(REVIEW ARTICLE)

Promoting democratic values through civic education: A case of selected secondary schools in lusaka District, Zambia

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Abstract

Overview: Promoting democratic values through civic education is essential for fostering an informed and engaged citizenry capable of upholding democratic principles. Hence, this paper delves into the critical role of civic education in fostering democratic values within contemporary societies. The study was carried in Lusaka district from 6 selected secondary schools.

Body of Knowledge: Civic education encompasses teaching the fundamentals of democracy, including the importance of individual rights, the rule of law, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Civic education serves as a counterbalance to authoritarian tendencies and political apathy by encouraging active and informed participation in public life. The analysis underscores the importance of early and continuous civic education to build a resilient democratic society that values diversity, equity, and justice.

Methods: The study employed both the qualitative and quantitative methods and a descriptive survey design that sampled Head Teachers, Teachers of Civic Education, Community Members and students in Civic Education classes. The study consisted a sample of 300 respondents from the selected secondary schools. Data was obtained from the respondents by means of interviews and questionnaires. The qualitative data gathered was analyzed according to the themes of the study and the order of the research objectives. Data generated from the questionnaires (quantitative) were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 26) and Microsoft Excel (version 16) to come up with tables, and figures.

Results: The comprehensive analysis revealed that effective civic education programs are characterized by an inclusive curriculum that integrates critical thinking, discussion of current events, and hands-on participation in democratic processes. These programs aim to cultivate a sense of civic duty, political efficacy, and tolerance among students. Empirical studies indicated that well-designed civic education can significantly enhance students' knowledge of political systems, their skills in democratic participation, and their commitment to democratic values.

Recommendation: The government should; collaborate with education authorities to enhance democratic ideals in civic education curriculum; and through the education standard officer and other stakeholders need to enhance professional development workshops for teachers of civic education to enable them effectively teach and practice democratic ideals as espoused in civic education.

Keywords: Civic Education; Citizen Participation; Community Involvement; Democratic Values; Governance

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1. Introduction

Civic Education refers to the process of educating individuals about their rights, duties, and responsibilities as citizens within a society. It encompasses the study of government structures, political systems, the rule of law, and democratic principles (Chanda, 2023). The primary goal of Civic Education is to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to participate actively and responsibly in civic life, promoting informed and engaged citizenship. It includes understanding the functions of different branches of government, the importance of voting, the role of civil society, and the protection of human rights. Additionally, Civic Education fosters critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and a sense of social justice, encouraging individuals to contribute to the common good and to work towards the betterment of their communities (Mainde et al, 2022). It is an essential component of a healthy democracy, aiming to create a well-informed, responsible, and active citizenry capable of holding their leaders accountable and participating effectively in public affairs.

Citizen participation in promoting democratic values is a fundamental aspect of democratic governance, encompassing the active involvement of individuals and groups in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities. Torney (2012) described this engagement as ranges from voting in elections to participating in public debates, community organizing, and direct action such as protests or advocacy. By contributing their perspectives and expertise, citizens help shape policies and ensure that government actions reflect the will and needs of the populace, thereby enhancing accountability and transparency.

Citizen participation in democratic governance is encouraged, with citizens being actively involved in their governance through voting, dialogue, and community activities, fostering a vibrant and responsive democratic society (Mainde & Chola, 2020). This fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among the populace, leading to more responsive and effective governance. It also serves as a check on governmental power, preventing authoritarianism and promoting social justice by giving a voice to marginalized and underrepresented groups. Moreover, active citizen engagement nurtures a political culture of inclusivity and mutual respect, reinforcing the core democratic values of equality, freedom, and justice. Through educational initiatives and civic engagement, citizens become more informed and empowered to influence public policy and contribute to the democratic process, ensuring that democracy remains vibrant and resilient.

