

Exploring the Role of Civic Education in Fostering Democratic Values

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Abstract – This study examined the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among learners within selected secondary schools in Zambia. Civic education had long been regarded as a foundational component of democratic societies because it equipped citizens with essential knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for informed participation in governance and community life. However, concerns regarding declining civic engagement, political apathy, and intolerance prompted the need to critically assess the effectiveness of civic education in nurturing democratic values such as tolerance, respect, active citizenship, and social responsibility. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, employing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect data from students and teachers involved in civic education programmes. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques, while qualitative data were thematically analysed to capture deeper insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. The findings were expected to reveal that civic education played a significant role in enhancing learners' understanding of democratic principles and promoting positive civic attitudes, although its effectiveness was constrained by factors such as limited teaching resources, inadequate teacher preparation, and curriculum-related challenges. The significance of this study lay in its contribution to educational policy and practice by providing empirical evidence on how civic education influenced democratic values in schools. The findings were anticipated to inform policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators on strategies for strengthening civic education programmes so that they could more effectively support democratic participation and social cohesion in Zambia.

Keywords – Civic education, democratic values, active citizenship, tolerance, civic participation, education policy.

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduced the study entitled Exploring the Role of Civic Education in Fostering Democratic Values. It provided an overview of the research by outlining the context within which the study was conducted, the problem under investigation, and the purpose guiding the inquiry. Civic education had been widely recognised as a vital mechanism for preparing learners to participate responsibly in democratic societies. Through formal schooling, civic education was expected to nurture democratic values, enhance political awareness, and promote social responsibility among learners.

Despite the recognised importance of civic education, concerns had emerged regarding its effectiveness in addressing contemporary democratic challenges. Many societies, including Zambia, had experienced increasing political disengagement, intolerance, and limited youth participation in civic affairs. These challenges raised questions about whether civic education programmes were adequately designed and effectively implemented to meet the evolving demands of democratic governance. As a result, there was a growing need for empirical studies that examined the actual role civic education played in shaping learners' democratic values within school settings.

This study was therefore undertaken to explore how civic education contributed to the development of democratic values among secondary school learners. It sought to examine learners' exposure to civic education, assess its perceived impact on democratic attitudes, and identify challenges encountered by teachers in its delivery. By focusing on both students and teachers, the study aimed to

generate a comprehensive understanding of civic education as it was practised in schools.

The chapter further presented the background of the study, clearly articulated the problem statement, and outlined the research objectives and questions that guided the investigation. In addition, it discussed the characteristics of the phenomenon under study and the factors related to it. Overall, this chapter laid the foundation for the subsequent chapters by establishing the rationale, scope, and direction of the research.

Background of the Study

Civic education had historically played a central role in promoting democratic governance by equipping citizens with knowledge of their rights, responsibilities, and the functioning of political institutions. Globally, education systems had increasingly emphasised civic education as a response to challenges such as declining voter turnout, political apathy, and the erosion of democratic values (UNESCO, 2023). Scholars argued that democratic societies depended on informed and engaged citizens who possessed not only political knowledge but also values such as tolerance, respect, and social responsibility (Chansa, Mumba & Mwale, 2024).

In the African context, civic education had gained renewed attention due to democratic transitions and governance reforms experienced across the continent. In Zambia, civic education was integrated into the school curriculum with the intention of fostering responsible citizenship and strengthening democratic culture (Muleya, 2019). The Zambian education system recognised schools as critical spaces for instilling democratic values among young people

who would later assume civic and leadership roles in society (Zambia Ministry of Education, 2021).

However, recent studies suggested that the effectiveness of civic education in achieving these goals remained inconsistent. While some learners demonstrated improved civic awareness and engagement, others exhibited limited interest in democratic processes and community participation (Chanda, 2023). The rapid expansion of digital media, misinformation, and social polarisation further complicated the task of civic education by reshaping how young people engaged with political information (Ortega-Sánchez & Pérez-González, 2025).

Additionally, challenges related to teacher preparedness, curriculum relevance, and resource availability had continued to affect the delivery of civic education in schools. Research indicated that many teachers lacked adequate training to effectively translate civic education content into meaningful learning experiences (Academia.edu, 2023). Against this backdrop, the present study was conducted to critically examine the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among learners, with particular attention to the contextual realities of secondary schools in Zambia.

Problem Statement

Despite the acknowledged importance of civic education in democratic societies, its capacity to effectively foster democratic values among learners had remained uncertain. In Zambia, civic education was formally incorporated into the school curriculum with the expectation that it would cultivate active citizenship, tolerance, respect for diversity, and civic responsibility. However, observable trends such as low youth participation in civic activities, limited political engagement, and increasing social intolerance suggested that these objectives had not been fully realised. Several studies had indicated that civic education programmes often focused heavily on theoretical content while neglecting participatory and experiential learning approaches that were essential for internalising democratic values (Chansa et al., 2024). As a result, learners frequently acquired factual knowledge without developing the attitudes and behaviours associated with democratic citizenship. Furthermore, the persistence of political apathy among young people raised concerns about whether civic education was sufficiently relevant to learners' lived experiences.

The problem was compounded by challenges faced by teachers responsible for delivering civic education. Inadequate professional training, limited instructional materials, and overcrowded classrooms had constrained effective teaching and learning (Chanda, 2023). In some cases, civic education lessons were marginalised within the curriculum, reducing the time and emphasis devoted to them. These constraints undermined the potential of civic education to function as a transformative tool for democratic development.

Consequently, there existed a gap between the intended outcomes of civic education and its actual impact on learners' democratic values. Without empirical evidence examining how civic education influenced learners and identifying the challenges affecting its implementation, efforts to strengthen democratic culture through education remained limited. This study therefore sought to address this problem by investigating the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners and by identifying factors that hindered its effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners. Specifically, the study sought to assess how civic education was implemented in schools and the extent to which it influenced learners' attitudes, values, and behaviours related to democracy. The study was undertaken in response to growing concerns about declining civic engagement, limited youth participation in democratic processes, and increasing intolerance within society, which raised questions about the effectiveness of civic education as a tool for democratic development.

The study aimed to generate empirical evidence on whether civic education contributed meaningfully to the development of democratic values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, civic responsibility, and active citizenship. In doing so, it examined learners' exposure to civic education, their perceptions of its relevance, and the outcomes associated with different teaching and learning practices. The study also sought to explore the challenges faced by teachers in delivering civic education, recognising teachers as key agents in translating curriculum intentions into classroom practice.

By focusing on both learners and teachers, the study intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of civic education as it operated within the secondary school context. The findings were expected to inform educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers on ways of strengthening civic education programmes so that they could better promote democratic values and active citizenship. Ultimately, the purpose of the study was to contribute to the improvement of civic education policy and practice, and to support the broader goal of nurturing informed, responsible, and engaged citizens in a democratic society.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To examine the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners.

Specific Objectives

- To assess learners' exposure to civic education in secondary schools.

- To examine the influence of civic education on democratic values such as tolerance, respect, and active citizenship.
- To identify challenges faced by teachers in delivering civic education.
- To propose strategies for strengthening civic education programmes.

Research Questions

- What was the level of learners' exposure to civic education in secondary schools?
- How did civic education influence the development of democratic values among learners?
- What challenges did teachers encounter in the delivery of civic education?
- What strategies could be adopted to enhance the effectiveness of civic education?

Characteristics of the Phenomenon

The phenomenon under investigation in this study was civic education as a vehicle for fostering democratic values. Civic education was characterised by its emphasis on preparing learners for active participation in democratic life through the acquisition of civic knowledge, skills, and values. Unlike purely academic subjects, civic education integrated cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions of learning, making it inherently value-oriented (Stimmann Branson, 1998).

One defining characteristic of civic education was its focus on democratic principles such as equality, justice, freedom, and respect for human rights. These principles were not merely taught as abstract concepts but were expected to be reflected in learners' attitudes and behaviours within school and community contexts. Civic education also emphasised participatory learning approaches, including discussions, debates, and community engagement activities, which were intended to encourage critical thinking and active involvement (UNESCO, 2023).

Another key characteristic was its contextual nature. Civic education content was expected to reflect local social, political, and cultural realities while also addressing global democratic concerns. In Zambia, civic education incorporated national values, constitutional principles, and civic responsibilities relevant to the country's democratic framework (Muleya, 2019).

Furthermore, civic education was characterised by its long-term impact orientation. Its outcomes were not always immediately observable, as the internalisation of democratic values often manifested over time through sustained civic engagement and responsible citizenship. This characteristic made civic education both complex to assess and essential for democratic sustainability. The study

therefore treated civic education as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that required careful empirical examination.

Factors Related to the Phenomenon

Several interrelated factors influenced the effectiveness of civic education in fostering democratic values. One significant factor was curriculum design. A well-structured curriculum that integrated democratic values with learners' real-life experiences enhanced the relevance and impact of civic education. Conversely, rigid and content-heavy curricula limited opportunities for participatory learning and critical reflection (Chansa et al., 2024).

Teacher competence and preparedness also played a crucial role. Teachers who possessed strong subject knowledge, pedagogical skills, and an understanding of democratic principles were better positioned to facilitate meaningful civic learning. However, studies indicated that many teachers lacked specialised training in civic education, which affected their confidence and effectiveness in delivering the subject (Academia.edu, 2023). Continuous professional development was therefore essential for strengthening civic education practices.

Resource availability was another critical factor. Adequate teaching and learning materials, access to digital tools, and supportive school environments contributed positively to civic education outcomes. In contrast, resource constraints limited the use of interactive teaching methods and reduced learners' engagement (Zambia Ministry of Education, 2021).

Learner-related factors also influenced the phenomenon. Learners' socio-cultural backgrounds, prior knowledge, and exposure to political discourse shaped how they interpreted and responded to civic education. In some cases, societal norms and family attitudes toward politics affected learners' willingness to engage actively in civic matters (Chanda, 2023).

Finally, institutional and policy support significantly affected the delivery of civic education. Schools that prioritised civic education and encouraged democratic practices within their governance structures created environments conducive to value formation. Supportive education policies further reinforced the status of civic education within the curriculum. Collectively, these factors interacted to determine the extent to which civic education succeeded in fostering democratic values among learners.

Global Statistical Scenario

Globally, statistical evidence had consistently demonstrated a strong relationship between civic education and democratic participation. International organisations such as UNESCO and the World Bank reported that countries with well-established civic education programmes tended to record higher levels of political participation, civic awareness, and social trust (UNESCO, 2023). For instance, data from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) revealed that over 70% of students in

countries with structured civic education curricula demonstrated moderate to high levels of civic knowledge, compared to less than 45% in countries where civic education was weak or inconsistently implemented (ICCS, 2022).

In Europe, surveys conducted across member states indicated that approximately 65% of young adults who had received formal civic education during secondary schooling participated in at least one civic or political activity, such as voting, community engagement, or advocacy campaigns (European Commission, 2023). By contrast, participation rates dropped below 40% among youth populations with limited exposure to civic education. These findings suggested that civic education played a measurable role in shaping democratic engagement at a global level.

