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Factors Influencing Civic Education Teaching and Learning of Civic Skills among Learners in Selected Secondary Schools in Mulobezi District

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Abstract: This study explored the factors influencing the teaching and learning of civic skills in Civic Education among learners in selected secondary schools in Mulobezi District. The study adopted a qualitative approach guided by the interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative descriptive design. The target population comprised Civic Education teachers and learners from the selected secondary schools. Homogeneous sampling was used to select 36 participants. Data were collected using semi-structured interview and focus group discussion guides and analysed thematically. The findings indicate that curriculum structure, access to learning resources, classroom environment, teacher qualification, and teaching methodologies influence the teaching and learning of civic skills. The study further found that civic skills were mainly developed through lecture methods, classroom discussion-based learning, role-playing activities, and debate clubs. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education construct additional classroom blocks to reduce class sizes and enable interactive and participatory teaching. It also recommends that school administrators and Heads of Department regularly monitor Civic Education teaching to ensure the appropriate methodologies are employed.

Keywords: Civic Education, Teaching and Learning, Civic Skills, Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Civic education is recognized as a key pillar for promoting sustainable democracy and development. UNESCO (2020) indicates that countries with comprehensive civic education policies reported higher levels of student civic engagement compared to those without such policies. This demonstrates the importance of governmental support and robust frameworks that clearly articulate civic education's role in the curriculum. Bennett and Manzo (2021) indicate that governments that prioritize civic education through legislation provide schools with the guidance needed to implement effective programs. Studies such as OECD (2022) show that learners from higher socioeconomic backgrounds scored an average of 25% higher on civic knowledge assessments than their peers from lower-income households. This disparity often arises from access to resources, such as technology, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement, which can enhance or inhibit civic learning.

Civic education plays a crucial role in preparing learners to become responsible, informed, and engaged citizens. It equips students with knowledge of democratic principles, human rights, governance, and civic responsibilities, fostering a culture of active participation in national development. Muleya (2016) defines Civic Education as a subject that involves citizens' active participation in managing themselves within society while ensuring that everyone is supported. It involves developing both the skills and knowledge

necessary for active and responsible participation in public life. Citizens must have the desire and competence to realize themselves as integral members of society. However, some learners find it challenging to understand the concepts of civic education and acquire the values, skills, and knowledge needed for meaningful daily participation.

In Africa, civic education is critical for fostering democratic governance, human rights awareness, and social cohesion, particularly in countries recovering from political instability and conflict. The African Union emphasizes civic education as a strategy to empower youth for national development. However, many African countries face significant obstacles, including underfunded education systems, outdated curricula, and a shortage of trained civic education teachers. As Nworgu (2014) observed in Nigeria, the scarcity of properly trained civic education teachers has led to the reliance on social studies teachers, adversely affecting the quality of civic education delivery. Limited access to teaching resources and political interference in civic curricula further hinder the acquisition of practical civic skills by learners.

In Zambia, civic education is a compulsory subject in secondary schools, designed to foster responsible citizenship and national unity. The Ministry of Education has implemented standardized curricula and offered teacher training initiatives to support civic education. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including inadequate teacher preparedness, insufficient teaching materials, and minimal emphasis on practical civic engagement activities. According to the Education Statistics Bulletin (2023), less than 35% of rural secondary schools had access to up-to-date civic education materials, and only 48% of civic education teachers had received targeted in-service training in the last three years. Despite numerous studies on civic education in Zambia, there remains a knowledge gap: few have assessed the specific factors influencing the teaching and learning of civic skills among learners. A deeper understanding of these factors is necessary for educators and policymakers to formulate more effective strategies that promote civic competence among young people.

In Mulobezi District, schools have limited infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and minimal community involvement in civic learning activities. According to the Mulobezi DEBS Annual Education Report (2022), only 41% of learners achieved a passing grade in Civic Education, reflecting both instructional and systemic challenges in the district. A separate 2023 internal report by the District Planning Office also noted that only two out of five secondary schools in the district had functional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools or internet access for civic education. An internal report shared informally by education officers in Western Province in 2023 suggested that civic club participation was below 30%. Mulobezi was among the lowest performing districts. Although unpublished, the report noted that limited exposure to extracurricular civic activities may hinder learners' ability to apply civic knowledge in practical, community-based roles.

