique was also adopted to interrogate the gaps influencing corruption in teaching CVE in schools. For example, the concepts and language that are used by learners, administrators and teachers in perpetuating corrupt activities in schools are mentioned. This helped to answer the questions of "how" and "why". This means that data collected for this article was qualitatively generated through interviews, observation of major event and documentary analysis. Interviews were conducted with learners, teachers, education administrators and parents. Particularly, concerns of parents and teachers were taken into account to shed some light on whether the teaching and learning of CVE would reduce malpractices they experience with school authorities. Specifically, four groups were interviewed, namely teachers, administrative authorities, parents and learners at David Kaunda and *Munali* secondary school for girls education.

## 8. Data analysis and interpretation

Recordings of interviews was done from the two schools. It allowed participants to fluently express their beliefs, experiences and convictions about corruption in schools. Data was analyzed by the method of inductive content analysis as the basis for the article. In agreement with Patton

<sup>4</sup> Ontology concerns the nature of reality and existence. See Easterby-Smith *et al.*, (2015),

<sup>5</sup> Epistemology refers to what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a research field. See Saunders *et al.*, (2012)

<sup>6</sup> Inductive approaches help researchers to build a new conceptual theory via exploring a phenomenon. See Saunders *et al.*, (2012)

(1990)<sup>[45]</sup> who holds the view that, “the strategy of inductive designs is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be”. Equally, Hammersley *et al.*, (1995: 209)<sup>[20]</sup> suggest that in analyzing qualitative data, the initial task is to find concepts that help “make sense of what is going on”. Therefore, for this article, informant terms and titles were extracted and defined to analyze their meaning. For example, titles such as “head and deputy teacher”, “prefect teacher”, commonly referred to in *Nyanja*<sup>7</sup> as “*Bene mudzi*” (meaning leader of the school), “head boy and head girl” are embedded with power. One teacher claimed that “the limitation of supervisory mechanism to the superior in the education system often makes the head teacher be treated like a king. Also, another teacher indicated: “if it is the requirement of your head teacher, no matter work related or private, then it is the task of work, and it must be unconditionally done”. Terms such as: “the limitation of supervision” “the superior likes a king” *Bene mudzi*, and “unconditionally done” signifies absolute power by those in authority and when challenged, the challenger risks being transferred to another school or blacklisted for promotion to a senior position for many years to come.

Simply put, data collected from schools was sufficiently analyzed in semiological approach because it offered an explanation and interpretation of the corrupt practice in schools. This corrupt practice is a way of life in secondary schools in Zambia.

## 9. Discussion of findings

From interviews with our 24 informants, namely 20 parents, two head teachers, two education administrators and two school prefects (one head boy and head girl) and two heads of departments, one from social science and another one from natural sciences, the study findings revealed that the commonly used teaching and learning methods were weak in analyzing corruption hence the proliferation of it in schools. This was because, corruption was an everyday experience by teachers and learners in the course of performing their functions of teaching and learning. The argument was that while there were commonly established methods of teaching and learning, such as role play, pupil participation, the regular complex ways in which corruption found its way in the school system was missing in the popular teaching methodologies and context hence the persistence of corruption.

Corruption in Zambia’s education sector was manifest in various ways. It was blatantly an illegal act of bribery or fraud, nepotism embezzlement or theft. In education, corruption could also be described as actions undertaken to secure a modest income by educational personnel paid too little or late (Kaufman, 2003)<sup>[28]</sup>. Mostly, it was difficult to identify corruption, since the cultural perspective on what was considered to be corruption may differ in Zambia. In some instances, corruption occurred simply because of incompetence of the involved head teachers and their deputies. For a clear definition, Hallak and Poisson (2001) characterized corruption in education as “the systematic use of public office for private benefit whose impact is significant on access, quality or equity in education.” (p. 8).

In addition, head teachers and accountants developed a systematic overview of possible corrupt practices in schools in the areas of allowances, allocation of school places at grade 8 and 10. Construction, maintenance and school repairs, distribution of equipment, furniture and materials, writing of textbooks, teacher appointment and promotion management, appraisal information system, examination malpractices and diploma accreditation. This meant that, in the education sector of Zambia, corruption is a combination of illegal practices, such as bribery activities between head teachers and parents in order to gain privileges.