In North America, longitudinal studies showed that students who completed civic-oriented curricula were 30% more likely to vote in national elections and twice as likely to engage in voluntary community service than those without such exposure (Civiced.org, 2024). Similarly, Asian countries that had reformed their civic education frameworks reported improvements in youth political literacy and tolerance towards cultural diversity, particularly in urban educational settings (Silaban et al., 2024).

Global statistics also highlighted persistent challenges. UNESCO (2023) reported that nearly 50% of secondary school teachers worldwide lacked specialised training in civic education, limiting effective programme delivery. Additionally, disparities in access to civic education were evident between developed and developing nations, with low-income countries reporting inadequate resources and curriculum fragmentation. These global statistics underscored the relevance of examining civic education within specific national contexts, such as Zambia, to understand how global trends manifested locally.

Local Statistical Scenario

At the local level, available statistics indicated mixed outcomes regarding the effectiveness of civic education in Zambia. According to the Zambia Ministry of Education (2021), civic education was formally taught in over 85% of public secondary schools. However, national assessments revealed that only about 52% of learners demonstrated satisfactory understanding of core democratic principles such as constitutional rights, civic duties, and electoral processes.

Youth participation statistics further reflected these challenges. Electoral Commission of Zambia reports showed that voter turnout among first-time voters aged 18–25 remained below 45% in recent national elections, despite sustained exposure to civic education during secondary schooling (ECZ, 2021). This trend suggested a disconnect between civic knowledge acquisition and actual civic participation.

Teacher-related statistics also revealed critical gaps. Approximately 60% of civic education teachers had not

received formal in-service training specific to civic education pedagogy, relying instead on general social studies methodologies (Chanda, 2023). Additionally, school-level data indicated that fewer than 40% of secondary schools had access to updated civic education teaching materials, further limiting instructional effectiveness.

Despite these limitations, schools that actively integrated debates, student councils, and community engagement projects reported higher learner participation and improved civic attitudes. These local statistics justified the need for empirical research to examine how civic education functioned in practice and what factors influenced its outcomes within the Zambian context.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was carefully defined to ensure clarity, feasibility, and relevance. Geographically, the study was confined to selected secondary schools within Zambia, with particular emphasis on urban and peri-urban settings where civic education was formally implemented. This focus was adopted because urban schools typically had more structured curricula and diverse learner populations, making them suitable for examining democratic value formation.

In terms of content, the study focused specifically on civic education as a subject and as a cross-curricular practice aimed at fostering democratic values. It examined learners' exposure to civic education, their perceptions of its impact, and the instructional challenges faced by teachers. Democratic values under investigation included tolerance, respect, active citizenship, civic responsibility, and participation in democratic processes.

The population scope was limited to secondary school learners and teachers involved in civic education. Other stakeholders such as policymakers and parents were acknowledged but not included as primary respondents. Temporally, the study was limited to data collected within a defined academic period, allowing for systematic data collection and analysis.

Methodologically, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to enhance depth and reliability. While international perspectives informed the discussion, the primary emphasis remained on the Zambian educational context. This clearly defined scope ensured that the study remained focused while generating findings that were both contextually grounded and academically significant.

Usefulness of the Study in the Present Scenario

The usefulness of this study was particularly significant in the present democratic and educational context. Globally and locally, democratic institutions were facing challenges related to declining civic engagement, political apathy, and increasing intolerance. In such an environment, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of civic education was

essential for informing educational reform and democratic renewal.

For policymakers, the study provided data-driven insights into how civic education influenced democratic values among learners. These findings were useful for guiding curriculum reforms, policy development, and resource allocation aimed at strengthening democratic education (Ortega-Sánchez & Pérez-González, 2025). By identifying gaps in curriculum design and teacher preparation, the study supported evidence-based decision-making.

For educators and school administrators, the study highlighted practical challenges encountered in teaching civic education and identified strategies that enhanced learner engagement. The findings were useful for improving instructional practices, professional development programmes, and school-level initiatives that promoted democratic participation.

The study was also valuable to researchers and academics by contributing empirical evidence from a Zambian context, an area that remained underrepresented in civic education literature. It provided a foundation for future studies examining long-term impacts of civic education and comparative analyses across regions.

At the societal level, the study reinforced the role of education in nurturing responsible and informed citizens. By demonstrating how civic education influenced democratic values, the research supported broader efforts to strengthen social cohesion, national unity, and democratic sustainability. In the present era of misinformation and social division, the study's relevance lay in its potential to inform strategies that prepared young people to engage critically, responsibly, and ethically in democratic life.

Operational Definitions

For the purpose of this study, civic education referred to the structured educational process through which learners acquired knowledge, skills, and values necessary for democratic participation. Democratic values denoted principles such as tolerance, respect, equality, justice, and civic responsibility. Active citizenship referred to learners' engagement in civic and community activities aimed at promoting the common good. Tolerance was defined as the acceptance and respect of diverse opinions and cultures, while respect referred to the consideration shown towards others' rights and dignity. Curriculum denoted the official content and pedagogical approaches used in teaching civic education.

Chapterization

The study was organised into five chapters. Chapter One presented the introduction, background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, scope, and significance of the study. Chapter Two reviewed relevant theoretical and empirical literature on civic education and democratic values. Chapter Three outlined the research methodology, including design, population, sampling, instruments, and data analysis procedures. Chapter Four focused on data

presentation, analysis, and interpretation of findings. Chapter Five discussed the findings, drew conclusions, and presented recommendations and implications for policy and practice.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a comprehensive introduction to the study on the role of civic education in fostering democratic values. It established the context and rationale for the research by highlighting global and local democratic challenges that necessitated effective civic education. The chapter outlined the background of the study, clearly articulated the problem statement, and presented the research objectives and questions guiding the investigation. Furthermore, the chapter discussed the characteristics of civic education as a democratic phenomenon and examined key factors influencing its effectiveness. Global and local statistical scenarios were presented to demonstrate existing trends and gaps in civic engagement and civic education outcomes. The scope of the study was clearly defined to ensure focus and feasibility, while the usefulness of the study in the present scenario was elaborated to highlight its academic, policy, and societal relevance.

Operational definitions were provided to ensure conceptual clarity, and the chapterization outlined the logical structure of the entire study. Overall, this chapter laid a solid foundation for the subsequent chapters by establishing the theoretical, empirical, and methodological direction of the research. The next chapter therefore proceeded to review relevant literature to situate the study within existing scholarly discourse and to identify gaps that the present research sought to address.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Overview

This chapter reviewed the scholarly literature relevant to the role of civic education in fostering democratic values. The review was organised thematically to establish the empirical and theoretical foundations that informed the present study. Four main themes were synthesised: (1) the international evidence on civic education outcomes and comparative assessment frameworks; (2) empirical studies from sub-Saharan Africa and Zambia that examined implementation, teacher preparedness, and learner outcomes; (3) theoretical constructs that explained how civic education was expected to produce democratic dispositions (for example, social capital, political socialisation and deliberative democracy); and (4) identified gaps and methodological limitations in the extant literature. By structuring the chapter around these themes, the review aimed to move from broad, global findings to specific national and local contexts, and then to theory, thereby situating the current research within an established scholarly convers

The first part of the chapter summarised global comparative studies and large-scale assessments that measured civic knowledge, attitudes and participation among young

people. International instruments such as the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) were used as benchmarks to show patterns in civic knowledge attainment, dispositions towards democracy and cross-national differences in instructional practice (Schulz et al., 2023; IEA, 2022). These sources provided baseline evidence that civic education programmes, where well-designed and resourced, were associated with higher civic knowledge and greater reported civic engagement among adolescents.

The second thematic strand critically examined empirical literature from Africa and Zambia, focusing on research that had investigated teacher preparedness, curriculum relevance, pedagogical approaches and measurable student outcomes (Mulenga, 2022; Hamainza, 2024; Chanda et al., 2024). This section emphasised methodological diversity — including surveys, case studies and mixed-methods designs — and highlighted recurring findings: curricular intent often exceeded classroom reality; teacher training frequently lagged behind curriculum reforms; and experiential methods (debates, simulations, service learning) were associated with deeper civic dispositions. The third part presented the theoretical frameworks that explained how civic education might foster democratic values. The review evaluated the explanatory power of social capital theory (Putnam, 1993), political socialisation models (Almond & Verba, 1963), and deliberative democracy frameworks (Habermas; deliberation literature). Each theory's assumptions and limitations were considered, together with their empirical support in education research. Finally, the introduction explained the organisation of the remainder of the chapter: Section 2.2 provided an in-depth empirical literature review that critically analysed past and recent studies, and Section 2.3 discussed theoretical perspectives underpinning the study and appraised their relevance. Throughout, attention was paid to methodological strengths and weaknesses, the contextual applicability of findings to Zambia, and identified gaps that justified the present investigation. This structure enabled the study to draw on robust international benchmarks while remaining sensitive to local implementation realities.

2. Empirical Literature Review

Introduction to the Empirical Review

The empirical literature on civic education and democratic values had grown considerably over the past decades, reflecting increased global concern about declining civic engagement, political apathy, and social fragmentation. Empirical studies provided evidence-based insights into how civic education was implemented in different contexts, the outcomes it produced, and the challenges that limited its effectiveness. This section critically reviewed both past and recent empirical studies relevant to the present study, drawing on international, regional, and local research. The review focused on four key areas: the impact of civic education on civic knowledge and democratic attitudes, its influence on civic participation and active citizenship, the role of teachers and instructional practices, and contextual challenges affecting implementation. By examining these

studies, the section identified patterns, inconsistencies, and gaps that informed the current research.

Empirical Studies on Civic Education and Civic Knowledge

A substantial body of empirical research examined the relationship between civic education and learners' civic knowledge. Large-scale international assessments such as the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) consistently reported that students who received structured civic education demonstrated higher levels of knowledge about democratic institutions, constitutional principles, and civic rights and responsibilities (Schulz et al., 2023). These studies used standardised tests administered across multiple countries, allowing for cross-national comparison. Findings indicated that curriculum clarity, instructional time, and teacher preparedness were strongly associated with higher civic knowledge outcomes. Similarly, studies conducted in Europe and North America found that learners exposed to formal civic education performed better on measures of political literacy and democratic awareness than those without such exposure (European Commission, 2023). However, these studies also noted disparities related to socio-economic status and school resources. While the methodological strength of these studies lay in their large sample sizes and rigorous statistical analysis, critics argued that an overemphasis on knowledge-based outcomes risked neglecting affective and behavioural dimensions of democratic learning.

