



Civic virtue acquisition in Zambia: A social learning and communitarian perspective

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<https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.7.1.31>

ABSTRACT

Civic virtue is essential for ethical leadership and participatory governance, yet its acquisition in sub-Saharan Africa remains under-theorized. This article examines civic virtue acquisition in Zambia through the lenses of social learning theory and communitarianism theory. The study used a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design. It included twenty participants who were teachers of civic education, civic leaders, and members of the neighbourhood watch groups. The researcher selected participants through purposeful sampling to achieve diverse yet appropriate viewpoints. The research team used semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and document analysis to collect data. In its findings, the study argues that civic virtue must be elevated from descriptive ideals to transformative practices that strengthen democratic participation, ethical leadership, and inclusive development. The culmination of the different dynamics into a conceptual framework demonstrates that civic virtue acquisition is not a product of isolated interventions but a holistic outcome of integrated social systems. By integrating social learning processes with communitarian values, the study contributes to African scholarship on civic virtue and systemic governance reform. In conclusion, the study emphasized the interplay between grassroots mobilization, cultural and communitarian practices, and institutional factors. The findings conclude that civic virtues are not merely taught through formal instruction but are cultivated through lived experiences, indigenous knowledge systems, and participatory engagement. The study recommends the use of the proposed conceptual framework developed in it, which demonstrates that the acquisition of civic virtues is a holistic process, requiring synergy across social, cultural, and institutional domains. Further research could concentrate on a longitudinal survey of how these acquired civic virtues are sustained in the communities and the wider Zambian society.

Keywords: Civic Virtue, Community Engagement, Communitarianism, Participatory Governance, Qualitative Case Study, Social Learning Theory, Zambia

I. INTRODUCTION

Civic virtue, understood as the moral responsibility of citizens to act for the common good, is central to democratic resilience (Carothers & Donohue, 2019). In Zambia, challenges of corruption, weak accountability, and limited civic participation underscore the need for frameworks that explain how civic virtue is acquired and sustained. Civic virtues, a distinct category of human virtues, are the settled dispositions that reflect the qualities essential to being an engaged and responsible member of a political community (Daka et al. 2025). Drawing on classical philosophy, particularly the teachings of Aristotle, civic virtues are understood as enduring characteristics that embody excellence specific to the realm of citizenship and public life (Lin, 2024). These virtues encompass honesty, fairness, respect for others, and a commitment to the common good, all of which are crucial for fostering a healthy, functioning democracy (Lovett, 2014). In an era marked by increasing polarization and social fragmentation, the cultivation of civic virtues becomes more vital than ever, as they serve not only to enhance individual character but also to promote social cohesion and trust among community members.

Furthermore, civic virtues are essential for empowering citizens to actively engage in civic activities such as voting, community service, and public discourse and to uphold democratic values and principles (Daka et al. 2025). They continue to posit that, by developing a deeper understanding of civic virtues, citizens can better appreciate their role in shaping both individual behaviour and the broader fabric of society, ultimately contributing to the flourishing of democratic governance and civic life. They classify "Civic virtues" as a normative and multi-dimensional concept that includes citizenship behaviours, civic responsibility, public-mindedness, tolerance, and community engagement.

The study provides a comprehensive, analytical exploration of how civic virtues are acquired in Zambia, drawing on theoretical foundations, educational and community-based strategies, and the role of faith-based organizations. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how selected Zambian communities cultivate and reinforce civic virtues.

Zambia's governance and civic landscape reflect a balance between constitutional principles, institutional reforms, and the active participation of diverse stakeholders. The structure of government, anchored in the separation of powers and decentralization, provides a framework for accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement. Key institutions and oversight bodies work to uphold democratic values, despite persistent challenges of anti-corruption, human rights, and civic space (Gumbo & Moombe, 2018). Decentralization and local governance reforms have empowered councils and communities, with expanded fiscal mechanisms and participatory platforms. Traditional leadership and faith-based organizations remain influential, bridging the gap between state and society and contributing to development and social cohesion.