Community involvement in promoting democratic values refers to the active participation of individuals and groups within a community in democratic processes and civic life to foster principles such as equality, justice, freedom, and collective decision-making (Chanda, 2024). This involvement can take various forms, including voting, engaging in public discussions, participating in local government meetings, volunteering for civic activities, and contributing to the development of community policies and programs. By being involved, community members help ensure that diverse perspectives are represented and that governance is transparent and accountable. Furthermore, such engagement empowers individuals, builds social capital, and enhances trust among citizens and between the public and their leaders. It encourages a sense of ownership and responsibility towards communal well-being and promotes the idea that democracy is not just a system of government but a lived experience requiring active and continuous participation. Through these collective efforts, community involvement reinforces the core democratic values and helps to create more inclusive, equitable, and resilient societies (Abdi et al, 2016).

Democratic values refer to the fundamental principles and beliefs that underpin a democratic system of governance (Barber, 2014). These values emphasize the importance of individual rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech, religion, and assembly, ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to express their opinions and participate in the political process. Equality before the law and equal opportunity are also central, promoting a society where individuals are treated fairly and have the same chances to succeed. The rule of law is a critical democratic value, requiring that laws are applied consistently and fairly, protecting citizens from arbitrary use of power. Transparency and accountability in government operations ensure that public officials are held responsible for their actions and decisions, fostering trust and preventing corruption. Chanda (2024) added that democratization is a multifaceted concept encompassing political, social, and economic dimensions. At its core, it refers to the process of making systems, institutions, or societies more democratic, with a focus on increasing participation, equality, and accountability. Additionally, democratic values include the principles of majority rule coupled with the protection of minority rights, ensuring that while the majority's will is respected, the rights of minorities are safeguarded.

Governance, in the context of promoting democratic values, encompasses the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences. Democratic or good governance ensures transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness, which are fundamental to democracy (Vasiljevic, 2009). It involves the establishment and maintenance of rule of law, where laws

are clear, publicized, and applied equally, protecting fundamental rights. Furthermore, it promotes participation by encouraging the active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and considered. Good governance also entails efficient and equitable resource allocation and the provision of public services, aiming to reduce inequalities and foster social justice. Additionally, it supports the integrity and responsiveness of institutions, ensuring they adapt to changing needs and circumstances while remaining faithful to democratic principles. Ultimately, governance in a democratic context is about creating an environment where individuals can freely express their will, hold leaders accountable, and contribute to the collective well-being of society.

Promoting democratic values through civic education in secondary schools involves a comprehensive strategy aimed at fostering informed and engaged citizens. This approach integrates the principles of democracy such as justice, equality, freedom, and responsibility into the curriculum, encouraging students to appreciate and participate in democratic processes. Muleya (2019) revealed that effective civic education encompasses interactive and experiential learning methods, which help students understand their rights and responsibilities. It also involves critical thinking and discussions about current events, government structures, and historical contexts, providing students with a robust understanding of how democratic systems function and their role within them. Teachers play a crucial role in this process by employing active learning approaches that create an open and inclusive classroom environment where diverse perspectives are respected and valued. Additionally, partnerships with civic organizations and local governments can enhance learning by offering real-world experiences and insights. Overall, by embedding democratic values into the fabric of secondary education, schools can nurture a generation of active, informed, and responsible citizens who are prepared to contribute positively to society.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The statement problem of promoting democratic values through civic education in secondary schools centers on the challenge of effectively integrating democratic principles into the educational curriculum to foster a well-informed and participatory citizenry. This issue arises from the observed gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application of democratic values among students (Anderson, 2019). The core of the problem involves understanding how civic education can be designed and implemented to not only convey the importance of democratic values such as justice, equality, and freedom but also to instill critical thinking, active participation, and a sense of responsibility (Chanda, 2023). This analysis seeks to identify the barriers within current educational frameworks, such as outdated teaching methods, lack of teacher training, and insufficient resources, that hinder the effective teaching of civic education in relation to promotion of democratic values. Further, there is also a need to examine the effectiveness of civic education programs secondary schools in fostering democratic values among students. By addressing these issues, the study aims to provide actionable insights and recommendations to enhance civic education, thereby contributing to the development of students as active, engaged, and informed citizens capable of sustaining democratic societies. By promoting democratic values in schools, the study aims to empower students to become informed and engaged citizens capable of contributing positively to their communities and shaping Zambia's democratic future. This research holds significance not only for Zambia but also for broader discussions on civic education and democracy promotion in Africa and beyond.

