

## **Civic Education and Pupils' Civic Dispositions in Ghana and Nigeria: A Comparative Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

The ultimate desire of any sensitive government is to build responsible citizens who will participate meaningfully in the developmental efforts within and outside society. The current social-political upheavals in Ghana and Nigeria underscored the need for national value orientation and reorientation for effective nation-building. The study adopted a descriptive survey to assess gender differences in pupils' civic disposition in Ghana and Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select 920 Basic 8 pupils from four educational circuits in Central Region, Ghana and four Local Government Education Authorities in Lagos and Ogun State in South-West, Nigeria. The research tool was tagged: Basic Education Pupils' Questionnaire (BEPQ). The data were analysed using simple percentages, mean scores and independent t-tests at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that there is no significant gender difference in the contribution of basic education to pupils' civic disposition. The main conclusion drawn from this study is that the difference in the level of civic awareness of basic school pupils is due to the quality of basic education and that civic disposition increases the likelihood of a person engaging in civic activities. Government at all levels should encourage publication of relevant textbooks and research findings on basic school pupils especially in value-laden subjects like civic education.

**Keywords:** Education, Gender, Comparative studies, Civic Disposition

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## Introduction

The production of self-reliant and responsible citizens is one of the goals of education all around the world. Individuals do not automatically become good and responsible citizens; they need to be educated. However, research examining civics and students' engagement largely focus on young people in tertiary institutions as a general group. Comparatively, less attention has been devoted to the examination of basic school pupils, especially their gender roles concerning the formation of good citizenship (Galston, 2004; Lewis, 2014; Ostman, 2012).

It is often asserted that young adults are increasingly apathetic and reluctant to exercise their civic responsibilities. One of the solutions to this challenge could be a dynamic and goal-oriented civic programme at the basic level. Civic education is a concept, topic or school subject that seeks to equip young people with positive attitudes, skills and dispositions and as a tool needed to survive in a complex and highly competitive global environment. Civic education has been tagged with different names such as *citizenship education* and *ethics, civic culture, civic engagement, political education* and *social education* (Ogundare, 2002; UNDP, 2004; Weissbourd, 2010). There is no international consent on the content of the curricula of civic education and its goals. However, the broadest possible description would be that it is aimed at making good citizens, equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills and traits of character (Antwi, 1992; Lewis, 2014; Ogundare, 2002). The challenge, therefore, is for the school to help the youth develop reflective attachments to their nation and a sense of kinship with citizens in all parts of the world (Johnson & Johnson, 2005).

Citizenship education is seen as one of the oldest subjects in the school curriculum, and it continues to be on the radar screen of the contemporary curriculum of the school to educate the youth on civil rights and responsibilities. Citizenship education is the type of education that fosters democratic attitudes, skills, and knowledge to engage and work on important public issues and make democracy a way of life (Ostman, 2012). Service-learning advocates are part of the equation to creating a global understanding of citizenship with the focus on service and volunteering in addition to creating opportunities and programs that will encourage and reward public service among youth. Engaging young people in civic education can only be positive for the future of any nation (Anderson, 2013). Schools foster positive trends in youth on civic engagement

and create awareness of the importance of public service. The increase in the number of young people involved in community service and volunteering, and also in the percentage of young people who are tolerant and committed to the rule of law and freedom suggest the importance of human right and world justice.

Civic education is seen as a panacea to foster the skills and virtues necessary for all-encompassing citizenship, critical thinking and autonomous decision making; all of which are vital characteristics for well-functioning individuals. However, civic education requires the community to be accommodating to diverse belief systems, ensuring individuals can live without the risk of being marginalized or persecuted. Many scholars have posited civic education as a cure for student cynicism, apathy, and civic disengagement (Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007). Cynicism and apathy are commonly linked to civic disengagement. Over the past 25 years, we have witnessed an explosion of interests in civic education around the world, this comes as the paradoxes of globalization.

Raising awareness of the importance of global citizenship to building a better future for humanity was a key in the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), launched in 2012. It is aimed at empowering learners to become responsible global citizens. The Initiative has Global Citizenship Education "GCE" as one of its key education objectives for eight years (2014-2021) to make sure that we are "educating citizens" and "training children for adulthood and citizenship".

The absence of education, whether formal or informal, puts at stake the very survival of a nation. This is because people with the requisite knowledge in every conceivable area of human endeavour are needed for the smooth running of society. Apart from helping people to become useful members of society, education helps them to develop an appreciation of their cultural heritage and to live more satisfying lives (Falade, 2008; Odusanya, 2017). Besides, education contributes to social change and social mobility. For a nation to attain a relatively complex level of development and civilization, its members must be educated (United Nations General Assembly, 2015).

Attempts to ensure delivery of quality education continue to prove elusive and far more critical for most developing countries around the world, especially Ghana and Nigeria. In 1996, the Ghanaian government launched the Free, Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) programme in response to a constitutional

requirement and global mandate (Ankomah, Koomson, Bosu, & Oduro (2008); UNESCO, 2009). A similar programme was launched in Nigeria in 1999, called the Universal Basic Education (UBE).

The scope of FCUBE and UBE was expanded to include pre-primary schooling, the first three years of junior secondary education (J.S.S), and the Mass Literacy for Adolescents (FRN, 2013). It is a reform measure by the Federal Government, aimed at rectifying the existing distortions in the basic education sub-sector (Adeosun, Oni, Adebayo, Onuoha, & Yakassai, 2009). Development of education in Ghana is closely tied to the socio-political changes that have taken place from colonial times to the present day. The governance of education is highly centralized. The national government sees to the formulation of policies and setting up of special funds for projects implementation.