In the African context, empirical studies reported comparable trends but with greater variability. Research conducted in Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa indicated that civic education improved learners' understanding of democratic processes, particularly elections and governance structures (Chansa, Mumba and Mwale, 2024). However, the depth of knowledge acquisition was often constrained by limited instructional time and reliance on textbook-centred teaching. These studies suggested that while civic education contributed to knowledge acquisition, its effectiveness depended heavily on contextual factors such as teacher capacity and resource availability.

In Zambia, studies by Muleya (2019) and Mulenga (2022) reported that learners generally demonstrated basic knowledge of civic concepts but struggled with applying this knowledge to real-life situations. These findings highlighted a gap between curriculum content and practical understanding, suggesting that civic education knowledge outcomes were necessary but insufficient for democratic engagement.

Civic Education and Democratic Attitudes

Beyond civic knowledge, empirical research increasingly examined the influence of civic education on democratic attitudes such as tolerance, respect for diversity, trust in democratic institutions, and commitment to democratic principles. International studies showed that learners who participated in civic education programmes reported more positive attitudes towards democracy and greater acceptance of pluralism (UNESCO, 2023). These

attitudinal outcomes were particularly strong in contexts where civic education incorporated discussion-based and participatory pedagogies.

In Europe, longitudinal studies indicated that civic education contributed to sustained democratic attitudes into early adulthood, particularly when learners were exposed to debates, student councils, and service-learning activities during secondary schooling (European Commission, 2023). These studies employed mixed-method designs, combining surveys with follow-up interviews, which strengthened the validity of their conclusions.

Empirical evidence from sub-Saharan Africa also supported the positive attitudinal impact of civic education, although outcomes varied across contexts. Chanda (2023) found that Zambian learners who engaged in civic education exhibited higher levels of tolerance and respect for human rights compared to peers with limited exposure. However, the study noted that attitudinal change was more pronounced than behavioural change, a pattern echoed in other African studies.

Methodologically, many of these studies relied on self-reported measures of attitudes, which raised concerns about social desirability bias. While this limitation did not invalidate the findings, it suggested the need for triangulation with qualitative data. Overall, the empirical literature demonstrated that civic education was effective in shaping democratic attitudes, particularly when supported by learner-centred teaching approaches.

Civic Education and Active Citizenship

A critical strand of empirical research focused on the relationship between civic education and active citizenship, defined as participation in civic, political, and community activities. International evidence suggested that civic education increased learners' willingness to engage in democratic processes, including voting, volunteering, and community problem-solving (Putnam, 1993; UNESCO, 2023). However, the strength of this relationship varied depending on programme design and context.

ICCS data revealed that while civic education improved civic intentions, actual participation rates among youth remained modest, particularly in developing countries (Schulz et al., 2023). This discrepancy suggested that civic education alone could not overcome structural and socio-political barriers to participation. Studies in Latin America and Africa similarly reported that civic education raised awareness but had limited influence on sustained civic action.

In Zambia, Hamainza (2024) found that learners who participated in extracurricular civic activities demonstrated higher levels of civic engagement than those who only received classroom-based instruction. This finding underscored the importance of experiential learning in translating civic values into action. However, access to such activities was uneven, often limited to well-resourced schools.

Empirical studies therefore suggested that active citizenship outcomes depended on opportunities for practice, institutional support, and broader socio-political conditions. This body of evidence highlighted the need to examine not only whether civic education existed, but how it was implemented and supported.

Teacher Role and Instructional Practices in Civic Education

The role of teachers emerged as a central theme in empirical literature on civic education. Numerous studies identified teacher preparedness, pedagogical competence, and attitudes as key determinants of civic education effectiveness. Mulenga (2022) reported that many civic education teachers lacked specialised training, resulting in reliance on lecture-based teaching methods. This instructional approach limited opportunities for dialogue and critical thinking.

Studies conducted in Zambia and neighbouring countries found that teachers who employed participatory methods such as debates and simulations were more likely to foster democratic skills among learners (Chanda et al., 2024). However, these practices were constrained by large class sizes, limited teaching materials, and curriculum pressures. International studies echoed these findings, emphasising the need for continuous professional development in civic education pedagogy (UNESCO, 2023). Methodologically, teacher-focused studies often used qualitative interviews and classroom observations, providing rich contextual insights but limited generalisability. Nevertheless, the consistency of findings across contexts underscored the pivotal role of teachers in mediating civic education outcomes.

Contextual and Institutional Challenges in Civic Education Implementation

Empirical research consistently identified contextual and institutional challenges affecting civic education implementation. Resource constraints, curriculum overload, and examination pressures were commonly reported across studies. In many African contexts, civic education competed with examination-oriented subjects for instructional time, reducing its perceived importance (Muleya, 2019).

Policy-practice gaps were also evident. While curriculum documents emphasised democratic competencies, classroom realities often reflected traditional pedagogies and limited learner engagement. Studies highlighted that without supportive school leadership and policy alignment, civic education initiatives struggled to achieve intended outcomes (Chansa et al., 2024).

These challenges underscored the need for holistic approaches that addressed structural, pedagogical, and policy-level factors. Empirical evidence therefore supported the conceptual framework adopted in the present study, which recognised civic education outcomes as the product of interacting variables.

Methodological Strengths and Weaknesses in Existing Studies

A critical review of methodologies used in empirical studies revealed several strengths and limitations. Large-scale surveys provided generalisable findings but often lacked contextual depth. Qualitative studies offered rich insights but were limited in scope. Few studies employed mixed-method designs capable of triangulating findings effectively.

Additionally, most studies were cross-sectional, limiting their ability to assess long-term impacts of civic education. Longitudinal research remained scarce, particularly in African contexts. These methodological gaps justified the mixed-method approach adopted in the present study.

Synthesis and Implications for the Present Study

The empirical literature reviewed demonstrated that civic education contributed positively to civic knowledge and democratic attitudes, but its influence on active citizenship was uneven. Teacher preparedness, instructional practices, and institutional support emerged as critical mediating factors. Contextual challenges and methodological limitations further complicated assessment of civic education outcomes.

These findings informed the present study by highlighting the need for context-specific, mixed-method research that examined both outcomes and implementation challenges. By focusing on the Zambian secondary school context, the current study sought to contribute empirical evidence that addressed gaps identified in existing literature.

3.Theoretical Review

This section reviewed and critically evaluated three theoretical perspectives that commonly underpinned civic education research: political socialisation, social capital theory, and deliberative democracy (and associated theories of democratic competencies). The aim was to explain their applicability to understanding how civic education might foster democratic values and to highlight each theory's strengths and limitations.

Political socialisation theory (Almond & Verba, 1963; Easton & Dennis, later developments) framed civic education as a process by which individuals internalised political norms, values and knowledge through agents such as schools, families and media. This perspective emphasised stages of development, the role of formal education in transmitting civic knowledge, and the cumulative influence of socialising agents on political attitudes. Applied to schools, political socialisation theory justified curricular transmission of civic facts and norms, and predicted that sustained exposure would lead to more stable civic orientations. The strength of this theory lay in its clear mechanisms — modelling, reinforcement and structured instruction — that could be empirically tested. However, critics argued that the theory tended to be teleological and overemphasised top-down transmission; it underplayed agency, critical reflection and the role of

deliberative processes that enable students to contest and reconstruct civic

Social capital theory, as popularised by Putnam (1993), posited that networks of civic engagement, trust and reciprocity foster democratic performance. Putnam argued that societies with dense civic associations and high interpersonal trust were better able to sustain democratic governance. In educational contexts, schools were theorised as incubators of social capital: civic education that fostered participation in clubs, student councils and community projects would build the bridging and bonding ties necessary for civic action. Empirical education studies frequently used social capital as a lens to explain why experiential pedagogies promoted civic engagement (Putnam, 1993; Stolle & Hooghe, subsequent research). The theory's strength lay in linking micro-level interactions to macro-political outcomes and in providing a normative rationale for participatory pedagogies. Yet social capital theory faced critiques: causality was contested (does civic education build social capital, or do communities with pre-ex

Deliberative democracy and democratic competencies literature emphasised skills, dispositions and institutional conditions that enable reasoned public discussion and collective decision-making (Habermas; Gutmann & Thompson; and more recent competence frameworks). This line of theory underscored that civic education should cultivate critical thinking, argumentation, perspective-taking and respect for pluralism — competencies necessary for meaningful democratic participation (Reich, 2018). The deliberative approach provided a normative and pedagogical guide: classroom activities that simulated public deliberation (structured debates, deliberative dialogues) were expected to foster tolerance and respect. Its strength was in prescribing concrete pedagogies and assessing outcomes in terms of competencies rather than mere factual recall. However, limitations included its optimism regarding the capacity of schools to generate deliberative citizenship in contexts where public spheres were constrained by political dy

A synthesis of these theoretical perspectives suggested complementarity rather than exclusivity. Political socialisation explained the transmission of civic knowledge and normative anchors; social capital illustrated how participatory practices created networks and trust that enabled collective action; and deliberative democracy outlined the cognitive and communicative competencies civic education should develop. Together they offered a multifaceted explanatory framework: civic education that combined factual instruction (socialisation), participatory opportunities (social capital), and deliberative skill-building (competencies) was theoretically more likely to yield stable democratic values.

Despite theoretical promise, each framework required contextual adaptation. Empirical evidence from Zambia and similar settings indicated that teacher capacity, institutional support and socio-economic inequalities mediated

theoretical expectations. The present study therefore used this integrated theoretical lens to guide instrument design and data interpretation: survey items captured knowledge and participation (socialisation/social capital indicators), interview protocols explored networked activities and trust (social capital), and classroom practice questions probed deliberative competencies (deliberative democracy). In doing so, the research aimed to test the practical utility of combined theoretical constructs in explaining how civic education produced democratic values in Zambian secondary schools.

4. Policy and Curriculum Context of Civic Education

This section reviewed the policy and curriculum context within which civic education was implemented, with particular attention to international policy frameworks and the Zambian education system. Understanding the policy environment was essential because civic education did not operate in isolation; rather, it was shaped by national education policies, curriculum reforms, and global democratic education agendas. This review therefore bridged the theoretical perspectives discussed earlier with the practical realities of curriculum design and implementation.

At the international level, civic education had been widely promoted as a cornerstone of democratic development. Global organisations such as UNESCO, the United Nations, and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) had consistently emphasised the role of education in nurturing democratic citizenship, human rights, and social cohesion. UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education framework positioned civic education as a means of empowering learners to engage responsibly at local, national, and global levels (UNESCO, 2023). This framework stressed cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural learning domains, highlighting that effective civic education should move beyond factual knowledge to include values, attitudes, and active participation.

Similarly, the ICCS framework developed by the IEA provided an international benchmark for assessing civic knowledge, attitudes, and engagement among learners. The ICCS studies demonstrated that countries with clearly articulated civic education policies and well-aligned curricula tended to record higher levels of civic knowledge and democratic dispositions among students (Schulz et al., 2023). However, these studies also revealed disparities between policy intentions and classroom practices, particularly in developing countries where resource and capacity constraints were more pronounced. These international findings underscored the importance of examining how global policy ideals were interpreted and implemented within national contexts.