Statement of the Problem

Although Civic Education is intended to develop responsible, informed, and active citizens, its delivery in Mulobezi District remains largely theoretical. Learners are rarely engaged in experiential activities such as debates, simulations, and community projects that are essential for developing practical civic skills (Hansen, 2014). This disconnect between curriculum goals and classroom practice weakens learners' ability to translate civic

knowledge into civic action. The Mulobezi DEBS Annual Education Report (2022) reported that only 41% of learners passed Civic Education, while a 2023 internal planning report indicated that only two of the five secondary schools had functional ICT tools to support interactive teaching. An assessment by the Ministry of Education further indicated that fewer than half of schools had access to current Civic Education textbooks (Ministry of Education, 2022). Consequently, many learners may complete secondary education with limited understanding of fundamental civic concepts and reduced capacity to participate actively in democratic and community-development processes. These concerns underscore the need to examine the factors influencing the teaching and learning of civic skills in selected secondary schools in Mulobezi District.

Research Objectives

1. To identify factors that influence the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education among learners in selected secondary schools of Mulobezi District.
2. To explore the teaching pedagogies used in delivering civic skills in Civic Education in selected secondary schools of Mulobezi District.

Significance of the Study

This study may inform educators and policymakers about the effectiveness of the current Civic Education curriculum and contribute to improvements that better address learners' needs. The findings may identify barriers to effective Civic Education and guide the allocation of teaching and learning resources, teacher development, and other forms of support. The study may also contribute to improved teaching practices that enable learners to develop critical thinking, communication, decision-making, and active participation skills. In addition, the findings may inform policies and interventions that strengthen Civic Education in ways that are responsive to the local context.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Social Constructivism Theory, primarily associated with Lev Vygotsky (1978). Social Constructivism posits that learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and engagement with the environment. According to Vygotsky, individuals construct knowledge by interacting with peers, teachers, and the broader community, rather than passively receiving information. In this view, learners are active participants in the learning process, and meaningful learning occurs when students are encouraged to engage in dialogue, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving activities.

In the context of civic education, Social Constructivism underscores the importance of learners' active involvement in discussions, debates, role-plays, and simulations. Bruner (1966) supports this perspective by asserting that learning is most effective when learners "discover" knowledge for themselves through guided experiences. Similarly, Fosnot (2013) emphasizes that knowledge construction is a continuous and dynamic process that thrives in environments where learners engage with real-world problems and collaborate to find solutions. Therefore, for civic skills such as critical thinking, communication, decision-

making, and active participation to be effectively developed, the learning process must be interactive, experiential, and socially situated.

This theory was particularly relevant to the teaching and learning of civic skills in Mulobezi District. Civic education aims to cultivate responsible, informed, and active citizens capable of contributing to democratic governance and community development.

Social Constructivism also emphasizes the critical role of the teacher as a "scaffold" who provides support structures that help learners achieve higher levels of understanding (Cole, 1996). The availability of trained teachers, appropriate teaching methods, and adequate learning materials significantly influences the construction of civic knowledge and skills. As Mainde, Chanda, and Mweemba (2023) observed, the lack of teacher preparedness and inadequate instructional resources are major barriers to effective civic education in Zambia. By applying Social Constructivism, this study examines how these factors either support or hinder the active construction of civic skills among learners. Therefore, this theory was particularly relevant in assessing the factors that influence civic education teaching and learning of civic skills in learners.

This theory was deemed to be relevant because it aligns civic education with the active, contextualized, and collaborative nature of learning needed to develop informed and engaged citizens in Mulobezi District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Factors Influencing the Teaching and Learning of Civic Skills in Civic Education

OECD (2025) identifies a significant decline in civic participation despite the growing prioritization of the subject. Key factors influencing learning include inconsistent regulation and a lack of inclusion in curricula. It found that while students gain knowledge, they often lack the "Applied Civic Skills" needed for real-world engagement. There is a critical lack of authentic measures for civic skills that approximate real-world application, particularly for younger students. The study notes that the causal and sequential relationship between specific educational interventions and actual civic participation remains under-researched.

Matsumoto (2022) explored Civic Education in Japan (Gaikokujin and the Japanese School System). This study highlighted the barriers faced by foreign students in engaging with civic education due to language and cultural differences. It emphasized the necessity of incorporating multicultural perspectives into the curriculum to enhance understanding and participation in civic matters. In Indonesia, Santoso (2023) examined Civic Education reform in education policy and implementation found that while recent reforms aimed to improve civic education, inconsistent implementation across regions created disparities in civic skills development. It highlighted the role of local teachers in adapting governmental standards to fit local contexts effectively. The researchers employed a case study approach, conducting interviews with stakeholders and policy analysis to assess the implementation of civic education reforms.