## 1.2. The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of civic education programs in fostering democratic values among students. This analysis aims to identify how well these programs instill a sense of civic responsibility, encourage active participation in democratic processes, and promote understanding of democratic principles such as equality, justice, and human rights.

1.3. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of civic education programs in instilling democratic values among secondary school students in Lusaka district, Zambia.
- Identify existing challenges and barriers to effective implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

1.4. Conceptual Framework
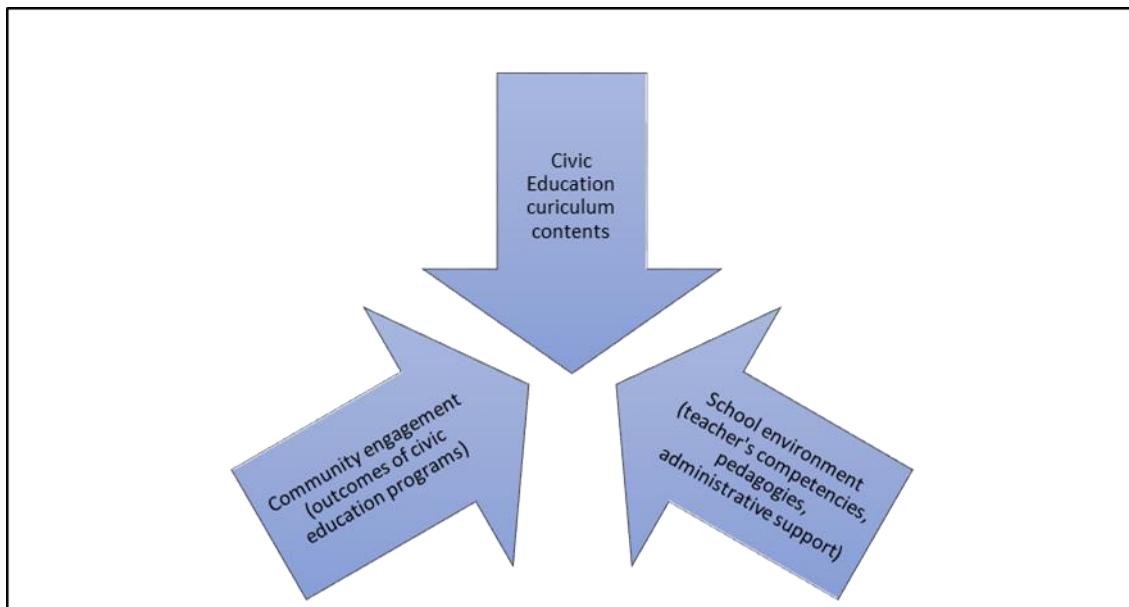
Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Promoting democratic values through civic education is crucial in shaping informed and active citizens who are able to participate meaningfully in the democratic processes of their country. In Lusaka district's secondary schools, it is essential to implement a comprehensive plan that not only teaches students about democratic principles but also fosters critical thinking, debate, and civic engagement. One key aspect of promoting democratic values through civic education is ensuring that students have a strong foundation in understanding the key components of democracy, such as the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the importance of civic participation (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). This can be achieved through incorporating these concepts into the curriculum across various subjects, as well as through extracurricular activities like debate clubs, student government, and community service projects.

Furthermore, promoting democratic values also involves creating a school culture that values diversity, inclusivity, and respectful dialogue. Teachers can play a crucial role in modeling democratic behavior and fostering open discussions where students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, even when they differ from their peers. Alma et al (2024) explained teachers need to use instructional techniques that strive to improve the learning experience by adding modern viewpoints and technology improvements which centred on the learner. Encouraging students to listen actively, engage in respectful debate, and seek compromise are important skills that can be nurtured through classroom discussions and activities. Administrative support from school managers and other senior government officials have a potential to breed effective implementation of civic education curriculum for promoting democratic values. Additionally, it is important to involve parents, community members, and local leaders in promoting democratic values in secondary schools. This can be done through partnerships with local organizations, guest speakers, and community dialogue sessions that highlight the importance of democratic values in shaping a prosperous and inclusive society. All in all, promoting democratic values through civic education in secondary schools is a multifaceted process that requires a comprehensive and holistic approach. By incorporating democratic principles into the curriculum, fostering a culture of open dialogue and debate, and engaging community stakeholders, schools can play a crucial role in shaping informed and active citizens who are committed to upholding democratic values in their society.