Recent reforms, including constitutional amendments, electoral system overhaul, and the Access to Information Act, signal progress toward a more inclusive and equitable governance model. However, ongoing challenges in civic participation, regulatory constraints, and resource allocation require sustained attention and collaborative solutions. Ongoing reforms aim to strengthen institutional capacity and promote a culture of integrity (Williams et al., 2020).

By examining community-driven initiatives, local governance practices, and informal civic education, this research aimed to highlight the multifaceted nature of civic acquisition and the specific urban contexts that enhance civic virtues in everyday life. The following objectives guided the study: to investigate how grassroots mobilization and civic associations contribute to civic virtue acquisition through collective responsibility and local accountability; to analyze how the "Cultural and Communitarian Practices" pathway ties civic virtue to indigenous knowledge systems, and to assess the contextual dynamics of civic virtue acquisition in Kanyama and Mandevu constituencies, focusing on institutional factors.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Civic virtues are essential for empowering citizens to actively engage in civic activities such as voting, community service, and public discourse and to uphold democratic values and principles. However, scholars have found widespread perceptions that citizens increasingly disregard laws and authority at community and institutional levels in Zambia (Daka et al. 2025). Scholars have attributed this erosion of respect to weakened moral upbringing, political interference and shifting social values, without clearly suggesting a remedy to this crisis. Consequently, this vice needs to be addressed before society fragments further. In this regard, this study aimed to propose a conceptual framework founded on the theoretical framework that integrates Social Learning Theory and Communitarianism, as a solution to enhance the cultivation of civic virtue outside the formal education system.

1.2 Research Objectives

- i. To investigate how grassroots mobilization and civic associations contribute to civic virtue acquisition through collective responsibility and local accountability;
- ii. To analyze how the "Cultural and Communitarian Practices" pathway ties civic virtue to indigenous knowledge systems;
- iii. To assess the contextual dynamics of civic virtue acquisition in Kanyama and Mandevu constituencies, focusing on institutional factors.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Civic Virtues acquisition can best be understood as a multidimensional process that involves philosophy, Psychology, education and socio-political aspects. The research used Bandura's Social Learning theory and Communitarian (Etzioni, 1994) to develop a theoretical framework which guided the entire study.

This study situates civic virtue acquisition within Social Learning Theory and Communitarianism, linking individual moral formation to collective governance reform. Theoretical Foundations are based on the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which emphasizes that Civic virtue is acquired through observation, imitation, and reinforcement within social contexts. Role models in schools, communities, and leadership positions shape civic behaviours. SLT helps move beyond simply measuring knowledge to understanding the dynamic, social mechanisms that determine whether residents internalize and act on those virtues in their daily lives.

In addition, Communitarianism (Etzioni, 1994) was embedded in the theoretical framework. Civic virtue emerges from shared values, collective responsibility, and community solidarity. It emphasizes the balance between individual rights and communal obligations. The applicability of communitarian theory to this study lies in its ability to inform strategies for promoting social cohesion and integrating civic virtues in diverse communities. By recognizing

the importance of community and shared values, researchers will develop effective approaches to promote collective responsibility and social harmony. Communitarian theory's focus on social responsibility can also encourage individuals to take an active role in promoting civic virtues and contributing to the well-being of their communities. Furthermore, by empowering community members to become agents of change, communitarian theory will help researchers develop sustainable and community-driven solutions for promoting civic virtues.

The study used the following domains to establish Civic Virtue Acquisition: “Educational Institutions” for Civic education embedded in curricula, and Peer learning and role modelling through student councils and service projects. The second domain was the use of “Community-Based Strategies”, which included grassroots mobilization, fostering accountability and Civic clubs and associations, reinforcing collective responsibility. The third and last domain was the “Cultural and Communitarian Practices” that included Traditional norms emphasizing solidarity, reciprocity, Collective rituals and community forums, reinforcing shared values. These were embedded in the Integrated contextualized framework that guided the entire study.