For Hallak and Poisson (2001) analyzed the typology of corrupt practices in education by looking at the areas of management or planning within education ministries. In Chapman’s (2005)<sup>[7]</sup> classification, the corrupt practices were identified around the administrative level of schools or the agency involved in the implementation of educational policies. For this article, the authors observed that the extent of occurrence of corruption in schools in areas of management was in terms of the lack of definition for the word “merit promotion” of teachers from one level to another. The ways in which the promotion criteria for teachers were executed were too numerous and kept on evolving. For example, from an interview carried out with one teacher on the criteria for promotion the following words were uttered:

*“In order to succeed for promotion from a class teacher to head teacher, one needs to know how to teach”.*

Teaching here implies being able to reciprocate by offering a gift to the education authorities. The administrator feels obliged at some point to return the “teach” (the gift) embedded in the act of promotion. This shows that engaging in corruption is a dynamic process in the social life of teachers, learners and administrators. Unfortunately, the CVE content and pedagogy approach is mute on such reciprocities and obligations fueling corrupt practices in schools.

Through interviews with pupils in secondary schools at David Kaunda and Munali girls in Zambia, it was revealed that corruption was facilitated by power relations between teachers and pupils. Power relations between teachers and pupils, teachers and their supervisors tended to legitimize it. This was the kind of corruption distinguished between the pupils and the teacher exchange (Cárdenas, 2006)<sup>[5]</sup> influenced by power relations and networking. It could be inferred from this that, the corrupt activity between class teachers and their pupils was embedded in familiar expressions and titles such as “class monitor, head boy, head girl”. This is a semiology of corruption at a level of constructed discourses. When asked from interviews conducted at the two aforementioned schools about how they were chosen to be in their positions out of the many, the head boy and head girl responded as follows:

*“Networking, courage, attractiveness to teachers and fellow pupils”.*

This reveals the semantic field of corruption in education due to pupil and teacher power relations. This kind of corruption manifests in the school system due to rules, regulations and power relations between actors. These regulations are never reviewed by the teaching authority. For example, the personal relationship and the position held by the teacher and education authorities provide a latitude for corruption such as favoritism to take place. When a

<sup>7</sup> A Bantu language spoken by the *Chewa* people in Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.

teacher is seeking for promotion, the language used connotes both power and interpersonal relationship facilitating corruption in schools. For example, salutations: “Yes Sir” and accolades such as “Congratulations Sir” embedded in the code of ethics for teachers provide a fertile ground for the abuse of power by those in the teaching authority to initiate corruption in education.

The other type of corruption according to Azfar (2001) is based on pedagogy that has provided loop holes for corruption to flourish in the education sector in Zambia. Acknowledging corrupt practices in education, Heyneman (2004) tried to develop specific characteristics of a corruption-free education system, consisting of (1) equality of access to educational opportunity, (2) fairness in the distribution of educational curricula and materials, (3) fairness in accreditation in which all institutions are judged by professional standards equally applied and open to public scrutiny, (4) fairness in the acquisition of educational goods and services, as well as the (5) balance and generosity in curricular treatment of cultural minorities and geographical neighbors, and the (6) maintenance of professional standards of conduct by those who administer education institutions and who teach in them, whether public or private (Heyneman, 2004).

By defining the pedagogical characteristics facilitating corruption in the education sector, one would assume that, corruption may be easier to eliminate in the education sector in Zambia, yet far from it. Although all the suggested anti-corruption methods in the teaching and learning of civic education may have been taught and implemented by the school authorities, corruption still exists. Hence the sustainability of education reforms needs to be questioned. In Europe, several case studies done by de Asis (2000), Klitgaard and Maclean-Abaroa and Parris (2000) <sup>[29]</sup> have shown that anti-corruption methods and reforms work for a while, but corruption leaps back into the sector. Corruption finds its way in education due to the pedagogical loopholes through what is known as personal business ties. This is a kind of friendship comprising the implications of a persistent exchange of favors, such as preferential treatment in business, preferential access to limited resources as well as offering of school places to those in need by head teachers and deputies.

Further, interviews and discussions on corruption with education users, namely parents at *Munali* and David Kaunda secondary school revealed that corruption manifests itself through an act of negligence of duties by teachers involving such things as poor time keeping, irregular classes (absenteeism), and delays in releasing exam results and lack of interest and motivation in their jobs. It is no wonder that the phrase “*A teacher is never late or absent*” is coined to reflect how corruption is experienced by education users and perfected by head teachers and education board secretaries in schools.