2. Research methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. Exploratory and descriptive designs were as well considered appropriate as they also allowed for more flexible strategies of data collection in order to respond to research objectives. The study was conducted in 6 selected secondary schools of Lusaka district, targeting 6-Head Teachers, 12-teachers of Civic Education, 240-students in Civic Education and 42 Community Members. Qualitative data collected from semi-structured interview schedules was analyzed thematically in line with research objectives; while data generated from the questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 26) and Microsoft Excel (version 16) to come up with tables, and pie charts. The study upheld research ethical considerations such as voluntary participation of the

respondents, confidentiality, honesty, and right of privacy. The researchers used pseudo names Sa,Sb... (referring to Secondary school) and respondents are represented by their general titles like head teacher, teachers of civic education, students in civic education class and community members.

3. Findings and discussions

The following findings and discussions were presented according to set research objectives

• To evaluate the effectiveness of civic education programs in instilling democratic values among secondary school students in Lusaka district, Zambia.

• To identify existing challenges and barriers to effective implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

Effectiveness of Civic Education Programs in Instilling Democratic Values Among Secondary School Students
The figure below provides data as recorded in research questionnaire administered to students in civic education classes. The questionnaire sought to analyze the effectiveness of civic education programs in promoting democratic values among secondary school students. Key guiding elements of the survey were effective teaching of civic education; promote justice, community engagement, respect for human rights, respect for diversity, respect for rule of law and promote critical thinking.
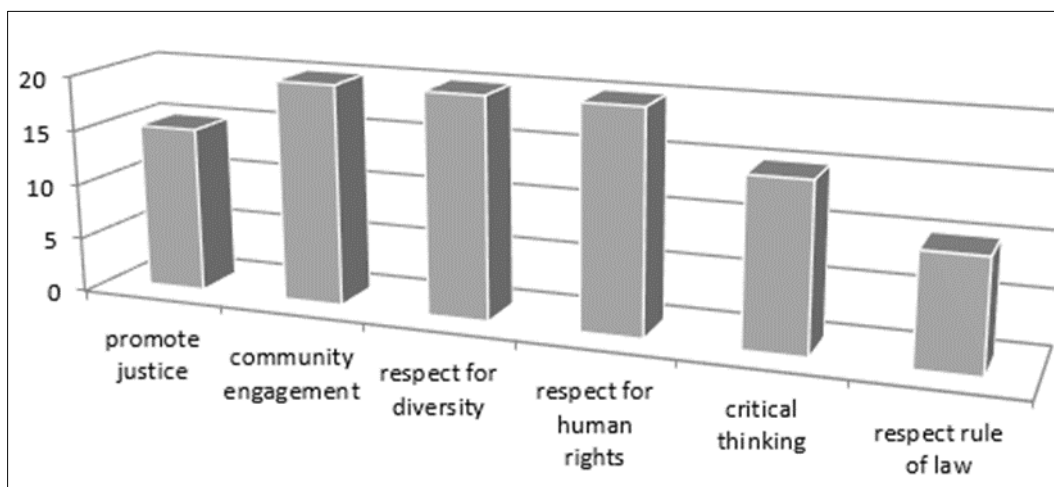
Figure 2 Effectiveness of Civic Education Programs in Instilling Democratic Values among Secondary School Students

It can be noted from the figure above that 15%(36) indicated behavior changes, 20%(48) indicated community engagement, 20%(48) indicated respect for human rights, 20%(48) indicated respect for diversity, 15%(36) indicated critical thinking and 10%(24) indicated respect for rule of law. From these figures, it can be noticed from students' response in the questionnaire that there is a lot that need to be done for civic education to promote democratic values.