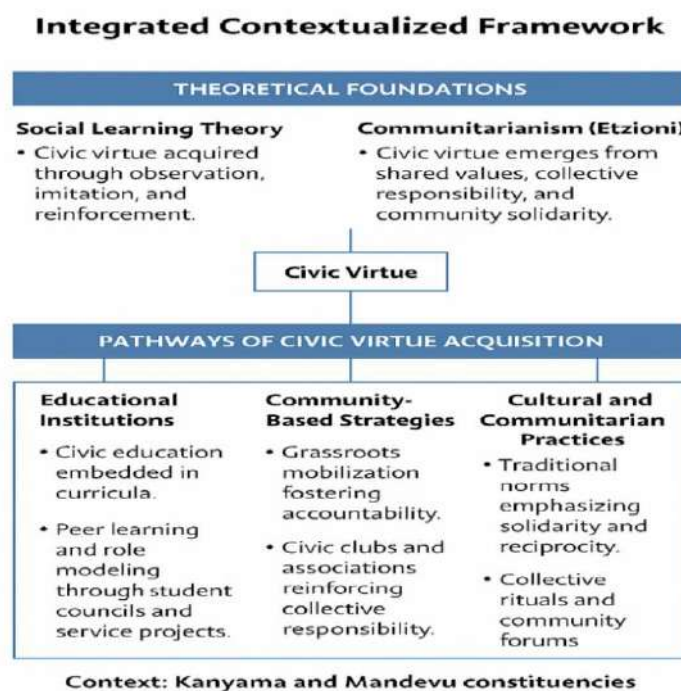


Figure 1

The Integrated Theoretical Framework of SLT (Bandura, 1977) and Communitarianism (Etzioni, 1994) in the local context of Kanyama and Mandevu Communities in Zambia

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Grassroots Mobilisation and Civic Associations: Pathways to Civic Virtue through Collective Responsibility

Grassroots mobilization involves the collective action of community members to address shared challenges, influence decision-making, and promote accountability. Civic associations, including neighbourhood committees, faith-based organizations, youth and women’s groups, and NGOs, serve as vehicles for such mobilization, providing platforms for participation, advocacy, and service delivery. According to Mumba and Mumba (2010), these associations are most effective when they foster inclusive participation, build social capital, and act as intermediaries between citizens and the state. Research by Campbell and Goritz (2014) indicated that individuals involved in civic activities report higher levels of life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Their findings suggest that civic engagement fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, contributing to positive mental health outcomes. According to the UN Universal Periodic Review (2017-2022), Faith Based Organisations have played a pivotal role by strengthening their organizational management, technical skills, and inclusivity which has been essential for enhancing their contribution to the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR, 2025), and the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG) have historically been influential in governance, advocacy, and service delivery. They engage in constitution-making, electoral monitoring, rights advocacy, and social justice initiatives. FBOs

are particularly effective in reaching marginalized groups, promoting values of empathy, solidarity, and collective responsibility [UN Universal Periodic Review (2017-2022)].

Neighbourhood Committees, Ward Development Committees, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) play critical roles in mobilizing residents, facilitating participatory planning, and monitoring service delivery. In Lusaka's informal settlements, such as Kanyama and Mandevu, these structures are instrumental in organizing collective action, disseminating information, and advocating for local priorities (Mulambia, 2020). Youth and women's associations contribute to civic mobilization by organizing community projects, advocating for inclusion, and providing leadership development opportunities. However, their participation is often constrained by traditional norms, limited resources, and underrepresentation in decision-making structures (Chiwele et al., 2024).

Civic Education pedagogical approaches include schools, NGOs, churches, media, and community-based organizations. The Ministry of General Education collaborates with stakeholders to develop curricula, resources, and teacher training programs (Curriculum Development Center [CDC], 2025). 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. However, according to Muntengwa (2020), studies highlight challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching materials, and reliance on traditional, teacher-centred methods. Daka et al (2025) assert that civic virtues promote greater civic engagement, leading to increased voter turnout and more robust participation in local governance.