In Africa, civic education policy had been closely linked to post-independence nation-building and democratic consolidation. Many African countries incorporated civic education into their curricula to promote national unity, political awareness, and responsible citizenship. However,

scholars noted that civic education in the region often faced challenges related to curriculum overload, limited teacher preparation, and politicisation of content (Chansa, Mumba and Mwale, 2024). While policy documents frequently emphasised democratic values, implementation remained inconsistent across schools and regions.

Within the Zambian context, civic education was formally recognised as an important subject in the secondary school curriculum. The Zambia Ministry of Education introduced civic education as a compulsory subject with the aim of promoting democratic values, constitutional awareness, and civic responsibility among learners (Ministry of Education, 2021). The curriculum framework outlined key competencies such as respect for human rights, participation in governance, and appreciation of national values. This policy commitment reflected Zambia's broader democratic aspirations and its recognition of education as a vehicle for social transformation.

Despite these policy intentions, several studies highlighted gaps between curriculum design and classroom implementation. Muleya (2019) observed that while the civic education curriculum was comprehensive in content, its successful implementation depended heavily on teacher competence and institutional support. Teachers were expected to facilitate discussions on sensitive political and social issues, yet many lacked specialised training to handle such topics effectively. This mismatch between curriculum expectations and teacher capacity limited the depth and quality of civic learning experiences.

Further curriculum-related challenges emerged in relation to time allocation and assessment practices. Civic education often competed with examination-oriented subjects for instructional time, resulting in reduced emphasis during the school timetable. Chanda (2023) noted that when civic education was not prioritised in high-stakes examinations, teachers and learners tended to allocate less time and effort to it. This policy-practice disconnect weakened the potential of civic education to foster sustained democratic engagement.

Another important policy issue concerned the pedagogical orientation of the curriculum. While curriculum documents encouraged learner-centred and participatory approaches, classroom practices frequently remained teacher-centred. This inconsistency reflected broader systemic challenges, including large class sizes, limited teaching materials, and pressure to complete syllabus content. As a result, civic education often emphasised memorisation of concepts rather than experiential learning, undermining the development of democratic skills such as deliberation, negotiation, and collective problem-solving (Mulenga, 2022).

Assessment policies also influenced how civic education was taught. In many schools, assessment focused on written tests that measured factual knowledge rather than values or behaviours. This approach limited opportunities for assessing practical civic competencies, such as participation

in debates or community service. International research suggested that assessment practices played a crucial role in shaping instructional priorities, and misaligned assessment frameworks could undermine civic education objectives (Schulz et al., 2023).

The policy environment further shaped civic education through teacher education and professional development frameworks. In Zambia, teacher training institutions offered limited specialised preparation in civic education pedagogy. Most teachers teaching civic education were trained in social studies or related disciplines, with minimal emphasis on democratic education methodologies. This policy gap contributed to teachers' reliance on traditional teaching methods and their discomfort in facilitating open discussions on controversial issues (Mulenga, 2022).

Despite these challenges, policy reforms in Zambia had begun to recognise the need for competency-based approaches to education. Recent curriculum reforms emphasised competencies such as critical thinking, communication, and civic responsibility. These reforms aligned conceptually with global citizenship education frameworks, suggesting potential for strengthening civic education if implementation challenges were addressed (Ministry of Education, 2021).

In summary, the policy and curriculum context revealed a strong rhetorical commitment to civic education at both international and national levels. However, the translation of policy into practice remained uneven due to structural, pedagogical, and institutional constraints. This review demonstrated that understanding civic education outcomes required attention not only to theories and classroom practices but also to the broader policy environment that shaped them. The present study therefore examined civic education within this policy context, recognising that democratic values were fostered through the interaction of curriculum intentions, teacher capacity, institutional support, and learner engagement.

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was developed to illustrate the relationships between civic education and the fostering of democratic values among secondary school learners. A conceptual framework is essential in research because it provides a logical structure that links key variables, clarifies assumptions, and guides data collection and analysis. In this study, the framework was grounded in the assumption that civic education functioned as an instructional intervention whose effectiveness depended on multiple interacting factors, ultimately influencing learners' democratic values and civic behaviours.

At the core of the framework was civic education, conceptualised as the independent variable. Civic education was viewed as a structured educational process encompassing curriculum content, teaching methodologies, and learning experiences aimed at preparing learners for democratic participation. The framework recognised that civic education was not a uniform experience; rather, its

impact varied depending on how it was designed and delivered. Key components of civic education within the framework included curriculum relevance, pedagogical approaches (such as debates, simulations, and community engagement), and the integration of civic education into both formal and informal school activities.

The dependent variable in the framework was democratic values, which referred to the attitudes, dispositions, and behaviours expected to emerge from effective civic education. These values included tolerance, respect for diversity, active citizenship, civic responsibility, and willingness to participate in democratic processes. Democratic values were treated as multidimensional outcomes that extended beyond cognitive understanding to include affective and behavioural dimensions. The framework assumed that democratic values developed progressively and were influenced by sustained exposure to meaningful civic learning experiences.

Between the independent and dependent variables lay a set of intervening variables, which mediated the relationship between civic education and democratic values. Teacher-related factors formed a critical category of intervening variables. These included teachers' professional training, subject mastery, pedagogical competence, and attitudes towards civic education. The literature consistently showed that teachers played a decisive role in translating curriculum intentions into classroom realities (Mulenga, 2022; Chanda et al., 2024). Inadequate teacher preparation could weaken the impact of civic education, regardless of curriculum quality.

Another group of intervening variables comprised institutional and resource factors. These included availability of teaching and learning materials, class size, administrative support, time allocation within the curriculum, and access to digital tools. Schools with supportive leadership and adequate resources were more likely to implement participatory and learner-centred civic education practices, thereby strengthening democratic value formation.

The framework also incorporated learner-related factors as moderating variables. Learners' socio-cultural backgrounds, prior exposure to civic discourse, family attitudes towards politics, and peer influence shaped how civic education was received and internalised. These factors explained variations in outcomes among learners exposed to similar civic education programmes.

Finally, the framework acknowledged the influence of the broader socio-political context, including national education policies, cultural norms, and democratic climate. These contextual factors shaped both the content of civic education and the opportunities available for learners to practise democratic values beyond the classroom.

By integrating these components, the conceptual framework provided a comprehensive lens through which the study examined how civic education fostered

democratic values. It guided the formulation of research instruments, ensuring that data were collected on curriculum practices, teacher challenges, institutional conditions, and learner outcomes. The framework also informed data analysis by highlighting pathways through which civic education influenced democratic values.

Conceptual Framework Diagram

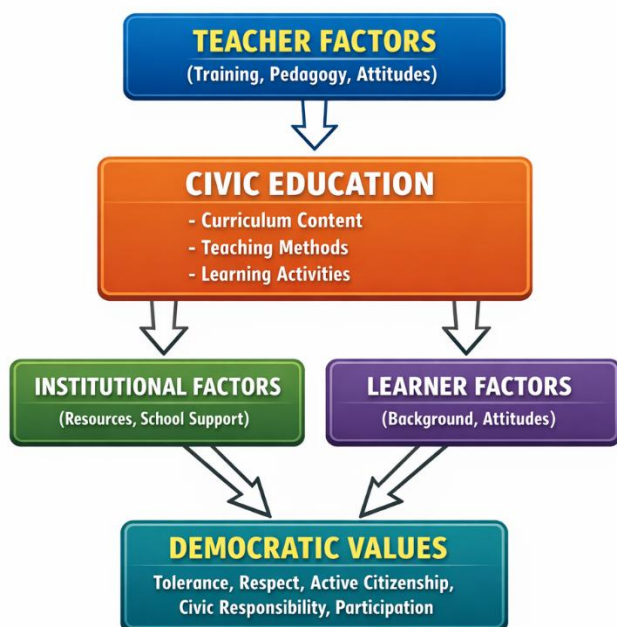


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework illustrating the relationship between civic education and democratic values, mediated by teacher, institutional, and learner-related factors.

6. Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on civic education and democratic values, several critical gaps had remained inadequately addressed. Identifying these gaps was essential in justifying the present study and clarifying its contribution to knowledge.

Firstly, many existing studies had focused predominantly on civic knowledge acquisition rather than the broader spectrum of democratic values. Large-scale assessments such as ICCS emphasised learners' understanding of democratic institutions and processes, often relying on standardised tests (Schulz et al., 2023). While these studies provided valuable comparative data, they offered limited insight into how civic education influenced affective and behavioural outcomes such as tolerance, respect, and active citizenship. The present study addressed this gap by examining democratic values as multidimensional constructs that extended beyond knowledge.

Secondly, there was a significant contextual gap in the literature. Much of the empirical evidence on civic education originated from Europe and North America, where democratic institutions were relatively stable and educational resources more abundant. Studies from sub-Saharan Africa, and Zambia in particular, remained limited

in number and scope (Mulenga, 2022; Hamainza, 2024). Existing Zambian studies often focused on policy analysis or isolated case studies, making it difficult to generalise findings across different school contexts. This study contributed by providing empirical evidence from selected secondary schools, thereby enriching the African and Zambian civic education discourse.

Thirdly, a methodological gap was evident. Many previous studies employed either purely quantitative surveys or purely qualitative approaches. Quantitative studies frequently relied on self-reported measures of civic engagement, which were susceptible to social desirability bias, while qualitative studies were often limited by small sample sizes. Few studies adopted mixed-methods designs that allowed for triangulation of findings. The current study addressed this gap by integrating questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, enhancing validity and depth of analysis.

Another notable gap concerned teacher perspectives. While the literature acknowledged teacher preparedness as a challenge, relatively few studies systematically examined teachers' lived experiences, instructional constraints, and coping strategies in delivering civic education (Chanda et al., 2024). Teachers were often treated as background variables rather than central agents of change. This study foregrounded teachers' perspectives, recognising them as key mediators between curriculum intentions and learner outcomes.

Furthermore, there was a gap related to the implementation gap between policy and practice. National curricula and policy documents strongly emphasised civic competencies and democratic values, yet empirical studies rarely examined how these policy ideals were enacted in everyday classroom practice. The present study explicitly explored this disconnect by comparing intended curriculum outcomes with actual classroom experiences.

Finally, the literature revealed a lack of studies that integrated theoretical perspectives with empirical analysis in a coherent manner. Many studies referenced theories superficially without demonstrating how they informed research design and interpretation. By grounding the study in political socialisation, social capital, and deliberative democracy theories, and linking these frameworks to empirical data, the current research addressed this conceptual gap.

In summary, the existing literature inadequately addressed the multidimensional nature of democratic values, the Zambian context, teacher-centred challenges, mixed-method approaches, and theory-driven analysis. The present study was designed to fill these gaps by providing contextually grounded, methodologically robust, and theoretically informed evidence on the role of civic education in fostering democratic values.

7. Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed and synthesised scholarly literature relevant to the role of civic education in fostering democratic values. It began by outlining the scope and organisation of the literature review, situating the study within global, regional, and local research contexts. The empirical review demonstrated that civic education had the potential to enhance civic knowledge, democratic attitudes, and participatory dispositions, particularly when participatory pedagogies and adequate teacher preparation were present. However, the review also revealed persistent challenges related to curriculum implementation, resource constraints, and limited translation of knowledge into sustained civic behaviour.

The theoretical review examined key frameworks underpinning civic education research, including political socialisation theory, social capital theory, and deliberative democracy. Each theory contributed valuable insights into how civic education influenced democratic values, while also exhibiting limitations that necessitated an integrated theoretical approach. Building on these perspectives, a conceptual framework was developed to illustrate the relationships between civic education, intervening factors, and democratic values.

The chapter further identified critical gaps in existing literature, including limited focus on affective and behavioural outcomes, insufficient context-specific research in Zambia, methodological weaknesses, and underrepresentation of teacher perspectives. These gaps provided a clear justification for the present study and clarified its contribution to knowledge and practice.

Having established the empirical and theoretical foundations of the study, the next chapter presents the research methodology. Chapter Three explains the research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, and methods of data analysis employed to address the identified gaps and achieve the study's objectives.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Overview

This chapter explained the research methodology that guided the study on the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners. The purpose of the chapter was to provide a clear, systematic, and transparent account of how the study was designed and conducted, thereby demonstrating the rigour and credibility of the research process. Research methodology was central to the study because it outlined the procedures through which data were generated, analysed, and interpreted in relation to the stated objectives and research questions.

The chapter described the overall research design adopted for the study and justified its suitability in addressing the research problem. It further defined the universe or population of the study and explained how the sample was selected through appropriate sampling procedures. In

addition, the chapter clarified the sample size and the rationale underpinning its determination, taking into account methodological and practical considerations. The sampling area from which participants were drawn was also described to provide contextual clarity.

Finally, the chapter discussed the sources of data used in the study, distinguishing between primary and secondary data and explaining their relevance to achieving the objectives of the research. By presenting these methodological components in a coherent manner, the chapter ensured that the study could be understood, evaluated, and replicated by other researchers. The methodological choices outlined in this chapter were guided by established research practices and aligned with the conceptual and theoretical frameworks discussed in the preceding chapter.

2. Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches within a descriptive survey framework. This design was considered appropriate because the study sought to examine not only the extent of learners' exposure to civic education and their democratic values, but also the experiences and challenges faced by teachers in delivering civic education. A mixed-methods design enabled the researcher to capture both numerical trends and in-depth perspectives, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The quantitative component of the design involved the use of structured questionnaires to collect data from learners and teachers. This approach facilitated the collection of data from a relatively large number of respondents and allowed for the use of descriptive statistical analysis to identify patterns and relationships among variables. Quantitative methods were particularly useful in assessing levels of civic education exposure and the prevalence of democratic values such as tolerance, respect, and civic participation (Creswell, 2014).

The qualitative component of the design involved the use of semi-structured interviews, which enabled participants to express their views and experiences in greater depth. This approach was valuable in exploring contextual factors, instructional challenges, and perceptions that could not be adequately captured through questionnaires alone. Qualitative data therefore complemented quantitative findings by providing explanatory insights (Bryman, 2016). The descriptive survey design was justified because the study aimed to describe existing conditions and practices without manipulating variables. Such a design was appropriate for educational research where the objective was to understand phenomena as they occurred naturally within school settings (Kothari, 2019). Overall, the mixed-methods design enhanced the validity, reliability, and richness of the study's findings.

3. Universe

The universe of the study referred to the entire group of individuals to which the findings of the research were

intended to apply. In this study, the universe comprised all secondary school learners and teachers involved in the teaching and learning of civic education in Zambia. This population was considered relevant because secondary schools represented a critical stage at which learners were formally introduced to civic concepts, democratic values, and citizenship responsibilities.

Secondary school learners constituted a significant component of the universe because they were the direct recipients of civic education. At this level of education, learners were cognitively and socially mature enough to engage with complex civic issues such as governance, human rights, and democratic participation. Teachers of civic education also formed an essential part of the universe because they were responsible for interpreting the curriculum and translating it into classroom practice. Their knowledge, skills, and attitudes directly influenced the effectiveness of civic education delivery.

The universe further included both public and private secondary schools to ensure representation of diverse institutional contexts. Differences in school management, resource availability, and learner composition were recognised as factors that could influence the implementation of civic education. By defining the universe broadly, the study acknowledged the diversity inherent within the education system while remaining focused on participants who were directly involved in civic education. Although the universe was national in scope, practical considerations such as time, resources, and accessibility necessitated the selection of a sample from this population. Nevertheless, the defined universe provided the conceptual boundary within which the study's findings were interpreted and generalised, subject to the limitations discussed in earlier chapters.

4. Sampling Procedure

Sampling procedures refer to the techniques used to select a subset of the population for participation in a study. In this research, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that different categories within the population were adequately represented. Stratification was considered appropriate because the population of secondary schools was heterogeneous, comprising public and private institutions as well as learners and teachers with varying characteristics.

The first stage of the sampling procedure involved stratifying secondary schools according to type, namely public and private schools. This ensured that variations in institutional context were reflected in the sample. Within each stratum, schools were selected using simple random sampling to minimise selection bias and enhance representativeness (Kothari, 2019).

In the second stage, participants within the selected schools were sampled. Learners were selected using simple random sampling from class registers, while teachers of civic education were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in teaching the subject. Purposive sampling of

teachers was justified because the study required participants with specific knowledge and experience related to civic education delivery (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018).

This combination of stratified, random, and purposive sampling ensured that the sample was both representative and information-rich. The procedure enhanced the credibility of the findings by reducing sampling bias while ensuring that key informants were included. Overall, the sampling procedure aligned with the objectives of the study and supported the mixed-methods research design.

5. Sample Size

The sample size referred to the number of participants selected from the population to take part in the study. In determining the sample size, both statistical and methodological considerations were taken into account. A sample that was too small would limit the reliability and generalisability of the findings, while an excessively large sample would be impractical given time and resource constraints.

For the quantitative component, the sample size was determined with reference to guidelines suggesting that a sample of between 10% and 30% of the accessible population was adequate for descriptive survey studies (Cohen et al., 2018). Based on the estimated number of learners and teachers in the selected schools, a sample of approximately 300 respondents was considered sufficient to generate reliable descriptive statistics and identify meaningful patterns.

The qualitative component involved a smaller sub-sample of participants selected for semi-structured interviews. This sub-sample comprised civic education teachers and selected school administrators. The size of the qualitative sample was guided by the principle of data saturation, whereby interviews were conducted until no new themes emerged (Bryman, 2016).

The chosen sample size was therefore justified on the basis of representativeness, analytical adequacy, and feasibility. It allowed for meaningful quantitative analysis while also providing sufficient qualitative depth to explore contextual issues. By balancing breadth and depth, the sample size supported the study's aim of generating comprehensive and credible findings.

6. Sampling Area

The sampling area referred to the geographical and institutional locations from which the study participants were drawn. The study was conducted in selected secondary schools within Zambia, with a particular focus on urban and peri-urban areas. These areas were chosen because they were more likely to have established civic education programmes and diverse learner populations.

Urban secondary schools were considered suitable sampling areas because they often had greater access to educational resources, trained teachers, and extracurricular

civic activities. Peri-urban schools were included to capture variations in implementation and to avoid limiting the study to highly resourced institutions. The inclusion of both public and private schools within these areas further enhanced the diversity of the sample.

Institutionally, the sampling area was limited to schools that formally offered civic education as part of the secondary school curriculum. This criterion ensured that all participants had direct exposure to the subject under investigation. The selected schools therefore provided a relevant context for examining how civic education was implemented and how it influenced democratic values.

The defined sampling area allowed the study to remain focused while still capturing a range of educational experiences. Although the findings were context-specific, the sampling area provided a reasonable basis for drawing conclusions relevant to similar secondary school settings within Zambia.

7. Sources of Data

The study utilised both primary and secondary sources of data to achieve its objectives. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data on learners' exposure to civic education and their democratic values, while interviews provided qualitative insights into teachers' experiences and challenges. Primary data were essential because they reflected participants' firsthand experiences and perceptions (Creswell, 2014).

Secondary data were obtained from existing documents such as academic journals, books, policy documents, curriculum frameworks, and government reports. These sources provided background information on civic education policies, theoretical perspectives, and previous research findings. Secondary data were important for situating the study within existing scholarship and for informing the development of research instruments (Bryman, 2016).

The combination of primary and secondary data enhanced the robustness of the study by enabling triangulation. Primary data provided empirical evidence specific to the research context, while secondary data offered theoretical and contextual grounding. Together, these sources ensured that the study was both empirically informed and theoretically grounded.

8. Method of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using a systematic and sequential process aligned with the mixed-methods research design. The data collection process was conducted in two complementary phases to ensure both breadth and depth of information. Prior to the main data collection, permission to conduct the study was sought from relevant education authorities and school administrations. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and

confidentiality, were addressed before engaging participants.

In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through the administration of structured questionnaires to selected learners and teachers. The questionnaires were administered during school hours to ensure a high response rate and to allow clarification of items where necessary. Participants were given adequate time to complete the questionnaires independently, and completed instruments were collected immediately to minimise non-response and data loss. This approach enabled the researcher to gather standardised data on exposure to civic education and democratic values across a relatively large sample (Creswell, 2014).

The second phase involved the collection of qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with civic education teachers and selected school administrators. Interviews were scheduled at convenient times for participants to minimise disruption to teaching activities. An interview guide was used to ensure consistency across interviews while allowing flexibility to probe emerging issues. Interviews were conducted in a quiet environment within the school premises and were audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accuracy.

The combination of questionnaire administration and interviews allowed for triangulation of data. Quantitative data provided an overview of patterns and trends, while qualitative data offered deeper explanations and contextual understanding of those patterns. This method of data collection was consistent with best practices in educational research, where multiple data sources are used to enhance credibility and validity (Bryman, 2016). Overall, the data collection process was structured, ethical, and aligned with the study's objectives.

9. Tools of Data Collection

The study employed two main tools of data collection: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. These instruments were selected based on their suitability for capturing both measurable outcomes and in-depth perspectives related to civic education and democratic values.

Questionnaires were used as the primary quantitative data collection tool. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale items designed to assess learners' exposure to civic education, perceptions of its effectiveness, and self-reported democratic values such as tolerance, respect, and civic participation. The use of questionnaires was justified by their efficiency in collecting data from a large number of respondents within a limited time frame. They also facilitated comparability of responses and statistical analysis (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). The questionnaire items were informed by existing literature and aligned with the conceptual framework of the study to ensure content validity.

