



# **An Investigation of The Role of Civic Education in The Governance of Schools in Selected Secondary Schools in Muchinga Province of Zambia**

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the role of Civic Education in strengthening governance practices in selected secondary schools in Muchinga Province, Zambia. Civic Education is widely recognized as a critical subject that develops learners' democratic values, civic responsibility, and participation in governance structures. The study employed a mixed-methods research design involving 120 respondents comprising pupils, teachers, and school administrators. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis and were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Findings reveal that Civic Education significantly enhances learner participation in school governance structures such as student councils, improves discipline through value internalization, and strengthens accountability and transparency in decision-making processes. However, challenges such as inadequate teaching resources, limited instructional time, insufficiently trained teachers, and weak policy enforcement hinder its effectiveness. The study concludes that Civic Education is a fundamental driver of democratic school governance and recommends improved curriculum implementation, teacher professional development, and strengthened institutional support.

**Keywords:** Civic Education, School Governance, Democracy, Participation, Accountability, Secondary Schools

## **I. Introduction**

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone of national development and democratic consolidation. According to Dewey (1916), education is not only preparation for life but life itself, implying that schools are key institutions for shaping democratic citizens. In modern educational systems, Civic Education plays a central role in preparing learners to participate actively in governance processes within and beyond schools.

In Zambia, Civic Education was introduced to promote democratic values such as human rights, justice, equality, and participation (Ministry of Education, 2013). It is expected to enable learners to understand governance systems, respect authority, and contribute meaningfully to school administration processes.

School governance refers to the structures, processes, and practices through which schools are directed and controlled. According to Bush (2011), effective school governance requires participation, transparency, accountability, and shared decision-making. Civic Education is therefore expected to strengthen governance by empowering learners with civic knowledge and participatory skills.

However, schools in Muchinga Province continue to face governance challenges such as indiscipline, low learner participation in decision-making, and weak accountability mechanisms. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of Civic Education in promoting democratic school governance.

This study therefore investigates the role of Civic Education in enhancing governance practices in selected secondary schools in Muchinga Province.



### **1. Statement Of The Problem**

Despite the inclusion of Civic Education in Zambia's curriculum, governance challenges persist in secondary schools. These include student indiscipline, weak participation in governance structures, poor communication between learners and administrators, and limited accountability.

Scholars such as Kerr (1999) and Print (2007) argue that Civic Education should foster democratic participation and responsible citizenship. However, in many Zambian schools, its impact appears limited due to implementation challenges.

There is insufficient empirical evidence on how Civic Education influences governance in secondary schools in Muchinga Province. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap.

### **2. Objectives Of The Study**

General Objective

To investigate the role of Civic Education in the governance of secondary schools in Muchinga Province.

Specific Objectives

To examine how Civic Education promotes democratic participation in schools

To assess its influence on discipline and accountability

To identify challenges affecting its implementation

To propose strategies for improving its effectiveness

### **3. Research Questions**

1. How does Civic Education influence school governance?
2. What role does it play in promoting discipline and participation?
3. What challenges affect its implementation?
4. How can Civic Education be improved in schools?

## **II. Literature Review**

### **1. Concept Of Civic Education**

Civic Education is broadly defined as the study of rights, responsibilities, and duties of citizens in a society. According to Branson (1998), it prepares individuals to participate effectively in democratic processes.

Torney-Purta et al. (2001) emphasize that Civic Education develops civic knowledge, civic skills, and civic dispositions. These include critical thinking, participation, and respect for diversity.

Galston (2001) further argues that civic learning is essential for sustaining democratic institutions.

### **2. Civic Education And School Governance**

School governance involves leadership, decision-making, and accountability systems within schools (Bush, 2011). Civic Education contributes by promoting student involvement in governance structures such as student councils.



According to Kerr (1999), students exposed to Civic Education are more likely to engage in participatory governance and understand institutional rules.

### 3. Civic Education And Discipline

Discipline is a key requirement for effective learning environments. Dewey (1916) emphasized that moral and civic learning shapes behavior.

UNESCO (2015) reports that Civic Education enhances respect for rules and authority, thereby reducing misconduct in schools.

### 4. Civic Education And Participation

Participation is a core democratic principle. Print (2007) notes that Civic Education encourages learners to take part in decision-making processes.

Banks (2008) adds that participatory education strengthens democratic culture in institutions.

### 5. Civic Education And Accountability

Accountability ensures responsible use of authority. According to Chapman and Drysdale (2008), Civic Education promotes transparency and accountability in institutional governance.

### 6. Challenges In Civic Education Implementation

Several studies highlight challenges including:

- Limited teaching materials (UNESCO, 2015)
- Inadequate teacher training (Print, 2007)
- Overloaded curriculum (Kerr, 1999)
- Lack of practical engagement opportunities (Banks, 2008)

## III. Methodology

### 1. Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods.

### 2. Population And Sample Size

Category	Sample
Pupils	80
Teachers	30
Administrators	10
Total	120

### 3. Data Collection Methods

- Questionnaires
- Semi-structured interviews



- Document analysis

#### 4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages), while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

### IV. Data Presentation And Analysis

Table 1: Role of Civic Education in School Governance

Role	Percentage
Promotes Discipline	82%
Enhances Participation	78%
Encourages Accountability	75%
Builds Leadership Skills	70%

#### Analysis

The results indicate that Civic Education plays a dominant role in promoting discipline (82%), suggesting strong behavioral influence in schools.

Table 2: Impact on Learners

Impact	Percentage
Improved Behavior	80%
Increased Participation	77%
Better Decision-Making	72%

#### Analysis

The findings show that Civic Education improves learner behavior and enhances participation in governance activities.

Table 3: Challenges in Implementation

Challenge	Percentage
Lack of Teaching Materials	81%
Limited Instructional Time	76%
Inadequate Teacher Training	70%

#### Analysis

The most significant challenge is lack of teaching materials (81%), affecting effective curriculum delivery.

#### Qualitative Findings

##### Teachers' Views

- “Civic Education helps learners understand their responsibilities.”
- “It improves discipline and respect for authority.”

##### Learners' Views

- “We learn our rights and responsibilities.”



- “It helps us participate in school decisions.”

## V. Discussion

The findings align with Branson (1998), Kerr (1999), and Print (2007), who argue that Civic Education fosters democratic participation and responsibility.

The study confirms that Civic Education improves discipline, participation, and accountability in schools. This supports Dewey’s (1916) theory that education is a tool for social and moral development.

However, challenges such as lack of resources and inadequate training weaken its effectiveness, consistent with UNESCO (2015) findings.

## VI. Conclusion

The study concludes that Civic Education plays a significant role in improving governance in secondary schools in Muchinga Province. It enhances discipline, promotes participation, and strengthens accountability systems. However, its effectiveness is constrained by implementation challenges.

## Recommendations

1. Improve availability of Civic Education teaching materials
2. Provide continuous teacher training programs
3. Increase instructional time allocated to Civic Education
4. Strengthen student participation in governance structures
5. Enhance policy enforcement on civic learning

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