2.2.2 Cultural and Communitarian Practices: Linking Civic Virtue to Indigenous Knowledge Systems

In the Zambian context, civic virtues such as trust, empathy, social responsibility, and altruism are considered vital for democratic participation and community development (Curriculum Development Centre, 2025). Daka et al. (2025) found that while these virtues are valued in communities like Kanyama and Mandevu, their practice is often undermined by corruption, individualism, and conservative societal norms. The acquisition of civic virtue is thus not merely a matter of individual disposition but is shaped by collective experiences, institutional frameworks, and the broader socio-political environment.

2.2.3 Contextual Dynamics of Civic Acquisition in Kanyama and Mandevu Constituencies: The Role of Institutional Factors and Legal Frameworks

Zambia's commitment to participatory governance is enshrined in the Constitution (Amendment Act No. 2 of 2016) and operationalized through the National Decentralization Policy (Republic of Zambia, 2022). These frameworks establish local government as an autonomous sphere, mandate the devolution of powers, and promote citizen participation in decision-making. Key institutional mechanisms include Ward Development Committees (WDCs), Constituency Development Fund Committees (CDFCs), and the expanded Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The National Decentralization Policy articulates objectives such as: Promoting inclusive citizen and community participation in democratic governance at the local level; Strengthening platforms for community engagement; Enhancing the capacities of local authorities, WDCs, and civil society in development planning and service delivery. Sim (2016) conducted a study that aimed to analyze global citizenship education content programming offered to civil society organizations in South Korea. The study found an unbalanced focus on humanistic justice and fundamental structures. Suggesting a balanced program design for formal and non-formal educational provisions.

Empirical research in Lusaka, including Kanyama and Mandevu (Chanda, 2023), indicated that well-designed civic education programs can enhance students' knowledge of political systems, critical thinking, and commitment to democratic values. Community engagement activities, such as student councils, debates, and service projects, reinforce theoretical knowledge with practical experience. Nonetheless, barriers such as resource constraints, insufficient teacher training, and entrenched cultural norms continue to impede the effective implementation of civic education in urban schools. This study ignored civic education for out-of-school youth.

2.3 Conceptual Review

Civic virtue refers to the behaviours, values, and dispositions that enable individuals and groups to participate responsibly in public life, uphold the common good, and hold institutions accountable. The acquisition of civic virtue, encompassing civic engagement, collective responsibility, and local accountability, is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of democratic consolidation and sustainable development. It can be conceptualized as an interactive process that involves several factors. In Zambia, and particularly in urban constituencies such as Kanyama and Mandevu, the interplay between grassroots mobilization, civic associations, and participatory governance has become central to efforts aimed at fostering civic responsibility and strengthening local accountability mechanisms.



III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research approach used qualitative methods with an exploratory case study design to collect data through detailed interviews and group discussions. The research investigated the process of acquiring Civic virtues, which leads people to participate in civic activities. This research approach was suitable for this study because the researcher aimed to capture the lived experiences of participants because virtues are often formative and situational. This allowed the observations of how civic virtues manifest in the urban communities of Kanyama and Mandevu, and how the citizens acquire them. Qualitative research and using an exploratory case study provided for capturing ‘unwritten rules’ that could easily have been missed by a questionnaire.

3.2 Study Area

The research data collection took place in Kanyama and Mandevu communities located in Lusaka, Zambia.

3.3 Target Population

The target population included members from the Ward Development Committees, Constituency Development Committees, Members of Parliament, Neighbourhood Watch groups, Local Government officials. Headteachers and Heads of Departments, and Curriculum Development Centre Subject Specialists.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

This study used purposive sampling, which involved selecting participants based on their expertise to achieve diverse yet appropriate viewpoints. A sample size was arrived at that involved two heads of the Social Sciences Department, the two Members of Parliament for Kanyama and Mandevu Constituencies, eight members of the Ward Development Committees, four Neighbourhood Watch group members, and four teachers of Civic Education and two Social Sciences Heads of Department. This brought the sample size to twenty. The researcher also used homogeneous sampling in order to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences in civic virtues.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The research team used semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), and document analysis to collect data.