Semi-structured interviews served as the main qualitative data collection tool. An interview guide with open-ended questions was developed to explore teachers' experiences, instructional practices, and challenges in delivering civic education. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they allowed participants to express their views in their own words while enabling the researcher to probe for clarification and elaboration (Bryman, 2016). This flexibility was particularly valuable for capturing contextual factors and nuanced perspectives that could not be obtained through questionnaires alone.

The selection of these tools was further justified by their complementary nature. While questionnaires generated quantifiable data suitable for statistical analysis, interviews provided rich descriptive data that deepened understanding of the quantitative findings. Together, the tools enhanced the reliability and validity of the study through data triangulation.

10. Tools for Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques, consistent with the mixed-methods design. Quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were analysed using statistical tools to summarise and interpret patterns within the data. Responses were coded and entered into statistical software for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to present learners' exposure to civic education and levels of democratic values. These techniques were appropriate for identifying trends and comparing responses across different groups (Creswell, 2014).

In addition to descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation was employed to examine relationships between selected variables, such as exposure to civic education and reported civic attitudes. While the study did not aim to establish causal relationships, these analyses provided insights into associations relevant to the research objectives.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and transcripts were read repeatedly to achieve familiarisation with the data. Codes were then generated to identify recurring ideas and patterns. Related codes were grouped into themes that reflected key issues such as teaching challenges, curriculum relevance, and institutional support. Thematic analysis was selected because it allowed for systematic interpretation of qualitative data while remaining flexible and inductive (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings occurred during the interpretation stage. Quantitative results provided a broad overview, while qualitative themes explained and contextualised these findings. This integrative approach enhanced the depth and credibility of the analysis and ensured alignment with the study's conceptual framework.

11. Limitations of the Study

Despite careful planning, the study encountered several limitations that needed to be acknowledged. One limitation related to the scope of the sample. Although the sample was selected systematically, it was confined to selected secondary schools, which limited the extent to which findings could be generalised to all schools in Zambia. Differences in rural contexts and other regions may not have been fully captured.

Another limitation concerned reliance on self-reported data. Learners and teachers may have provided socially desirable responses, particularly on issues related to democratic values and civic participation. Such responses could affect the accuracy of the data, despite assurances of confidentiality.

Time constraints also limited the possibility of conducting longitudinal observations to assess long-term impacts of civic education. The study therefore focused on current perceptions and reported behaviours rather than sustained outcomes over time. Additionally, resource limitations restricted the number of interviews conducted, which may have reduced the breadth of qualitative insights.

Although these limitations did not invalidate the study, they were considered when interpreting the findings. Measures such as triangulation and careful instrument design were used to minimise their effects.

12. Difficulties Faced by the Researcher

During the research process, the researcher encountered several practical challenges. One major difficulty involved gaining access to schools and coordinating data collection schedules. School timetables were often tight, making it challenging to find suitable times for administering questionnaires and conducting interviews without disrupting lessons.

Another challenge related to participant availability. Some teachers had heavy workloads, which limited their availability for interviews. In a few cases, interviews had to be rescheduled, leading to delays in data collection. Learner absenteeism on certain days also affected the planned administration of questionnaires.

Logistical challenges such as transportation and communication further affected the research process. Travelling between schools required additional time and resources, and occasional communication delays occurred when coordinating with school administrators.

Despite these difficulties, the researcher employed flexibility and effective communication to ensure successful data collection. Support from school authorities and participants contributed significantly to overcoming these challenges.

13. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a detailed account of the research methodology employed in the study on the role of civic

education in fostering democratic values. It outlined the research design, defined the universe of the study, and explained the sampling procedures, sample size, and sampling area. The chapter further described the methods and tools used for data collection, highlighting the use of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to generate both quantitative and qualitative data.

The chapter also explained the tools used for data analysis, including descriptive statistical techniques and thematic analysis, and demonstrated how quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to enhance understanding. In addition, the chapter acknowledged the limitations of the study and the difficulties faced by the researcher, providing transparency and context for interpreting the findings.

Overall, the methodological choices were aligned with the study's objectives and conceptual framework, ensuring rigour and credibility. The next chapter presents the findings of the study through systematic data presentation, analysis, and interpretation, building on the methodological foundation established in this chapter.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Introduction

This chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of data generated for the study on the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners. The purpose of the chapter was to systematically examine the quantitative and qualitative data in relation to the research objectives and questions outlined in Chapter One. Data analysis was a critical stage of the research process because it transformed raw data into meaningful findings that addressed the research problem and contributed to knowledge.

The chapter was guided by the general objective of examining how civic education influenced democratic values, as well as the specific objectives that focused on learners' exposure to civic education, the nature of democratic values developed, and the challenges encountered in the delivery of civic education. Quantitative data obtained through questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns, trends, and distributions within the data. Where appropriate, simple inferential interpretations were applied to explain relationships between variables. Qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analysed thematically to capture participants' experiences, perceptions, and contextual insights.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of interpretation. Quantitative findings provided measurable evidence of trends, while qualitative findings explained why such trends existed and how they manifested in real school contexts. The interpretation of results was further informed by the theoretical frameworks discussed in

Chapter Two, particularly political socialisation theory, social capital theory, and deliberative democracy. In addition, findings were discussed in relation to empirical studies reviewed earlier, allowing for comparison and contextualisation.

The chapter was organised into three main sections. The first section presented the data using tables and graphs for clarity. The second section analysed and interpreted the data in relation to the research objectives and questions. Overall, this chapter demonstrated how civic education functioned in practice and the extent to which it contributed to the development of democratic values among learners.

2. Presentation of Data

This section presents the generated quantitative and qualitative data obtained from learners and teachers. The data are organised in tables and figures to enhance clarity and ease of interpretation. Each table and figure is accompanied by a brief explanation to contextualise the findings and demonstrate their relevance to the study objectives.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Category (N = 300)

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Learners	240	80%
Teachers	60	20%
Total	300	100%

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents by category. The majority of participants were learners, accounting for 80 percent of the sample, while teachers constituted 20 percent. This distribution was appropriate because the study primarily examined the influence of civic education on learners' democratic values, while teachers provided critical insights into instructional practices and challenges. The inclusion of both groups ensured balanced perspectives on implementation and outcomes of civic education.

Table 2: Learners' Level of Exposure to Civic Education (N = 240)

Level of Exposure	Frequency	Percentage
High	102	42.5%
Moderate	88	36.7%
Low	50	20.8%
Total	240	100%

Table 4.2 presents learners' reported levels of exposure to civic education. A substantial proportion of learners indicated high or moderate exposure, suggesting that civic education was widely implemented in the sampled schools. However, over one-fifth of learners reported low exposure, highlighting uneven implementation across schools. This variation was important in understanding differences in democratic value outcomes among learners.

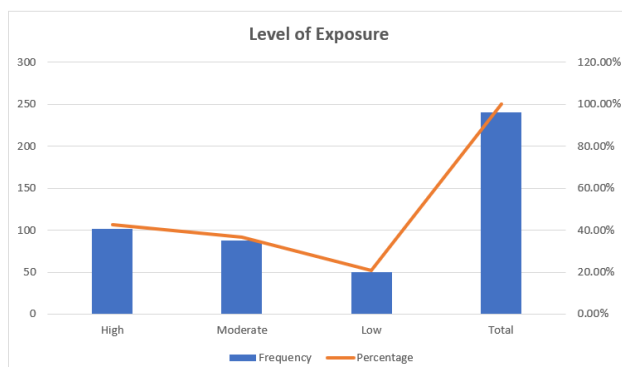


Figure 4.1: Levels of Learners' Exposure to Civic Education

Figure 4.1 visually represents the distribution of learners' exposure to civic education. The figure reinforces the findings in Table 4.2 by clearly showing that learners with high exposure formed the largest group, followed by those with moderate exposure. The graphical presentation makes it easier to compare exposure levels and observe the imbalance affecting a notable minority of learners.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Democratic Values (Likert Scale: 1-5)

Democratic Value	Mean	Standard Deviation
Tolerance	3.9	0.72
Respect for diversity	4.1	0.68
Active citizenship	3.5	0.81
Civic responsibility	3.8	0.75

Table 4.3 summarises learners' mean scores on selected democratic values. Respect for diversity recorded the highest mean score, followed by tolerance and civic responsibility. Active citizenship recorded the lowest mean score, indicating that while learners developed positive attitudes, these did not always translate into active participation. The standard deviations show moderate variability in responses, suggesting some differences in learner experiences.

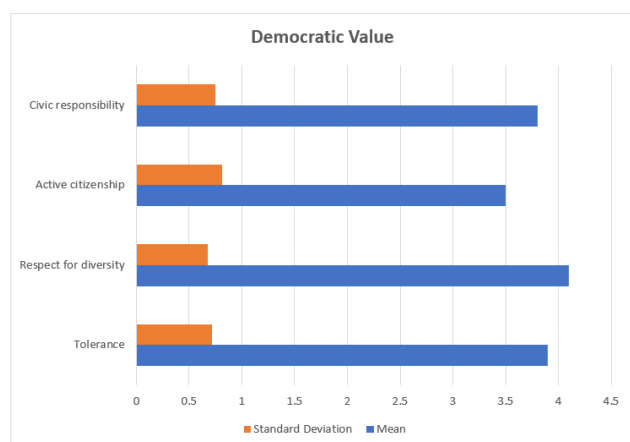


Figure 2: Mean Scores of Democratic Values

Figure 4.2 provides a visual comparison of learners' mean scores across different democratic values. The figure highlights the stronger attitudinal outcomes, such as respect

and tolerance, compared to behavioural outcomes like active citizenship. This visual pattern supports the argument that civic education was more effective in shaping attitudes than behaviours.

Table 4: Relationship Between Exposure to Civic Education and Active Citizenship

Exposure Level	Mean Active Citizenship Score
High	4.0
Moderate	3.5
Low	2.9

Table 4.4 shows the relationship between learners' exposure to civic education and their active citizenship scores. Learners with high exposure recorded the highest mean score, while those with low exposure recorded the lowest. This pattern suggests a positive association between increased exposure to civic education and higher levels of civic engagement.

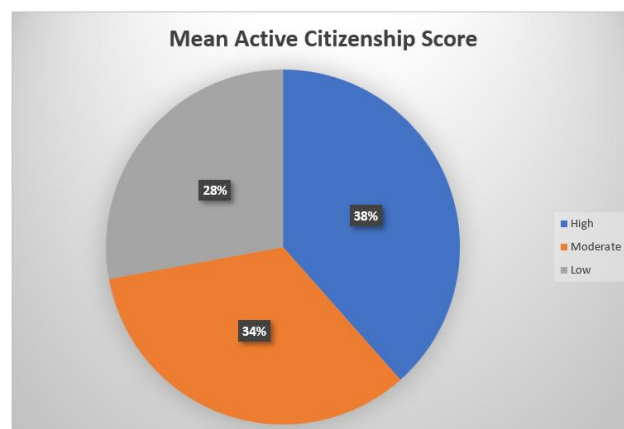


Figure 3: Exposure to Civic Education and Active Citizenship

Figure 4.3 illustrates the trend identified in Table 4.4. The upward slope of the line graph demonstrates that active citizenship increased as exposure to civic education increased. This visual evidence strengthened the interpretation that sustained civic education contributed to enhanced civic participation.