The findings of the study are agreeable with Şanlı & Mehmet (2015) who noted the need to align civic education curriculum objectives with the broader goals of promoting democratic values such as tolerance, equality, and active citizenship. The curriculum contents, methodologies, and resources utilized must ascertain their relevance, accuracy, and engagement levels. Furthermore, the pedagogical strategies employed in delivering civic education content need to foster critical thinking, dialogue, and participation among students, essential for nurturing democratic principles.

It was revealed that the assessment methods utilized to gauge students' understanding and internalization of democratic values needed to be proactive. Consolidated response from teachers of civic education from Sa and Sc indicated that,

Teaching methods used in teaching civic education need to evaluates the program's inclusivity, considering its adaptability to diverse student demographics and learning needs within and outside Lusaka district as learners have varying needs and experiences.

 By meticulously examining these aspects, the curriculum analysis provides valuable insights into the program's strengths, weaknesses, and potential areas for enhancement, thereby informing evidence-based recommendations for optimizing its effectiveness in cultivating democratic values among secondary school students in Lusaka, Zambia.

In a similar vein, students explained in the questionnaire that the effectiveness of civic education programs in instilling democratic values among secondary school students in Lusaka district, relies heavily on the implementation of diverse teaching methods. Mainde, et al., (2021) and M'cormack (2011) studies support students' assertion as they recommended a comprehensive approach blending traditional lectures, interactive discussions, role-playing exercises, and experiential learning activities in teaching active subjects like civic education. By employing these varied teaching methods, educators can cater to diverse learning styles, engage students actively in the learning process, and effectively cultivate a deep-seated appreciation for democratic values among secondary school students in Lusaka district, Zambia. The findings of the study revealed that 6- members of the community advocated community engagement as one of the practical way of teaching civic education and promoting democratic values among secondary school students. One of them said,

"you know community involvement serves as a pivotal element in fostering a culture of democracy within the educational system. Through active participation from local communities, students will gain practical insights into the principles of democracy, citizenship, and civic responsibility."

Salu (2007), Muleya (2015) and Chola (2016) all support the findings of the current study as theyadded that community engagement facilitates interactive learning experiences, such as workshops, debates, and community projects, which reinforce theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. Additionally, it promotes inclusivity by incorporating diverse perspectives and local contexts, enriching students' understanding of democratic principles. Chanda et al (2024) describes community engagement as the process by which organizations and institutions involve individuals, groups, and communities in meaningful and collaborative activities aimed at achieving a common goal or addressing shared concerns. By fostering a collaborative environment between schools and communities, the civic education program can effectively empower students to become informed, active citizens capable of contributing positively to their society's democratic processes.

The study revealed head teachers' counsel on the need for comprehensive teacher training program which is pivotal in enhancing the effectiveness of civic education initiatives aimed at instilling democratic values among secondary school students in Zambia. Walsh (2013) confers with this assertion as the training need to focus on equipping educators with pedagogical strategies tailored to the local context, incorporating interactive and participatory teaching methodologies that foster critical thinking, dialogue, and active citizenship. Furthermore, it should emphasize the importance of teachers serving as role models and facilitators of democratic principles both inside and outside the classroom. This training should not only provide educators with a deep understanding of democratic values but also empower them to effectively communicate these concepts to students, fostering a culture of respect, tolerance, and civic engagement. Additionally, ongoing professional development opportunities and support networks are essential to sustain teachers' commitment and enthusiasm for promoting democratic values among students. Chanda's (2024) study noted that by investing in comprehensive teacher training, Zambia can significantly enhance the impact of its civic education programs and contribute to the cultivation of a more informed, responsible, and participatory citizenry.

Findings of the study as recorded in the questionnaire coincided with views of most teacher of civic education where the subject is seen as a catalyst for conveying democratic values in Zambia. This came out strongly as consolidated response indicated that,

"there are behavioral changes observed as a result of the effectiveness of the civic education programs in instilling democratic values among secondary school students".