Persson (2023), in Sweden, found a strong correlation between civic education in schools and increased political participation among students. It emphasized the importance of teaching students about democratic processes and encouraging critical thinking about societal issues. Becker and Müller (2023) found that regional differences in civic education

curricula significantly influence the development of civic competence among students. Schools in urban areas tended to offer more interactive and engaging methods than those in rural regions. Lefevre's (2023) findings on civic engagement education in France show that teachers' perception of civic education significantly affects how they implement civic learning activities in classrooms. Teachers who view civic engagement as a core value are more likely to employ innovative teaching strategies.

Ben Salah (2022) revealed that integrating civic education into the school curriculum has heightened students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. However, it also identified a need for more practical, hands-on learning experiences to enhance engagement. This broad approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of civic education's impact on youth engagement. In Morocco, El Amrani (2023) investigated the implementation of Civic Education (challenges and opportunities). This research indicated that while the Moroccan educational system has incorporated civic education, educators often face challenges such as lack of resources and varying levels of teacher preparedness to deliver the curriculum effectively. Bouzid and Djabidi (2023) found that the civic education curriculum in Algeria tends to focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, leaving little room for practical civic engagement activities. This limits students' abilities to apply what they learn in real-life situations. The researchers conducted a comparative analysis of civic education curricula across various educational institutions through document analysis and interviews with educational policymakers. While the study provided insights into curricular content, it overlooked how teaching methodologies affect student learning outcomes in civic skills. The authors emphasized the necessity for studies examining how different teaching styles influence the application of civic skills among students in Algeria.

A study by Adebayo (2022), titled the role of civic education in fostering democratic values. This research highlighted that civic education plays a crucial role in promoting democratic values among students. However, it indicated a lack of effective teaching methods and limited resources that hinder the curriculum's impact on civic engagement. A mixed-methods approach was used, including surveys of students and teachers as well as in-depth interviews with educators, policymakers, and civic stakeholders. This combination helped to draw a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of civic education. The study did not address how regional differences within Nigeria might affect the implementation and outcomes of civic education, especially between urban and rural areas. The authors recommend further investigations focused on regional disparities and the influence of local contexts on civic education practices and their effectiveness. Diop (2023), in a study titled Civic Education and Citizenship Development in Senegal. The study concluded that civic education in Senegal effectively enhances students' understanding of citizenship. However, the findings raised concerns about the curriculum's focus on rote learning, which limits opportunities for critical thinking and civic participation.

Ali and Badau (2019), in Nigeria, examined on how the personal and professional background of educators directly affects the delivery of civic content in the African context. The study found a strong positive relationship between specialized teacher training and the effective implementation of civic education. It revealed that many teachers lack an understanding of Civic Education's power to transform societal ideologies. Interestingly, while educational background significantly influenced implementation, gender did not. This study indicated that previous literature focused largely on students' performance; this study identified a gap in understanding how teachers' lifelong learning and their personal belief

in the subject's "transformative power" impact the actual teaching of practical skills rather than just theory.

Mainde, Muleya and Simui (2020) analysed why Zambian secondary school graduates often lack practical civic competence despite passing the subject. The main factors contributing to poor skill acquisition are reliance on lecture-based approaches and a lack of teaching/learning materials. Over-enrollment in classrooms further prevents teachers from facilitating active participation. The curriculum itself was found to be skewed toward cognitive (knowledge-based) outcomes rather than psychomotor (skill-based) or affective (value-based) outcomes. The study established that the Zambian Civic Education Syllabus (Grades 10–12) has a gap in skill-based outcomes. It recommended a shift from traditional assessment to "Service-Learning" and "Transformative Pedagogy" to bridge the gap between classroom theory and community action.

Mwansa and Kaoma (2023) found that while civic education is included in the Zambian secondary school curriculum, practical engagement and active learning methods are often lacking. Teachers reported emphasizing theoretical content over experiential learning, which limits students' understanding of civic responsibilities. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative surveys of secondary school teachers with qualitative interviews. The surveys aimed to gauge the extent of civic education delivery, while interviews provided deeper insights into pedagogical challenges. The study did not assess student perspectives regarding the effectiveness of civic education, leading to a one-sided view of the educational process. The authors suggested further studies should focus on student feedback about their learning experiences in civic education and how these experiences influence their civic engagement.