3.6 Data Analysis

Using the Thematic analysis, the researcher followed six procedures as postulated by Caulfield (2023): familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, naming themes and writing up to identify themes from the perspective of the factors that account for the integration of civic virtues. The research team performed thematic analysis on the collected data. The researcher used thematic analysis to extract meaningful conclusions from the data through a deep interpretation of the collected data. The research used identified themes to establish conclusions from each data point as advanced by Clarke & Braun (2013).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that ethical considerations were observed throughout the study. According to Cohen et al. (2011), ethical issues that arise in academic research can be incredibly deep and intricate, and they frequently put researchers in moral binds that may seem remarkably insoluble. Ethics is concerned with preventing harm to the welfare and interests of the researcher and research subjects because of the research being done. Research participants should not endure worry, stress, guilt, and self-esteem damage during data collection and in the interpretations drawn from the data they provide (Creswell, 2014). Ethical considerations are a set of principles that guide the researcher’s designs and practices. All ethical considerations in this study, such as seeking permission from authorities, issues of confidentiality were considered. Ethical approval was sought from the University of Zambia before undertaking the study.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

After examining community-driven initiatives, local governance practices, and informal civic education, this research highlights the multifaceted nature of civic acquisition and the specific urban contexts that enhance civic virtues in everyday life. Using a qualitative research approach, and guided by the study objectives, the following themes were arrived at from the sub-themes that emerged;



Table 1
Community-based Cultural and Contextual Dynamics

Subtheme	Participant	Verbatim
Community Practices	Participant 9	"Community clean-up programs not only beautify our environment but also teach us the value of hard work and teamwork."
Collective responsibility	Participant 10	"When communities are involved in decision-making, they are more likely to take ownership and responsibility for their projects."
Community Practices	Participant 11	"We need more community-based programs that focus on empowering youth and promoting positive values."
Civic Initiatives	Participant 12	"Through community initiatives, we can build a sense of unity and cooperation that benefits everyone."

In Table.1, the first sub-theme that emerged was Collective responsibility, Community Practices and Civic Initiatives; these sub-themes culminated into the first theme, which was Community-based cultural and contextual dynamics.

Table 2
Civic Virtues and Community Perspectives

Subtheme	Participant	Verbatim
Mobilization	Participant 1	"I believe civic virtues are about being responsible and respectful in our communities. We need more community programs to teach these values."
Mobilization	Participant 3	"In my village, we practice communal work, which has strengthened our bonds and promoted a sense of responsibility among us."
Collective responsibility	Participant 5	"For me, civic virtues are about doing the right thing even when no one is watching. It starts from home and school."
Local Contribution	Participant 4	"We need to engage more with our leaders and communities to make sure everyone understands the importance of civic virtues."

From Table.2, the following sub-themes emerged: Mobilization, Collective responsibility and local Contribution. These led to the theme: Civic Virtue and Community Perspectives

Table 3
The Role of Education in Promoting Civic Virtues

Subthemes	Participant	Statement
Education	Participant 2	"If we teach civic virtues in schools, children will grow up knowing the importance of respecting others and contributing to society."
Civic Education	Participant 6	"Teachers have a big impact on students. If teachers model good civic behaviour, students are likely to follow suit."
Civic Education	Participant 7	"The curriculum should include practical civic education that encourages community service and volunteerism."
Formal Education	Participant 8	"Education is key. Without it, people might not understand why civic virtues are important for our development."

Table 3 emphasized the role of Education in the Acquisition of Civic Virtues, which were represented by the following sub-themes: education, Civic Education, and Formal Education.

Table 4
Contextual Dynamics and Institutional Factors

Subthemes	Participant	Statement
Traditional Institutions	Participant 13	"Our traditional leaders can use their platforms to teach and enforce civic virtues, setting a good example for their communities."
Cultural dynamics	Participant 15	"Cultural practices that promote respect for elders and community are essential for teaching civic virtues."
Cultural Factors	Participant 14	"By incorporating civic virtues into our cultural ceremonies, we can pass these values to the younger generation."
Traditional Leadership	Participant 20	"Traditional leaders have a responsibility to promote peace and unity, which are foundational to civic virtues."

Table 4 contained the following sub-themes: traditional institutions, Cultural Factors, and Traditional Leadership, which all culminated into the theme of Institutional factors.