Wilkins' (2018) study support the above assertion as there is a noticeable increase in students' engagement with democratic processes, evidenced by their active participation in school governance structures such as student councils and debates on pertinent societal issues. Civic education programs also lead to discernible enhancement in critical thinking skills among students, as they demonstrate a deeper understanding of democratic principles such as freedom of speech, equality, and respect for human rights. This is reflected in their ability to analyze complex socio-political issues and express their opinions confidently and respectfully. Additionally, there is a palpable shift in students' attitudes towards diversity, inclusion and decline in instances of anti-social behavior as they exhibit greater tolerance towards differing viewpoints and a willingness to collaborate with peers from diverse backgrounds.

Mainde et al, (2021) study can be aligned to views of most teachers of civic education as recorded during interviews. The study noted that the effectiveness of civic education programs in instilling democratic values among secondary school students relies heavily on robust knowledge acquisition strategies. Detailed notes on knowledge acquisition would encompass various aspects, including curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, and assessment methods tailored to the local context. One of the teachers from Se said, *"integration of real-life examples, interactive activities, and debates"* would facilitate a deeper comprehension of democratic concepts. Collaborative learning environments in civic education, teacher training, and community engagement are vital components to reinforce the application of democratic values beyond the classroom. Chanda & Siyunda (2023) further supported this study that regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms are also essential to gauge the effectiveness of civic education programs. Ultimately, a well-executed knowledge acquisition framework within civic education programs can empower secondary school students in Lusaka district to become active and responsible citizens committed to upholding democratic ideals.

Chitondo & Chanda's (2023) study agrees with current study findings as civic education helps us realize and respect diversity, making each one of us unique through our backgrounds, personality, life experiences and beliefs. By promoting respect for diversity, the program cultivates a sense of inclusivity and tolerance, fundamental pillars of democracy. For instance, one teacher of civic education said that, "*students are encouraged to engage in open dialogue, exchange ideas, and challenge stereotypes, thereby fostering critical thinking and empathy.*" Through experiential learning activities, such as cultural exchanges and community projects, students develop a deeper understanding of the value of diversity in a democratic society. Moreover, by recognizing and respecting diverse perspectives, students are better equipped to participate actively in democratic processes, contribute to community development, and uphold the principles of equality and justice (Woleola, 2017). Thus, respect for diversity serves as a cornerstone in the effectiveness of the civic education program, empowering secondary school students in Lusaka district to become informed, engaged, and responsible citizens committed to upholding democratic values.

3.2 Challenges and Barriers to Effective Implementation of Civic Education Programs in Secondary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia

The study findings on the challenges and barriers to the successful implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools in Lusaka district identified 6 factors. Insufficient resources at 15%, Teacher Training and Capacity at 20%, Curriculum Integration at 30%, Institutional Support at 10%, Community and Cultural Factors at 20%, and Assessment and Evaluation at 5%. The findings shown in Table 1 below were recorded in the questionnaire administered to teachers of civic education.

Table 1 Challenges and Barriers to the Successful Implementation of Civic Education Programs

Responses	%
Insufficient Resources	15%
Teacher Training and Capacity	20%
Curriculum Integration	30%
Institutional Support	10%
Community and Cultural Factors	20%
Assessment and Evaluation	5%

According to the study findings, insufficient resources significantly impede the successful implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools in Lusaka district. These resources encompass financial, material, and human assets essential for delivering comprehensive and effective civic education. Tovmasyan & Thoma (2008) narrated that financial constraints limit the procurement of teaching materials such as textbooks, educational aids, and technology, which are crucial for engaging and informative lessons. Despite the recognized importance of civic education in fostering active citizenship and democratic participation among students, the scarcity of financial resources significantly constrains the breadth and depth of these initiatives. Insufficient funding undermines the ability to procure essential educational materials, engage qualified instructors, and organize impactful extracurricular activities. Moreover, the lack of financial support limits the implementation of innovative teaching methodologies and the integration of technology, which are crucial for enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of civic education in today's