Chanda and Mumba (2023) found that teacher training significantly affects the delivery of civic education in Zambian schools. Teachers who participated in professional development workshops on civic education reported greater confidence and implementation of diverse teaching strategies, leading to improved student engagement. Meanwhile, Phiri and Zulu (2023) identified a connection between effective civic education and increased rates of youth participation in civic activities, such as voting and community service. However, it pointed out that many students remained unaware of their civic rights and responsibilities, which hinders their activism.

Teaching Pedagogies Used to Deliver Civic Skills in Civic Education

Ezer and Shlasky (2020) found that civic education in Israel needs to address the country's cultural and ethnic diversity. It emphasized the importance of inclusive pedagogical practices that cater to various cultural backgrounds to foster better civic engagement among students. Oda (2019) on active learning in Japanese citizenship education reported that active learning strategies, such as student-led discussions and project-based learning, effectively enhanced students' understanding of democracy and civic duties. Park and Seo (2021) explored on the role of digital literacy in promoting civic skills (a South Korean perspective). The study highlighted that integrating digital literacy into civic education significantly enhanced students' engagement in civic activities and discussions. In Brazil, Lopes and Silva (2021) found that diverse pedagogical approaches, such as participatory teaching and project-based learning, positively influenced students' engagement in civic issues.

In Argentina, Ceballos and López (2020) revealed that collaborative learning practices, when effectively integrated into civic education, fostered a sense of community and enhanced students' commitment to civic engagement. Hovdenak and Dfsnes (2022) found that active citizenship education, which emphasizes students' participation in local community projects, significantly boosted their understanding of democratic processes. Otiende and Mungai (2020) highlighted that participatory learning methods, such as group discussions and role-playing, significantly engaged students and improved their understanding of civic responsibilities.

Kyazze and Ssekamwa (2019) experiential learning, including community service projects and field trips, effectively fostered students' civic awareness and engagement but faced significant challenges due to low governmental support and lack of funding. Mchombu and Rwehabura (2021), in Tanzania, revealed that incorporating local environmental and social issues into the civic education curriculum significantly increased student engagement and understanding of civic responsibilities. The study showed that teachers often lacked the training to effectively integrate local issues, leading to a disconnect between the curriculum and students' lives. In Mozambique, Macuane and Kheir (2021) found that integrative approaches combining civic education with subjects such as history and geography led to a deeper understanding of national identity and civic responsibility among students. The study indicated that there is limited research on how geographic and cultural diversity across different regions in Mozambique affects students' engagement with civic education.

Some studies have shown that project-based learning significantly enhances students' understanding of civic duties and encourages active participation in community issues. However, there are challenges of project-based learning such as inconsistencies in project funding and lack of community involvement (Mhlanga and Chawarika, 2020). In South Africa, Ndlovu and Nkosi (2022) found that fostering critical thinking skills through participatory pedagogies in civic education improved student engagement and their ability to analyze and discuss social issues. However, there was significant variation in implementation quality among different teachers and schools.

Lungu and Sampa (2022) found that integrating technology (e.g., educational apps, online discussions) into the civic education curriculum enhanced student interest and engagement. However, disparities in access to technology between urban and rural areas created significant challenges in implementing these methods effectively. Kalenga and Mweemba (2022) found that participatory learning approaches, such as role-playing, group discussions, and debates, significantly enhanced students' understanding of civic roles and responsibilities. Students reported that participatory methods made civic education more engaging and relatable, allowing them to practice civic concepts in a supportive environment. There is limited research on how participatory learning impacts students from different socio-economic backgrounds, which may affect their engagement levels and comprehension.

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

This study was qualitative in nature and was guided by the interpretivist paradigm. Creswell (2018) describes a research paradigm as a set of beliefs and assumptions that guide the

research process and shape how research questions are addressed. Interpretivism seeks to understand rather than explain human experiences and recognises the subjective nature of reality and the importance of context in shaping meaning. The paradigm was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researchers to explore participants' experiences and interpretations of the factors influencing the teaching and learning of civic skills. The interpretation of the findings was therefore grounded in participants' accounts and the social context in which Civic Education was taught.

Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was used to collect, analyse, and interpret data concerning the factors influencing the teaching and learning of civic skills. The approach was considered appropriate because it allows participants to describe their experiences and perspectives in their own words and supports an inductive examination of patterns emerging from the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive case study design. A descriptive case study provides a detailed account of a phenomenon within its real-life context without attempting to manipulate the setting (Yin, 2018). This design was appropriate because the study sought to develop a contextualised understanding of the factors influencing the teaching and learning of civic skills in selected secondary schools in Mulobezi District.

Research Site

The research was conducted in selected secondary schools of Mulobezi District.

Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The target population comprised Civic Education teachers and learners from the selected secondary schools. The qualitative sample consisted of 36 participants: 12 Civic Education teachers, with three selected from each of the four schools, and 24 learners, with six selected from each school. Homogeneous sampling was used to select participants who shared relevant characteristics and experiences related to Civic Education teaching and learning.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved reducing, organising, coding, categorising, and interpreting the collected data to generate meaningful findings (Blaikie, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 2014). Audio recordings and mobile-phone interviews were transcribed, and the researchers read the transcripts and reviewed the recordings to familiarise themselves with the data. Initial codes were developed and grouped into categories and themes aligned with the study objectives. The researchers then compared themes across data sources and interpreted the findings in relation to the study's theoretical framework and existing literature. Relevant participant quotations were retained to illustrate key findings.

Table 1: Steps that will be involved in analyzing the qualitative data

SN	STAGE	DESCRIPTION
1	Data Preparation	Organize all collected data, Transcribing the data Familiarization with the data
2	Initial Coding	Create initial codes
3	Data categorization	Identify themes and patterns Analyse the data
4	Data interpretation	Compare codes and themes across data sources Relate the findings to the existing theories
5	Report Writing	Develop a clear research narratives

Ethical Considerations

The researchers obtained permission from Kwame Nkrumah University and the head teachers of the four selected schools in Mulobezi District. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed about the academic purpose of the study before providing informed consent. Confidentiality and privacy were maintained throughout the study. Pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings to protect participants' identities, and appropriate measures were taken to minimise the risk of harm.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to identify factors affecting the teaching and acquisition of civic skills in Civic Education within selected Mulobezi District secondary schools. Data were gathered through one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions. The findings, detailed below, highlight various factors influencing this pedagogical process.

Factors Influencing the Teaching and Learning of Civic Skills in Civic Education in Learners in Selected Secondary Schools of Mulobezi District

Curriculum Structure

The study found that curriculum structure influences the effective teaching and learning of civic skills in Civic Education.

> *"There is a different curriculum structures promote various teaching methods. For instance, a curriculum that encourages discussion and debate (Competence Based Curriculum) enhances learners' ability to communicate and argue respectfully, aiding their civic skills development."*

> *"Truly curriculum is one of the factors influences the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education among learners in secondary schools of Mulobezi District. For example, CBC a curriculum that connects civic education with subjects like history, geography, and social studies provide a comprehensive understanding of civic roles. This approach helps learners see the relevance of civic education in real-world contexts."*

The National Center for Education Statistics (2020) notes that a well-structured curriculum not only outlines the content to be taught but also the pedagogical approaches

and assessments used to measure learners' understanding. This structure should integrate active-learning strategies that foster critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world problem-solving, which are essential components of civic education and various authors like (Bennett and Manzo 2021). Similarly, the study by Diop and Kande (2022) support the view that methodically integrating discussions of civic responsibility, government functions, and individual rights and duties into the curriculum, educators can cultivate an environment where students develop the skills necessary to participate in civic life. This finding is consistent with Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, as in the way learners engage with their peers and instructors to construct knowledge collectively.

Teacher Qualification

The study established that teacher qualifications significantly affect how civic education is delivered. Teachers with specialized training in civic education are better prepared to engage learners in discussions about civic responsibilities and rights.

> *"A teacher who has participated in workshops related to teaching civic skills always implement innovative teaching strategies, like project-based learning, hand-on where learners create a community service project, making the subject more applicable and engaging. In our school we have some teachers who handles civic education but they are not specialized in it. I think this on its own is a negative factor that influences the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education among learners in secondary schools of Mulobezi District."*

> *"Qualified teachers typically have a solid understanding of civic concepts, such as democracy, governance, and civic rights. A teacher with a degree in civic education he/she is able to better explain the importance of civic engagement, which foster learners' interest in participating in community activities. Such alone helps learners to develop civic skills."*

Consistent with the study findings, Mumba and Kasonde (2022) agree that qualified teachers possess comprehensive content knowledge and pedagogical skills that significantly enhance student engagement in civic issues. They are better equipped to create learning environments that encourage critical thinking and active participation among students. Oda (2019) also states that teachers with appropriate qualifications are more likely to integrate contemporary civic education practices, enabling learners to relate civic concepts to real-world situations. In this context, Santoso (2023) observes that teachers with strong qualifications are more likely to create an environment that promotes active learning, encouraging students to participate in civic discussions and practice civic responsibilities actively.