4.2 Discussion of the Study Findings

This study explored how civic virtues are cultivated through a multifaceted interplay of grassroots contexts, mobilization, cultural and communitarian practices, and institutional dynamics.

4.2.1 Cultural and Communitarian Practices

Traditional leaders and indigenous practices were identified as vital conduits for transmitting civic values. Participant 1 emphasized the importance of cultural respect for elders in teaching civic responsibility, while Participant 4 advocated for integrating civic virtues into cultural ceremonies to ensure intergenerational transmission. Participant 7 suggested that traditional leaders can model and enforce civic virtues, thereby reinforcing communal norms. Similarly, the Curriculum Development Centre (2025) emphasized that in the Zambian context, civic virtues such as trust, empathy, social responsibility, and altruism are considered vital for democratic participation and community development. In the same regard, Daka et al. (2025) also found that while these virtues are valued in communities like Kanyama and Mandevu, their practice is often undermined by corruption, individualism, and conservative societal norms. This dimension underscores the communitarian ethos, where civic virtues are sustained through shared values, rituals, and indigenous knowledge systems that resonate with local identities.

4.2.2 Grassroots Mobilization and Association

From the subthemes, 'Grassroot efforts' emerged as a foundational mechanism for instilling civic responsibility. Participants emphasized the role of community programs, youth engagement, and participatory decision-making in fostering ownership and cooperation. For example, Participant 3 described how communal work in their area strengthened social bonds and promoted responsibility. Participant 9 noted that clean-up programs not only beautify the environment and improve hygiene but also enhance teamwork and hard work. Similarly, Participant 10 highlighted that community involvement in planning enhances accountability and ownership. According to Mumba and Mumba (2010), these associations are most effective when they foster inclusive participation, build social capital, and act as intermediaries between citizens and the state. Research by Kristjánsson (2022) indicated that individuals involved in civic activities reported higher levels of life satisfaction and emotional well-being. Their findings suggest that civic engagement fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, contributing to positive mental health outcomes.

These findings affirm that civic virtues are not merely taught but practised through participatory action, reinforcing the bottom-up nature of virtue acquisition. This finding is aligned with the Social Learning Theory, which connotes that civic virtues are acquired and reinforced through social contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.2.3 Contextual Dynamics and Institutional Factors

Formal education systems and institutional structures were seen as critical for scaling civic virtue promotion. Participant 2 argued that teaching civic virtues in schools fosters respect and societal contribution from a young age. Participant 6 noted that teachers who model civic behaviour influence student conduct, while Participant 7 called for practical civic education that encourages service and volunteerism. These insights highlight the contextual dynamics within institutions that shape civic behaviour, especially when aligned with cultural and grassroots efforts. The role of mentorship, curriculum design, and leadership engagement emerged as pivotal in formalizing civic virtue acquisition. This is highly supported by Lufungula (2017), who revealed that effective civic education encompasses interactive and experiential learning methods, which help students understand their rights and responsibilities. Also, Lin (2025) held a similar view when they indicated that well-designed civic education programs can enhance students' knowledge of political systems, critical thinking, and commitment to democratic values.

In line with communitarianism theory, Civic virtues develop through community-driven structures, institutions, culture, and grassroots efforts, where mentorship, education, and leadership engagement play central roles in embedding shared values and shaping responsible civic behaviour.

4.2.4 Interconnected Influence

The outcome framework (Figure 2) synthesizes these findings, illustrating how each domain contributes to the acquisition of civic virtues in Zambia. The bidirectional arrows in the framework reflect the mutual reinforcement among these domains. Cultural practices inform institutional curricula; grassroots programs draw legitimacy from traditional norms; and institutional mentorship strengthens community engagement. Together, these spheres converge at the centre as 'Acquisition of Civic Virtues', demonstrating that civic virtue is not a product of isolated interventions but a holistic outcome of integrated social systems.

