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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ROLE OF CIVIC EDUCATION OF YOUTH ON DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN  
TANZANIA: A CASE OF MISSENYI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of civic education of youth on democratic governance in Tanzania. The conceptual framework consisted of civic education as the independent variable and democratic governance as the dependent variable of the study. To capture the objective of the study, both qualitatively and quantitatively approaches were used, with the study adopting a case study research design. The findings indicated that majority of the respondents strongly agreed to have participated in the civic education program while a small percentage strongly disagreed to have participated on the program. The study recommends progressive policies and allocation of resources to address youth marginalization in the distribution of opportunities for participating in decision making so as to build their capacity through civic education.

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INTRODUCTION

Youth are a constituent marginalized by the decision making organs; "there is a need to design specific programs that will focus on sensitizing the youth who form a large section of the society to participate in democratic governance especially in elections" (LHRC 2006). This statement compliments one of the biggest cries among youth for the formation of an independent youth coordinating body (Tanzania National Youth Council, 2007). Civic education of youth in democratic governance in Tanzania has implication to youth in a narrow sense but to society as a whole in a remarkably broad fashion. Tanzania's total population is about 44.5 out of which 50 percent are youth. Unlike United Nations' definition of youth that ages 15-24 years, Tanzania's youth group ranges from 15-35 years. In this country people have seen how youth have been, and can be used in bringing social movement in the community, particularly through academic institutions and political parties. In a speech a former prime minister said that youth unemployment is the rolling bomb waiting to blast sooner. Nevertheless, the efforts made do not seem to reflect the real needs and thus insufficient remedies to the problem. With the emergence of the so-called Arab Spring, at the end of 2010, the suicide of a young Tunisian street vendor brought thousands of young people on to the streets of Tunis. In January 2011, Egyptians who were mainly young people from various backgrounds started their revolution followed by Libyans (UNDP (2012).

Silvia P. and MacCulloch R. (2003) argue that the likelihood of supporting revolt is higher for youths and for individuals with low income or who are unemployed. The civic education in democracy governance in Tanzania among the youth is of the utmost important. The civic education is part of the capacity building programmes on social, political, and economic stability and peace. However, efforts and capacity building programme on youth in Tanzania have dwelt on youth unemployment in the country looked at the creation of sustainable jobs and improving the quality of jobs with emphasize on youth (Laderchi and Zacchia 2009); examined the youth economic empowered through employment, Helgesson and Earnest (2008), and which looked at issues on the various livelihood sources and the most pressing problems facing the youth (Views of the People, 2007). It is against this background, that the study investigated the role of civic education on youth in democratic governance in Tanzania.

Literature review

Theoretical framework

This study was guided by two theories: transactional theory and transformation leadership theories. The transformation leadership as a third theory in this study, the assumptions was that people would follow a person who inspired them, a person with vision and passion can achieve great things and on the other hand, the way to get things done is by injecting enthusiasm and energy. The comparison of two theories, transactional and transformational (Burns, 1978), a

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transactional leader engages others in reciprocal activity of exchanging one thing for another that is participatory and dynamic. Basing on the components of transformation leadership, civic education can help develop the vision of leaders whereby young leaders will be able to view the future that will excite and convert potential followers. The vision may be developed by the leader or may emerge from a broad series of discussions. According to Burns (1978), Leadership has been viewed from two dimension of description that Transactional leadership occurs when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. Transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.

### Empirical review

In Tanzania National Population Policy 2006 defines youth as individual aged between 15 and 24 years in which this group constitutes 19.6 percent of the country's population. In Tanzania, as elsewhere in sub-Saharan African countries, children and youth constitute the largest proportion of the population. According to UNDP (2012) report, youth leaders in the area of political participation in Africa countries, eligibility for national parliament starts at 25 years old or older. Opportunities for youth to engage in governance and participate in political and decision making processes depend largely on the political, socioeconomic, and cultural contexts where social norms in many parts of the world result in multiple forms of discrimination against young women. Both formal and informal engagement can be understood well through civic education towards democratic governance, and both are beneficial for a vivid and resilient democracy and should be supported. There is strong evidence that civic education of young people forms ground institutional political processes that is relatively low when compared to older citizens across the globe. Civic education in contests seemed to be a determining factor of the youth leadership experience variable.

Civic education of youth provides an opportunity and oversight functions of the Constitutional organs: Executive, Parliament and Judiciary to assess whether checks and balance system functions fairly. Also, civic education focuses on enhancing participation towards administrative initiatives, such civil service reform and anti-corruption with the goal of promoting accountability and transparency and good governance. Politically active youth represent vast interest of their peers in the decision making structures in Tanzania. They work in an environment that is engulfed by what is regarded as the 'generation conflict' between youth and the old guards. This conflict is thought of as the defining feature of many African political systems (Brennan 2006). Hypothetically, the old generations are regarded as working to preserve the *Status quo*, which is considered by the public as self-seeking (Bakari 2001). Much as the current political system does not rhyme why the interests and wishers of the majority, there have been calls for change. The Tanzanian political system does not require this change to come by through violent means, but democratically. As such, the ballot box is a key mechanism to bring about the required change.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research adopted case study research design focusing on Misenyi District in Tanzania. The study used both qualitatively and quantitatively research approaches. The study targeted youth of the Misenyi District. The study employed purposive sampling, a total of 50 respondents were sampled from the 20 wards out of 70 study population. To capture this, the conceptual framework employing capacity building as independent variable and democracy governance as dependent variable was employed.

### Study Findings and recommendation

The findings of the study show that, gender distribution, 68 per cent were male while 32 per cent were female. The age distribution, 46 per cent were below 25 years; 52 per cent were above 25 years; and 2 per cent were between 40-45 years. Further, the level of education, 4 per cent had primary education; 16 per cent had secondary education; 14 per cent high school secondary education; and 66 per cent had university education. The results on civic education (see table 1 below) indicated 26.1% strongly agreed to have participated on the program of civic education while 4.3% strongly disagreed to have participated on the program of civic education implying that institutions and other responsible organs that offer civic education programs are required to do more on awareness of Civic Education.

Table 1. Civic Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	1.9	4.3
	disagree	2	3.8	8.7
	moderate	5	9.6	21.7
	agree	9	17.3	39.1
	strongly agree	6	11.5	26.1
	Total	23	44.2	100.0
Missing	System	27	55.8	
Total		50	100.0	

The study recommends progressive policies and allocation of resources to address youth marginalization in the distribution of opportunities for participation. The resources to be addressed should cover both financial and no-financial resources.

### Conclusion

The civic education of youth on democratic governance at various levels youth leadership is a prerequisite to achieving democratic governance. The serious practical and structural constraints on youth civic engagement in political processes must be addressed.

This includes not only providing education, but also ensuring progressive policies and allocation of resources to address youth marginalization in the distribution of opportunities for participating in democratic governance.

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