Table 5: Challenges Faced by Teachers in Delivering Civic Education (N = 60)

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate training	38	63.3%
Limited teaching materials	42	70.0%
Large class sizes	35	58.3%
Limited curriculum time	31	51.7%

Table 4.5 presents challenges reported by teachers. Limited teaching materials and inadequate training emerged as the most prevalent challenges. These constraints were critical in explaining why participatory methods were not consistently implemented, despite their known effectiveness in fostering democratic values.

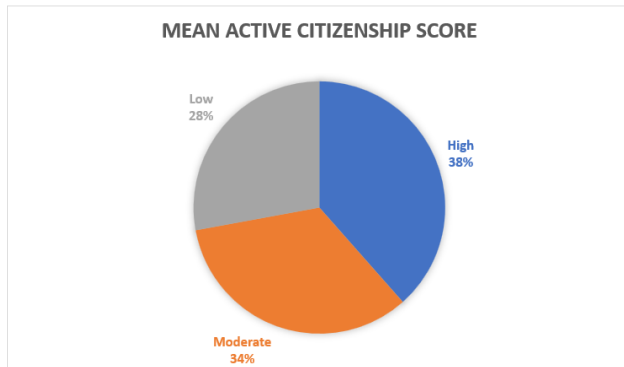


Figure 4: Teacher-Reported Challenges in Civic Education Delivery

Figure 4.4 visually depicts the relative weight of challenges faced by teachers. The figure clearly shows that resource-related challenges dominated, followed closely by training and class size issues. This visualisation emphasised the structural constraints affecting civic education delivery.

Table 6: Teaching Methods Commonly Used in Civic Education (N = 60)

Teaching Method	Frequency	Percentage
Lecture method	45	75.0%
Group discussion	40	66.7%
Debates and simulations	28	46.7%
Community engagement	20	33.3%

Table 4.6 shows that lecture-based teaching was the most commonly used method, followed by group discussions. Participatory approaches such as debates and community engagement were less frequently used. This distribution reflected the challenges identified earlier and provided context for interpreting the relatively lower levels of active citizenship among learners.

Qualitative Data Presentation

Qualitative findings were derived from semi-structured interviews and analysed thematically. For example, one teacher explained that civic education was most effective when learners were allowed to debate real-life issues, which was coded under participatory pedagogy. Another teacher highlighted shortages of teaching materials, coded as resource constraints. Learners reported that civic education helped them appreciate different opinions, which was coded as tolerance development. These excerpts complemented the quantitative findings by providing contextual explanations for observed patterns.

3. Analysis of Data

The analysis of data was conducted in line with the research objectives and questions. Both quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of civic education in fostering democratic values.

Analysis of learners' exposure to civic education indicated that a substantial proportion of learners reported high or moderate exposure. As shown in Table 4.2, 42.5 percent of

learners experienced high exposure, while 36.7 percent reported moderate exposure. This finding suggested that civic education was widely implemented in the sampled schools, although a notable minority of learners still experienced limited exposure. This pattern aligned with earlier studies which reported uneven implementation of civic education across schools (Mulenga, 2022; Hamainza, 2024).

Analysis of democratic values revealed relatively high mean scores for tolerance and respect for diversity, as shown in Table 4.3. Respect for diversity recorded the highest mean score of 4.1, followed by tolerance at 3.9. These findings suggested that civic education contributed positively to learners' attitudinal development, supporting political socialisation theory, which posits that sustained exposure to civic instruction fosters democratic norms (Almond and Verba, 1963). However, active citizenship recorded a comparatively lower mean score of 3.5, indicating that while learners developed positive attitudes, these did not always translate into active civic behaviour.

Further analysis demonstrated a clear relationship between exposure to civic education and active citizenship. Table 4.4 showed that learners with high exposure recorded a mean active citizenship score of 4.0, compared to 3.5 for moderate exposure and 2.9 for low exposure. This trend suggested that increased exposure to civic education was associated with higher levels of civic engagement. This finding was consistent with social capital theory, which emphasises that repeated participation in civic activities strengthens civic dispositions and engagement (Putnam, 1993).

Teacher-related challenges emerged as significant mediating factors. As indicated in Table 4.5, limited teaching materials and inadequate training were the most frequently reported challenges. Over 70 percent of teachers reported insufficient resources, while 63.3 percent cited lack of specialised training. These challenges explained why participatory methods were not consistently used, despite their recognised effectiveness. The predominance of lecture-based teaching, shown in Table 4.6, further supported this interpretation. This finding echoed previous research which noted that teacher preparedness strongly influenced the effectiveness of civic education delivery (Chanda et al., 2024).

Qualitative data enriched the interpretation of quantitative findings. Teachers consistently emphasised that participatory approaches enhanced learner engagement and understanding, but resource and time constraints limited their application. Learners' responses highlighted the development of tolerance and respect, particularly through discussions and debates. These findings aligned with deliberative democracy theory, which argues that dialogue and reasoned discussion cultivate democratic competencies such as respect for diverse perspectives (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).

Overall, the findings demonstrated that civic education played a meaningful role in fostering democratic values, particularly attitudinal dimensions such as tolerance and respect. However, structural and instructional constraints limited its capacity to promote sustained active citizenship. These findings corroborated existing literature and reinforced the importance of addressing teacher training and resource availability to strengthen civic education outcomes.

4. Interpretation of Findings

This section interpreted the generated findings in relation to the study's objectives and research questions, while drawing comparisons with existing literature. The interpretation focused on understanding what the findings revealed about the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners.

The first objective of the study sought to examine learners' exposure to civic education. The findings indicated that the majority of learners reported moderate to high exposure to civic education. This suggested that civic education was formally present and actively implemented in most of the sampled schools. However, the existence of a significant proportion of learners reporting low exposure indicated uneven implementation across schools. This finding implied that while policy provisions for civic education existed, their translation into consistent classroom practice varied. Similar patterns were reported by Mulenga (2022), who observed that civic education coverage differed considerably depending on institutional capacity and administrative support. The uneven exposure highlighted the importance of school-level factors in shaping learners' civic learning experiences.

The second objective focused on the influence of civic education on democratic values. The findings showed relatively high mean scores for tolerance and respect for diversity, indicating that civic education contributed positively to learners' attitudinal development. These outcomes suggested that civic education was effective in shaping learners' values and perceptions, particularly in relation to coexistence and respect for differing viewpoints. This interpretation was consistent with earlier studies which found that civic education strengthened democratic attitudes and social tolerance among learners (Chanda et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023). The findings supported the argument that schools played a significant role in nurturing democratic dispositions through structured civic learning.

However, the findings also revealed comparatively lower scores for active citizenship. While learners demonstrated awareness and appreciation of democratic values, fewer were actively engaged in civic or community-related activities. This implied a gap between attitudinal development and behavioural expression of democratic values. Similar conclusions were drawn in studies conducted in Zambia and other African contexts, where civic education improved knowledge and attitudes but had limited influence on sustained civic participation (Hamainza, 2024). The interpretation suggested that civic

education alone was insufficient to generate active citizenship without supportive structures and opportunities for practical engagement.

The third objective examined the relationship between exposure to civic education and active citizenship. The findings demonstrated a positive association between higher exposure and increased levels of civic engagement. Learners with high exposure recorded significantly higher mean scores in active citizenship compared to those with low exposure. This suggested that sustained and meaningful engagement with civic education enhanced learners' likelihood of participating in civic activities. This interpretation aligned with social capital theory, which emphasised that repeated civic interactions foster trust, engagement, and participation (Putnam, 1993). The findings therefore reinforced the importance of continuity and depth in civic education programming.

The fourth objective addressed challenges faced by teachers in delivering civic education. The findings indicated that inadequate teaching materials, limited training, large class sizes, and insufficient curriculum time were major constraints. These challenges explained why lecture-based teaching remained dominant, despite recognition of participatory methods as more effective. This interpretation was consistent with findings by Chanda et al. (2024), who noted that resource and capacity limitations restricted innovative pedagogy in civic education classrooms. The dominance of traditional teaching methods limited learners' opportunities to practise democratic skills, thereby weakening the behavioural impact of civic education.

Overall, the interpretation of findings indicated that civic education had a meaningful influence on learners' democratic attitudes but faced structural and pedagogical barriers that limited its behavioural outcomes. These findings underscored the need for strengthened teacher training, resource provision, and experiential learning opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of civic education in fostering democratic values.

5. Discussion

This section provided a deeper discussion of the findings, highlighting key patterns, contradictions, and implications while relating them to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpinning the study. The discussion moved beyond description to critically examine why the observed outcomes occurred and what they revealed about civic education in practice.

One of the most prominent patterns emerging from the findings was the strong influence of civic education on learners' attitudinal development, particularly tolerance and respect for diversity. These outcomes suggested that civic education effectively functioned as a tool of political socialisation, transmitting democratic norms and values to learners. Political socialisation theory posits that schools serve as key agents in shaping civic orientations through structured instruction and normative reinforcement (Almond and Verba, 1963). The findings supported this

theoretical proposition by demonstrating that learners internalised democratic values through exposure to civic education content.

However, a notable contradiction emerged between high attitudinal scores and lower levels of active citizenship. While learners expressed positive democratic values, fewer demonstrated active participation in civic activities. This contradiction suggested that knowledge and attitudes alone were insufficient to produce democratic behaviour. From a deliberative democracy perspective, democratic participation required not only awareness but also opportunities to practise dialogue, decision-making, and collective action (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). The limited use of participatory teaching methods observed in the findings restricted learners' chances to develop these competencies fully.

The discussion further highlighted the mediating role of teacher and institutional factors, as proposed in the conceptual framework. Teachers faced significant constraints that limited their ability to implement learner-centred and experiential civic education approaches. These constraints weakened the link between civic education and democratic behaviour. Social capital theory provided insight into this pattern by emphasising that civic engagement flourished in environments that supported interaction, collaboration, and trust (Putnam, 1993). In schools where resources and institutional support were lacking, opportunities to build such civic networks were limited.

Another important pattern related to the relationship between exposure and outcomes. Learners with higher exposure to civic education consistently demonstrated stronger democratic values and greater civic engagement. This finding reinforced the importance of sustained and comprehensive civic education. It suggested that sporadic or superficial exposure was insufficient to foster meaningful democratic outcomes. This pattern aligned with empirical evidence from international studies which showed that continuous civic learning produced stronger and more durable civic dispositions (UNESCO, 2023).