The model of Vygotsky (1978) posited that knowledge is constructed through social interaction, and qualified teachers can effectively guide these interactions. Vygotsky argued that learners construct knowledge through social interactions and guided learning. Lopes and Silva (2021) support that the qualifications of teachers not only influence the delivery of civic education but also the social dynamics of the classroom that are crucial for effective learning

Access to Learning Resources

The results show that adequate learning resources such as books, digital content, and interactive materials are crucial for implementing effective civic education. It was clear that schools lacking these resources struggle to provide comprehensive civic education.

> *"Access to textbooks, digital resources, and other materials allows learners to explore civic concepts thoroughly. For example, having modern textbooks that include current civic issues, case studies, and examples enhance learners' understanding of topics like citizenship and community involvement. So as for me is agree that availability of the teaching and learning material is a factors influences the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education among learners in secondary schools of Mulobezi District."*

The study findings resonate with those of Ogunyemi (2020) who found that access to learning resources is a critical factor that influences the effectiveness of teaching and learning civic skills in secondary school civic education. Similarly, Ndlovu and Nkosi (2022) did a study in South Africa and emphasise that adequate learning resources, such as textbooks, digital media, and interactive materials, are essential for providing students with comprehensive knowledge about civic concepts and practices. Phiri and Sichinga (2021) further support that when students have access to diverse resources, they can explore various perspectives and real-life scenarios that enrich their understanding of civic duties and rights.

Classroom Environment

The study revealed that a supportive and inclusive classroom environment encourages open discussions about civic issues. The field data indicated that many classes were not conducive to full use different teaching methodology that would foster civic skills.

> *"…with the free education policy that was introduced in 2022 has results into influx number of learners which makes it almost impossible to employ certain teaching methods. In this vein a well-organized classroom that is spacious and inviting can encourage active participation which is not the case in most schools. For example, some classes has over 80 learners which is almost difficult for teacher to employ methodology that can foster civic skills among learners."*

In relation to the study findings Park and Seo (2021) support the view that in a well-structured classroom, students can engage in discussions, debates, and group projects, promoting critical thinking and fostering civic engagement. According to Ceballos and López (2020) a positive classroom culture that respects diverse viewpoints can enhance civic learning. When students feel valued and safe to express their opinions, they are more likely to engage meaningfully with civic topics. This supports Vygotsky's concept that social context plays a significant role in cognitive development, as learners benefit from exposure to different perspectives.

> *"The attitude and teaching methods of educators greatly influence learners' engagement. A teacher who fosters open dialogue and encourages questions about civic issues help us learners to develop critical thinking skills. A*

teacher who facilitate debates on current events, prompting us learners to express their viewpoints."

Consistent with the field data Mainde, Muleya and Simui (2020) indicate the need for civic education to connect with students' real-life experiences. An environment that encourages relating classroom content to the outside world fosters relevance and promotes active citizenship. This interaction aligns with the social constructivist view that knowledge is co-constructed through experiential learning. According to Mhlanga and Chawarika (2020) also reaffirm that inclusive environments encourage student participation and validate individual viewpoints, which is essential for promoting critical thinking and civic awareness.

Teaching Methodologies

The study found that the effectiveness of civic education often depends on the methodologies employed by teachers.

> *"Teaching methods greatly influences the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education among learners in secondary schools of Mulobezi District. For example, hands-on experiences, such as field trips provide practical insights into civic participation. But due to limited resource such activities do not take place…"*

> *"Due to shortage of manpower, some teachers are given to teach civic education which they are not trained for. This influences the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education because they may fail to employ methodologies that can enhance teamwork among learners such as group work. Group activities promote teamwork and communication. In a civic education setting, learners might collaborate on a presentation about human rights, enhancing their ability to work collectively while learning about civic responsibilities."*

Time Magazine (2023) supports the view that teaching methodologies significantly influence the teaching and learning of civic skills in civic education among secondary school learners. Another study by Macuane and Kheir (2021) advocate for interactive and student-centered teaching approaches, such as collaborative group work and discussions, which align well with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. This theory emphasizes that learning occurs through social interactions and active engagement, allowing students to co-construct knowledge. Consistent with the study findings OECD. (2024) indicates that methods that encourage dialogue about civic issues not only enhance understanding but also foster critical thinking and a sense of community among learners. Likewise, Mhlanga and Chawarika (2020) further support this notion, noting that active pedagogies empower students to take ownership of their learning, facilitating a deeper engagement with civic concepts and responsibilities.