digital age (Chanda & Zohaib, 2024). Consequently, without adequate funding, civic education programs struggle to meet the diverse needs of students and adequately prepare them for their roles as informed and engaged members of society. Additionally, inadequate funding hampers the maintenance and development of school infrastructure necessary to create conducive learning environments. The shortage of trained and motivated teachers further exacerbates the problem, as educators are often overburdened and underpaid, leading to low morale and a lack of specialized knowledge in civic education. Moreover, limited access to extracurricular activities and community engagement opportunities restricts practical experiences for students, which are vital for fostering civic competencies. Dewey, 2017) added that these resource deficiencies hinder the ability of schools to provide quality civic education, ultimately affecting students' understanding of civic duties, rights, and participation in democratic processes.

Teachers of civic education observed that many teachers lack specific training in civic education, resulting in a limited understanding of the subject matter and ineffective teaching methods. This gap in expertise means that teachers are often unprepared to engage students in critical discussions about civic responsibilities, democratic processes, and human rights. Furthermore, professional development opportunities for teachers are scarce, leading to outdated teaching practices that fail to resonate with contemporary civic issues (Mainde et al, 2021). The lack of resources, including inadequate teaching materials and insufficient support from educational authorities, exacerbates this problem. Consequently, teachers struggle to deliver a curriculum that is both relevant and impactful, hindering students' ability to develop essential civic knowledge and skills. Addressing these training deficiencies through targeted professional development programs and increased resource allocation is crucial for enhancing the quality of civic education and ensuring its successful implementation in Lusaka's secondary schools.

Additionally, the teachers pointed out that the integration of civic education into an already crowded curriculum often leads to insufficient time allocation and inadequate depth in teaching the subject. Teachers, already burdened with existing subjects, struggle to effectively incorporate civic education, resulting in a lack of emphasis and priority. Furthermore, the interdisciplinary nature of civic education, requiring coordination across various subjects, complicates its implementation. Chanda (2023) supported this finding by stating that without clear guidelines and sufficient resources, teachers may lack the necessary training and confidence to deliver comprehensive civic education. This fragmented approach diminishes the program's effectiveness, hindering students' ability to fully engage with and understand civic concepts. Additionally, the absence of dedicated assessment methods for civic education reduces its perceived importance among students and educators. Consequently, the integration challenges contribute to the inadequate development of civic knowledge, skills, and values crucial for fostering informed and active citizenship among students in Lusaka's secondary schools. The study also noted that the absence of a comprehensive policy framework for civic education in schools poses a significant barrier to the effective implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools across Lusaka district. Without clear guidelines and mandates, schools lack the necessary direction and support to integrate civic education effectively into their curriculum (Mainde et al, 2023). This lack of policy leads to inconsistencies in the delivery of civic education, with some schools prioritizing it while others overlook its importance. Additionally, without a standardized policy, there may be variations in the quality and depth of civic education provided, undermining its overall impact on students' understanding of civic responsibilities and democratic principles. Moreover, the absence of a policy framework can result in inadequate resources allocated for civic education initiatives, further hindering its successful implementation.

The respondents further said that assessment and evaluation pose significant barriers to the successful implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools in Lusaka district. Firstly, the lack of standardized assessment criteria and evaluation frameworks hampers the ability to accurately measure the effectiveness and impact of these programs. Without clear guidelines, educators struggle to assess students' understanding of civic concepts and their application in real-world scenarios (ECZ, 2020). Additionally, the emphasis on traditional testing methods such as multiple-choice exams often fails to capture the nuanced understanding of civic engagement and democratic principles. Furthermore, limited resources and training for teachers in assessment and evaluation methodologies contribute to inconsistencies in grading and feedback, hindering students' learning experiences. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive reforms in assessment practices, including the development of alternative assessment methods that align with the goals of civic education and provide meaningful insights into students' civic competencies. Moreover, investing in teacher training programs and providing adequate resources can empower educators to effectively assess and evaluate students' progress in civic education, ultimately enhancing the success of these programs in Lusaka district secondary schools and increase student retention. Chanda (2024) defines student retention as the ability of an institution or school to keep its students enrolled from the time they first enter the school until they complete their intended program of study.