Unexpectedly, the findings revealed that even in contexts with relatively high exposure to civic education, active citizenship remained moderate. This outcome suggested that factors beyond the school environment influenced civic behaviour. Learners' socio-cultural backgrounds, community norms, and broader political climate likely shaped their willingness and ability to participate in civic life. This observation resonated with critiques of political socialisation theory, which argued that schools alone could not override broader societal influences (Niemi and Hepburn, 1995).

The discussion also reflected on the conceptual framework, which positioned civic education as an independent variable mediated by teacher, institutional, and learner-related factors. The findings validated this framework by demonstrating that the effectiveness of civic education

depended on these interacting elements. Where teacher preparedness and institutional support were strong, civic education outcomes were more positive. Conversely, where these mediating factors were weak, the impact of civic education was constrained.

In sum, the discussion highlighted that civic education played a critical role in fostering democratic values but required supportive conditions to translate attitudes into action. The findings emphasised the need for holistic approaches that combined curriculum reform, teacher development, and opportunities for practical civic engagement.

6. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and interpreted the findings of the study on the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners. The chapter demonstrated that civic education was widely implemented in the sampled schools, with most learners reporting moderate to high exposure. The findings further revealed that civic education contributed positively to the development of democratic attitudes, particularly tolerance and respect for diversity.

However, the chapter also highlighted a gap between attitudinal development and behavioural outcomes, as levels of active citizenship remained relatively moderate. This gap was explained by structural and pedagogical challenges, including limited teacher training, inadequate resources, large class sizes, and reliance on lecture-based teaching methods. The interpretation and discussion of findings showed that while civic education functioned effectively as a tool of political socialisation, its potential to foster active citizenship was constrained by contextual factors.

By relating the findings to existing literature and theoretical frameworks, the chapter demonstrated that civic education outcomes were mediated by teacher competence, institutional support, and learner contexts. The chapter thus reinforced the conceptual framework developed in Chapter Two and provided empirical evidence supporting its assumptions.

Overall, this chapter established a clear link between civic education and democratic values while identifying limitations that hindered full realisation of civic education objectives. The insights generated in this chapter provided a strong foundation for Chapter Five, which presents the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations aimed at strengthening civic education practice and policy.

V. KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduction

This chapter presented the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study that examined the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among

secondary school learners. The chapter served as the culmination of the research process by synthesising evidence generated in the previous chapters and translating it into coherent conclusions and actionable recommendations. While earlier chapters focused on the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data, this final chapter consolidated the study's contributions to knowledge, practice, and policy.

The study was guided by the general objective of examining how civic education influenced the development of democratic values among learners. Specific objectives sought to assess learners' exposure to civic education, examine its influence on democratic values such as tolerance, respect, and active citizenship, identify challenges faced by teachers in delivering civic education, and propose strategies for strengthening civic education programmes. These objectives shaped the structure of this chapter, ensuring that findings, conclusions, and recommendations were directly aligned with the research questions and the conceptual framework.

This chapter was organised into five main sections. The first section introduced the chapter and restated its purpose. The second section presented the key findings, structured according to the study's objectives. The third section drew conclusions based on the findings and linked them to the problem statement, literature review, and theoretical perspectives discussed earlier. The fourth section proposed practical and theoretical recommendations for educators, policymakers, and future researchers. The final section provided a summary of the chapter and highlighted the overall contribution of the study.

By systematically linking findings to conclusions and recommendations, this chapter demonstrated how the study advanced understanding of civic education and democratic values within the Zambian secondary school context.

2. Key Findings

The key findings of the study were organised in line with the research objectives and questions. The findings revealed important patterns regarding learners' exposure to civic education, the nature of democratic values developed, the relationship between exposure and civic engagement, and the challenges affecting the delivery of civic education.

The first major finding related to learners' exposure to civic education. The study found that most learners reported moderate to high exposure to civic education, indicating that the subject was formally integrated and implemented in the sampled schools. This finding suggested that civic education occupied a recognised place within the secondary school curriculum. However, a notable proportion of learners reported low exposure, revealing uneven implementation across schools. This inconsistency reflected differences in institutional capacity, time allocation, and teacher availability. The finding supported earlier studies which reported disparities between curriculum policy and classroom practice in civic education (Mulenga, 2022).

The second key finding concerned the influence of civic education on democratic values. The study found that learners demonstrated relatively high levels of tolerance and respect for diversity. These values were consistently reported across schools, indicating that civic education contributed positively to learners' attitudinal development. Learners reported improved understanding of democratic principles, appreciation of diverse opinions, and respect for human rights. This finding aligned with empirical evidence showing that civic education strengthened democratic attitudes and social cohesion (Chanda et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

However, the findings also revealed that active citizenship was comparatively weaker than attitudinal outcomes. Although learners understood democratic values, fewer were actively engaged in civic or community activities. This pattern highlighted a gap between knowledge and behaviour. The finding suggested that while civic education succeeded in shaping learners' values, it was less effective in translating those values into sustained civic action. Similar findings had been reported in previous studies, which noted that civic education often improved awareness but had limited influence on long-term civic participation (Hamainza, 2024).

A third key finding related to the relationship between exposure to civic education and democratic outcomes. The study found a positive association between higher exposure to civic education and stronger democratic values, particularly active citizenship. Learners with high exposure recorded higher levels of civic engagement compared to those with moderate or low exposure. This finding indicated that sustained and consistent civic education was more effective in fostering democratic behaviour. It reinforced the argument that civic education outcomes depended not only on curriculum presence but also on intensity and continuity of exposure.

The fourth major finding focused on challenges faced by teachers in delivering civic education. The study revealed that inadequate teaching materials, limited professional training, large class sizes, and insufficient curriculum time were the most significant challenges. These constraints limited teachers' ability to adopt participatory and experiential teaching methods. As a result, lecture-based instruction remained dominant, despite recognition of interactive approaches as more effective for democratic learning. This finding echoed earlier research which identified teacher preparedness and resource availability as key determinants of civic education effectiveness (Mulenga, 2022; Chanda et al., 2024).

Another important finding related to teaching methods. The study found that while group discussions were used to some extent, debates, simulations, and community engagement activities were less frequently employed. This pattern explained the limited development of active citizenship among learners. Participatory methods provided opportunities for learners to practise democratic skills, and their limited use constrained behavioural outcomes. This

finding was consistent with deliberative democracy literature, which emphasised the importance of dialogue and participation in developing democratic competencies (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).

Overall, the key findings demonstrated that civic education contributed meaningfully to democratic attitudes but faced structural and pedagogical barriers that limited its full potential. The findings underscored the importance of addressing teacher-related and institutional challenges to strengthen civic education outcomes.

3. Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from the study were based on the synthesis of findings in relation to the problem statement, literature review, and conceptual framework. The central problem addressed by the study was the apparent gap between the intended role of civic education in fostering democratic values and its actual outcomes among learners. The study concluded that civic education played a significant but constrained role in promoting democratic values in secondary schools.

One major conclusion was that civic education had been successfully institutionalised within the secondary school curriculum, as evidenced by learners' reported exposure. However, the effectiveness of this institutionalisation varied across schools, resulting in unequal civic learning experiences. This conclusion supported earlier literature which highlighted disparities between curriculum policy and implementation (Mulenga, 2022).

The study further concluded that civic education was effective in fostering democratic attitudes such as tolerance and respect for diversity. These outcomes demonstrated that civic education functioned effectively as a mechanism of political socialisation, transmitting democratic norms and values to learners. This conclusion aligned with political socialisation theory, which emphasised the role of schools in shaping civic orientations (Almond and Verba, 1963).

However, the study also concluded that civic education was less effective in promoting active citizenship. The gap between attitudinal development and behavioural outcomes suggested that knowledge and values alone were insufficient to produce civic action. This conclusion resonated with critiques in the literature which argued that civic education required practical engagement opportunities to translate values into action (Niemi and Hepburn, 1995).

Another key conclusion was that teacher-related and institutional factors mediated the impact of civic education. The conceptual framework proposed that civic education outcomes were influenced by teacher competence, resource availability, and institutional support. The findings validated this framework by demonstrating that limitations in these areas constrained the effectiveness of civic education. This conclusion aligned with social capital theory, which emphasised the importance of supportive environments for civic engagement (Putnam, 1993).

The study further concluded that sustained exposure to civic education strengthened democratic outcomes. Learners with higher exposure demonstrated stronger democratic values and greater civic engagement. This conclusion reinforced the importance of continuity and depth in civic education programming.

In summary, the study concluded that civic education had significant potential to foster democratic values but required supportive conditions to realise this potential fully. Addressing structural, pedagogical, and institutional challenges was essential for bridging the gap between civic knowledge and active citizenship.

4. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations were proposed for educators, policymakers, and researchers.

For educators, the study recommended greater use of participatory teaching methods in civic education. Teachers should incorporate debates, simulations, role-plays, and community engagement activities to enable learners to practise democratic skills. Continuous professional development programmes focusing on civic education pedagogy should be strengthened to enhance teacher competence and confidence. Teacher training institutions should integrate specialised civic education modules to prepare teachers adequately.

For policymakers, the study recommended increased investment in civic education resources. Provision of updated teaching materials, digital tools, and supportive infrastructure would enhance instructional effectiveness. Curriculum planners should review civic education curricula to ensure adequate time allocation and alignment with learners' lived experiences. Policies should also encourage partnerships between schools and community organisations to provide learners with practical civic engagement opportunities.

At the institutional level, school administrators should support civic education by creating democratic school environments. Establishing active student councils, debate clubs, and community service programmes would provide platforms for practising democratic values. Administrative support was essential for embedding civic education beyond classroom instruction.

For researchers, the study recommended further research using longitudinal designs to examine long-term impacts of civic education on civic behaviour. Comparative studies across rural and urban contexts would provide deeper insights into contextual influences. Future research should also explore the role of digital media and informal learning spaces in shaping civic engagement.

Theoretically, the study recommended integrating political socialisation, social capital, and deliberative democracy perspectives in civic education research. Such integration

provided a more comprehensive understanding of how civic education influenced democratic values.

5. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study on the role of civic education in fostering democratic values among secondary school learners. The findings demonstrated that civic education was widely implemented and contributed positively to learners' democratic attitudes, particularly tolerance and respect for diversity. However, the study also revealed a gap between attitudinal development and active citizenship, highlighting limitations in translating values into civic action.

The conclusions emphasised that civic education functioned effectively as a tool of political socialisation but was constrained by teacher-related, institutional, and structural challenges. The conceptual framework was validated by the findings, which showed that civic education outcomes were mediated by teacher competence, resource availability, and institutional support.

The recommendations proposed practical strategies for strengthening civic education, including enhanced teacher training, curriculum reform, increased resource provision, and expanded opportunities for experiential learning. The chapter highlighted the contribution of the study to knowledge, practice, and policy by providing context-specific evidence from secondary schools.

Overall, the chapter brought the study to a coherent conclusion and prepared the ground for the final closure of the dissertation by demonstrating how the research objectives were achieved and how the findings could inform future action and research.

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