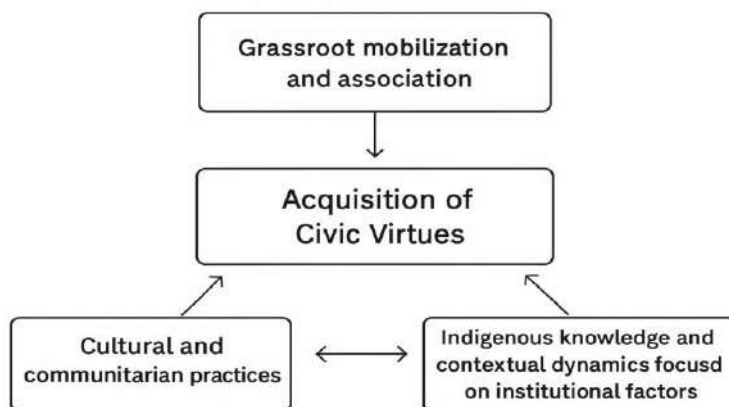


Figure 2
Conceptual Framework for the Acquisition of Civic Virtues in Zambia

Figure 2 illustrates the robust interplay between Contextual dynamics like grassroots mobilization, cultural and communitarian practices, and institutional factors. Each domain contributes to the acquisition of civic virtues, with arrows indicating mutual reinforcement and convergence. The pillars of this conceptual framework arise from the themes that emerged from the data that were collected in the study, firmly anchored in the integrated theoretical framework of the study.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study explored the multidimensional pathways through which civic virtues are acquired and promoted in Zambia, emphasizing the interplay between grassroots mobilization, cultural and communitarian practices, and institutional factors. The findings revealed that civic virtues are not merely taught through formal instruction but are cultivated through lived experiences, indigenous knowledge systems, and participatory engagement.

Grassroots mobilization, through community programs, youth involvement, and local associations, emerged as a powerful driver of civic responsibility and ownership. Cultural and communitarian practices, including respect for elders, traditional ceremonies, and leadership by example, provided a deeply rooted moral framework that reinforces civic values. Institutional factors, particularly education systems, teacher modelling, and curriculum design, were shown to formalize and scale civic virtue promotion.

The conceptual framework developed in this study demonstrates that the acquisition of civic virtues is a holistic process, requiring synergy across social, cultural, and institutional domains. This integrated approach offers a transformative lens for understanding civic education, not as a siloed intervention but as a dynamic ecosystem of influence on society.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conceptual synthesis, the following recommendations were proposed to strengthen civic virtue promotion in Zambia. Since contextual dynamics shone out as influential in the acquisition of Civic virtues, strengthening Community-Based Programs need to be enhanced through support and expansion of grassroots initiatives such as clean-up campaigns, youth-led projects, and participatory planning forums. And encourage local associations to integrate civic education into their activities, fostering ownership and responsibility.

Leverage Cultural Institutions and Indigenous Knowledge through collaborating with traditional leaders to embed civic virtues into cultural ceremonies and communal practices. And promote indigenous frameworks of respect, unity, and cooperation as foundational civic values.

Since the study found the Civic Education curriculum to be fragmented, this study recommends reforming the Educational Curricula and Teacher Training and integrating practical civic education into school curricula, emphasizing service, volunteerism, and ethical leadership. And equip teachers with training to model civic behaviour and mentor students in responsible citizenship.

For the out-of-school youth, engage them through relevant and creative Platforms through the use of sports, arts, and digital media to teach civic virtues in ways that resonate with youth interests and establish mentorship and leadership development programs that empower youth to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

This study recommends fostering Institutional-Cultural Synergy by encouraging collaboration between schools, communities, and cultural institutions to create a unified civic education strategy. And develop policies that recognize and support the role of indigenous knowledge in shaping civic behaviour.

Further research could concentrate on a longitudinal survey of how these acquired civic virtues are sustained in communities and the wider Zambian society. The current researchers or others could also consider studies on how civic virtues can effectively curtail political violence and voter apathy, especially among the youth.

Funding sources: This study received no external funding.

Acknowledgement: The researchers acknowledge the contributions of the study participants.

Declaration of Interest: None of the authors declared any conflict of interest.

Declaration of AI use: This article used AI assistance only to correct spellings and visualise the theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks of the study.

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