Head teachers narrated that in Lusaka district, the successful implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools faces significant challenges due to insufficient institutional support. This support encompasses various critical

components, including funding, teacher training, curriculum development, and resource allocation. Financial constraints are a primary concern, as schools often lack the necessary funds to procure educational materials, develop engaging curricula, and organize extracurricular activities that foster civic engagement (Banda & Mpolomoka, 2018). Furthermore, inadequate professional development for teachers hinders their ability to effectively deliver civic education content, as they are not equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies or subject matter expertise. The curriculum itself may also suffer from being outdated or misaligned with current societal needs, limiting its relevance and impact on students (Chanda, 2023). Additionally, the distribution of resources such as textbooks, technology, and other instructional aids is often uneven, exacerbating disparities between schools and affecting the overall quality of civic education. These institutional support issues collectively impede the ability of secondary schools in Lusaka district to provide comprehensive and effective civic education, ultimately affecting students' understanding of and engagement in civic responsibilities and processes.

Community members alluded that the successful implementation of civic education programs in secondary schools is hindered by various community and cultural factors. These barriers include deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and practices that may conflict with the values and principles promoted by civic education, such as gender equality and democratic participation. Many communities in Lusaka have traditional norms that prioritize male dominance and discourage active female participation, which can undermine efforts to teach inclusivity and equal rights (Chanda, 2024). Additionally, there is often a lack of support from parents and community leaders who may not see the immediate value of civic education, focusing instead on subjects perceived to have more direct economic benefits. Language barriers also play a significant role, as civic education materials and instruction are often in English, limiting comprehension and engagement among students who are more comfortable with local languages. Phiri et al (2023) explained that English is Zambia's national official language and is used as a means of communication and also as the language of particular activities such as education, commerce, and politics. The English language is also commonly used as a means of socialization. This position the English language enjoys demands that an average secondary school pupil should be competent with language skills. Furthermore, there is a general skepticism towards government-led initiatives, fueled by historical distrust and political instability, leading to a reluctance in fully embracing civic education programs. These cultural and community dynamics collectively create an environment where civic education struggles to take root and thrive in Lusaka's secondary schools. The study further revealed that deeply entrenched cultural norms and values often prioritize traditional beliefs over modern civic principles, hindering the acceptance and effectiveness of such educational initiatives. Traditional gender roles, hierarchical societal structures, and religious beliefs may clash with the principles of democracy, equality, and human rights promoted in civic education. Additionally, there might be resistance from community leaders and elders who perceive civic education as a threat to their authority or as a western imposition. Moreover, some cultural practices may discourage critical thinking or dissent, which are essential components of civic engagement (Chanda & Ngulube, 2024). Addressing these cultural attitudes requires a nuanced approach that respects local traditions while promoting the values of civic education, fostering dialogue, community involvement, and adapting curriculum content to resonate with cultural sensibilities.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on promoting democratic values through civic education in selected secondary schools within Lusaka district of Zambia underscores the critical role of education in fostering democratic principles among youth. The findings indicated that through meticulous examination, it becomes evident that civic education serves as a cornerstone in shaping informed and responsible citizens capable of actively participating in democratic processes. By instilling values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and a sense of civic duty, schools play a pivotal role in nurturing a culture of democracy from an early age. However, the effectiveness of civic education programs hinges on various factors, including curriculum design, teacher training, and the broader socio-political context. Thus, while this study highlights the importance of promoting democratic values through education, it also underscores the need for ongoing efforts to strengthen civic education initiatives to ensure their lasting impact on shaping democratic societies.

Recommendations

The following are actions that should be taken on the basis of the findings of this study:

- The government should collaborate with education authorities to enhance democratic ideals in civic education curriculum. This will make civic education contents relevant as students will be exposed to real life situations.
- The government through the education standard officer and other stakeholders need to enhance professional development workshops for teachers of civic education to enable them effectively teach and practice democratic ideals as espoused in civic education.
- Head teachers should create conducive environment where democratic principles and practices flourish. This

will accord students participate in school governance and other extracurricular activities like debates, model United Nations and student council.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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