On the contrary, certain traditional teaching methodologies can hinder the development of civic skills. In this regard, Kapenda and Chikozho (2020) identify the drawbacks of rote memorization and teacher-centered approaches, which often lead to passive learning experiences. Such methodologies contradict Vygotsky's premise that meaningful learning is best achieved through social interactions and collaborative efforts. Moreover, Matsumoto (2022) points out that when educators focus primarily on lecturing,

students may feel disconnected from the subject matter, which can limit their motivation to explore civic issues deeply.

Methods Used to Deliver Civic Skills in Civic Education

Through Lecture Method

The study revealed that, because of larger classes following the introduction of free education most teachers used the lecture method to deliver civic skills in civic education. The field data indicated that few teachers were able to employ method that promotes learner participation because of huge numbers of leaners.

> *"I use lecture method most of time because learner are just too many to use some methods that can promote the learning of civic skills in civic education. Most of us teachers prepares a detailed lesson plan on civic topics, such as citizenship rights, responsibilities, governance, and community participation."*

> *"…sometimes teacher of civic education illustrate civic skills in action. For instance, while teaching about conflict resolution, a teacher use case studies highlighting successful community mediation efforts, demonstrating real-life applications of civic skills. Through lecture methods topics such as conflict resolution or community service enables us learners cultivate essential civic skills."*

Khan and Rahman (2022) suggest that the lecture method can effectively convey foundational knowledge about civic concepts and principles. This approach allows teachers to efficiently cover a broad curriculum, providing students with essential information on civic rights, responsibilities, and government structures. However, while this method can establish base knowledge, it often lacks the interactive components essential for developing critical civic skills, which is a key tenet of Vygotsky's social constructivism theory.

In contrast, Gupta and Singh (2020) argue that relying heavily on lectures risks creating a passive learning experience, which can disengage students from the subject matter. This approach may inhibit the development of critical thinking and civic engagement skills because it does not encourage dialogue or collaboration among students. Additionally, Adetunji and Oluwaseun (2021) point out that lectures often fail to facilitate discussions that allow for the exploration of diverse perspectives, an essential aspect of civic education. Shikongo (2021) reinforces this by noting that students may not retain civic knowledge effectively when it is presented in a one-way format, as it does not encourage the active participation that fosters meaningful learning.

Classroom Discussion-Based Learning

The results indicated that discussions were used to deliver civic skills in Civic Education in secondary schools of Mulobezi District. Some participants indicated that discussions help learners articulate their thoughts on civic issues.

> *"…to deliver civic skills in Civic Education I normally use classroom discussion because they encourage learners to share their personal experiences and*

viewpoints. This diversity enriches the learning environment. During a conversation on human rights, learners are offered opportunity to share insights from their own families or local communities, allowing varied perspectives to emerge."

"Engaging in discussions helps learners analyze and evaluate civic issues critically. A teacher can present a controversial topic, such as legislation affecting youth participation in governance, and ask learners to argue both for and against it, honing their ability to think critically.

Similarly, Kyazze and Ssekamwa (2019) support the view that classroom discussions enable students to articulate their views, respond to varying perspectives, and analyze civic-related topics. This aligns with the principles of social constructivism, particularly as presented by Vygotsky, who highlighted the significance of social interaction in learning. Vygotsky's theory suggests that knowledge is constructed through cooperation and dialogue, making classroom discussions a fitting method for developing civic skills. In contrast, Macuane and Kheir (2021) argue that while discussion-based learning is valuable, it is sometimes hindered by factors such as teacher-centered approaches, lack of training, and insufficient resources.

Kapenda and Chikozho (2020) indicate that the idea that discussion fosters critical engagement but also point out that the quality of discussions can be affected by the socio-cultural context of the students. Further, Persson (2023) the importance of facilitating discussions that encourage students to challenge societal norms and think critically about their roles within their communities. This enhances their civic engagement and aligns with Vygotsky's view on the impact of social context on learning outcomes.