Equally, data gathered from head teachers and administrators on how corruption flourishes, despite the teaching and learning of CVE in schools, points to the “phenomenon of ambiguity” in communication, official laws and regulations. According to Yanduo (2020:99) <sup>[64]</sup>, ambiguity appears to be the imperfect communication, laws and regulations that offer opportunities for corruption to flourish. It is perceived impolite by people in the educational sector to express their real ideas directly, they prefer an indirect way, due to “ambiguity” in

communication. Ambiguity shows itself through words such as “confidential”. No teacher is authorized to ask his head teacher the reason for not being promoted to another level because it is confidential and impolite to do so. For example, one head of department from social sciences said the following:

*“A head teacher at a secondary school would never directly say, ‘If you want to be promoted, you must give me that’: They would be very ‘ambiguous’, just to let you ‘Express yourself’” (Informant, 2021).*

This shows how corrupt head teachers would not use the terms in association with corruption. Instead, they use more reasonable and acceptable words to disguise their activities, such as: “express appreciation to your supervisors”, as well as in the word “confidential”. This is because the extent of confidentiality is not defined. Further, while it is stated in the terms and conditions of service (TCS) concerning how a teacher can provide suggestions and complain about his delayed promotion to the superior or colleagues but as a subordinate, he has to be careful to avoid appearing to be insubordinate to his superiors. What can be inferred from this is this ambiguity is not only found in the way teachers communicate to the superiors but in the manner rules and regulations are couched. There are a lot of ambiguous definitions in laws and regulations (i.e., TCS) guiding the conduct of teachers in secondary schools. Some expressions in the anti-corruption laws found in schools are never provided in the CVE corruption content. Therefore, any unclear explanation and content omission may lead to different understandings, which, to some extent, has become a loophole for corruption to flourish in schools.

## 10. Conclusion

This article has applied Bourdieu Social Capital theoretical framing to map up corruption in teaching and learning of CVE in selected secondary schools, based on data from interviews and literature review. The Article has revealed that failure to enshrine corruption in Zambia’s education reform, has provided a fertile platform for corruption to persist. From a review of literature, it was established that Civic Education Content (CVEC) if properly harnessed has substantial power to help eliminate corruption in secondary schools. This is because CVE teachers constitutes most intelligent political elites in society. These teachers often participate in political life, occupy public offices and work as advisors to politicians, public officials, and parents. Therefore, Phiri (2017:110) <sup>[47]</sup> was able to make the claims that one of the major themes that always emerge from corruption studies, was “the importance of understanding corruption from within the prism of the locals”, which the education reforms ignored when designing the CVE curriculum in Zambia. In short, the involvement of teachers and pupils in CVE curriculum development to consider it as multiple interactions and process within a specific socio-political environment, is missing in most Anti-corruption Commission laws and the pedagogical process for teaching and learning CVE in Zambia. Innate characteristics of head-teachers, pupils and educational administrators are missing in the Terms and Conditions of Service (TCS) for public service workers that guide the conduct of stake holders in secondary schools.

## 11. Way forward

The concept of identifying and eliminating corruption

through teaching and learning CVE can only be achieved when interrogated it in local languages. It also requires concerted effort by CVE curriculum designers to make the subject compulsory to all learners in secondary schools. In agreement with Setwin Mutau Mufalo (2021:93), “there is need for teachers of Civic Education in schools across the country to possess a variety of teacher knowledge as outlined in the Civic Education pedagogical content in order to enhance not only effective delivery but also academic performance and learner transformation” to eliminate corruption. Equally, a reflexive policy inquiry and political commitment to eliminate corruption in the education sector of Zambia is needed. This requires leadership. In agreement with William Dunn (2018) <sup>[16]</sup> sustainable policy making process contains a series of interdependent functions arrayed through time. The process begins with agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy adoption and proceeds through policy implementation, policy assessment, and policy adaptation ((Lasswell, Harold D., and Myres S. McDougal, 1943). Sadly, education policy reforms in Zambia are not linked to the next, in backward and forward loops, and the process as whole has no definite beginning or end. This provides curriculum designers for CVE to ignore strengthening the pedagogical process contained with multiple approaches necessary to learners about the existence of corruption in secondary schools in Zambia.

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