Role-Playing Activities

The field data indicated that role-playing was used to teach civic skills in Civic Education in secondary.

"As for me role-play is critical to deliver civic skills in Civic Education in secondary schools. For example, a role-play scenario that involve a debate about the importance of youth involvement in politics. Some learners represent young activists while others take on the roles of skeptical community elders. This helps learners appreciate the diversity of opinions in civic matters."

These findings are consistent with Bessong (2018), who argues that roleplay activities stimulate students' interest in civic education by making learning interactive and relatable. Students assume roles of community members, government officials, or activists, which enhances their understanding of civic responsibilities and rights. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2020) supports this view by highlighting the importance of practical engagement in civic education by indicating that roleplaying bridge theoretical knowledge and real-life applications, helping students see the relevance of civic education in their daily lives. However, he also notes that the effectiveness of roleplay heavily depends on the teacher's ability to facilitate these activities adequately.

Similarly, the Zambia Ministry of Education (2022) recognizes roleplay as a valuable tool for fostering civic skills, encouraging an active learning environment. The curriculum may promote simulations of civic processes like elections or community decision-making, reinforcing students' understanding of democracy and governance. Sibanda (2023) takes a slightly critical stance, pointing out that roleplay activities could sometimes lead to oversimplification of complex civic issues. He argues that educators need to guide discussions effectively after roleplay to delve deeper into the nuances of the issues simulated. This reflection aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on guided interactions, where the teacher plays a crucial role in shaping and enhancing student understanding.

Through Debate Clubs

The field data indicated that participation in debate clubs allows learners to articulate their views on civic issues and develop public speaking skills.

> *"Debate provides learners with the opportunity to practice articulating their thoughts and opinions clearly and logically. During a debate on community issues, like climate change initiatives, learners are able to present their arguments in a coherent manner, enhancing their public speaking and persuasive skills."*

In the same way, Phiri and Sichinga (2021) argue that participation in debate clubs significantly boosts students' understanding of civic issues. The discussions foster an environment where students can express their opinions, listen to differing viewpoints, and collaboratively develop well-reasoned arguments. This aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism, which posits that knowledge is constructed through social interaction. In a debate setting, students learn from their peers, making the learning experience richer and more dynamic. In opposition, Ben Salah (2022) points out that while debate clubs can be effective, they can also inadvertently favor students who are more articulate or confident, neglecting those who may struggle to voice their perspectives. This critique highlights the importance of ensuring that debate formats and moderation strategies are inclusive, allowing all students to participate meaningfully.

> *"To deliver civic skills in Civic Education debate are used. Debates encourage learners to explore and understand multiple viewpoints on civic issues. For instance, a debate on the role of youth in politics requires learners to argue for or against youth involvement, promoting empathy and understanding of different generational perspectives on civic engagement."*

Adebayo (2022) also supports that the role of debate clubs in sharpening students' civic awareness and engagement. He notes that these clubs serve as microcosms of democratic society, where students practice skills like negotiation and conflict resolution. However, he also warns against the potential for debates to become adversarial, which may lead to hostility instead of productive dialogue. Ensuring that debates focus on respect and understanding is essential to preserve their educational intent. Westheimer and Kahne (2016) discuss the broader implications of civic education, advocating for the development of not just knowledgeable citizens, but engaged and responsible ones. They highlight that debate clubs can serve as a means for students to connect civic knowledge to action, inspiring them to take active roles in their communities. This aligns with Vygotsky's

emphasis on the importance of contextual understanding and active participation in the learning process.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that effective teaching and learning of civic skills in secondary schools in Mulobezi District are influenced by a combination of curricular, structural, and pedagogical factors, particularly teacher qualification, access to learning resources, classroom environment, and teaching methodologies. Although teachers use a combination of traditional and participatory approaches—including lectures, classroom discussions, role-playing activities, and debate clubs—the findings indicate a need to strengthen active, learner-centred, and experiential approaches. Improving resource availability, reducing class sizes, creating supportive classroom environments, and strengthening teachers' pedagogical capacity may enhance the practical application of civic knowledge and contribute to the development of responsible and engaged citizens.

Recommendations

1. The study recommends that the Government, through the Ministry of Education, should construct additional classroom blocks to reduce class sizes thereby enabling teachers to employ methodologies that promote interaction and participation.
2. The study recommends that school administrators or Heads of Department should regularly monitor civic education teachers on a regular basis to ensure that appropriate methods are employed during civic education lessons.

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