A nation cannot have democratic freedom, justice and, equality when the majority of the people do not know their rights and responsibilities. The democratic institutions must be created, and participation in the political process must be popular. Citizenship education is necessary to broaden the base of citizen participation. Knowledge of the constitution and the democratic principles it embodies, for example, enables the citizens to understand, defend and protect the constitution (Oni, 2009). A vibrant democracy is, in large part, a function of a democratic civic culture – culture being the behaviours, practices and norms that define the ability of the people to govern themselves. In other words, democracy is not a machine that runs by itself once the proper principles and procedures are inserted. A democratic society needs the commitment of its citizens (Oni, 2009). Quite similarly, the role of a teacher is not to dominate the lesson but guide, encourage and motivate the pupils to participate in activities which would promote meaningful understanding of Civic Education concepts.

### **Critical Democratic Theory**

Critical Democratic Theory (CDT) emerged from the works of John Dewey (1938). It states that education and learning form the ongoing two-way dialectic process that is built around the experiences of the students through critical thinking and action. Engagement is not purely a domestic matter. To succeed in the global community, students need to be acquainted with international structures and global problems (Colby et al., 2007). The thesis of CDT is relevant in this comparative work because it provides

the lens through which similarities and structural variations in the implementation of basic education in Ghana and Nigeria are measured. Also, the theory suggests some values like openness, respect for others' views, equity and justice as non-negotiable protocols in the classrooms, schools, communities and at policy tables. These indices form the basis for comparing pupils' civic disposition in Ghana and Nigeria.

Advancement in science and technology seems to have beclouded the stakeholders in education from seeing the importance of civic ecology and the delicate balance of moral relationship among society, schooling, teaching and most especially the basic school pupils. When learners lack necessary civic dispositions within and outside school, the resultant effects are likely to be incessant violence and the production of uncritical citizens that are selfish and indifferent to public affairs in Ghana and Nigeria. This does not seem sufficient for the post-millennial learners around the world especially in Ghana and Nigeria.

The purpose of this study is to compare civic education and pupils' civic dispositions in Ghana and Nigeria to identify their peculiar challenges and the lessons that can be learnt from them for others. Specifically, the study examined the contribution of basic education to pupils' civic dispositions in the two countries and gender difference in pupils' civic dispositions.

In line with the purpose of the study, a research question (Are there differences in the contribution of basic education to pupils' civic disposition in Ghana and Nigeria?) and a hypothesis (There is no significant gender difference in basic school pupils' civic disposition in Ghana and Nigeria) guided the study.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey to assess pupils' civic dispositions in Ghana and Nigeria. The survey was used in the collection of data to answer the questions posed for the study without manipulating data.

### **Area of Study**

The study was carried out in four educational circuits sampled from Effutu and Cape Coast Municipalities in Central Region of Ghana and four Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) sampled from Lagos and Ogun States in Nigeria. The

research areas were chosen because of their early contact with western education and civilization.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of the study embraced all public basic School in the Central Region of Ghana and South-West of Nigeria. Twelve Junior Secondary Schools were selected each from both countries to ensure uniformity. In all, 920 Basic 8 pupils participated in the study. There were 432 participants from Ghana and 488 from Nigeria. In both countries, 398 male and 522 female students were involved in the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage was the selection of Effutu and Cape Coast municipalities from the existing six municipalities (Cape Coast, Agona West, Assin North, Effutu, Mfantisman, upper Denkiyaand Komanda, Edina/Eguafo/Abiren municipal Districts) in the Central Region in Ghana. The same simple random sampling technique was used to select two states, Lagos and Ogun from the six states (Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ekiti, Ondo and Lagos) in South-West Nigeria. Using the hat and draw method, the names of all the circuits were paper folded and put in a box. After shuffling and reshuffling the content, four circuits, East and West circuit from Effutu Municipality; West and Central circuits from the Cape Coast Municipality were randomly picked by the researcher. The same sampling technique was used to select Kosofe and Ikorodu LGEA from Lagos State, while Ado-Odo Ota and Ijebu North East LGEA were selected from Ogun State. For the school level, stratified random sampling was used to select rural-urban schools. Again, simple random sampling was used to select three mixed schools each from the sampled circuits and LGEAs. Of the one thousand and nine (1009) copies of the questionnaires given out in both countries, nine hundred and twenty (920) were fully completed by the participants in all the study locations. This gave a good return rate of the questionnaires.

### **Instrumentation**

The only instrument used in the study was the Basic Education Pupils' Questionnaire (BEPQ) developed by the researchers and moderated by seasoned researchers in the chosen field. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Section A

elicited information on students' personal data such as school, age, sex and class, while B had ten items on contributions of Basic Education to students' civic disposition. The items were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 Disagree (D), 3 Agree (A) to 4 Strongly Agree (SA).

### Results and Discussion

The results obtained from the data are presented and analysed below:

Table 1

#### *Gender Distribution of Basic School Pupils Based on Country of Residence*

Gender	Ghana	Nigeria	Total
Male	146 (33.8%)	252 (51.6%)	398 (43.3%)
Female	286 (66.2%)	236 (48.4%)	522 (56.7%)
Total	432 (100.0%)	488 (100.0%)	920 (100.0%)

Table 1 shows that a total of 920 basic 8 pupils were sampled, 522 (56.7%) of them were female and 398 (43.3%) were male. This implies that more female pupils than the male ones were involved in the study. In the same vein, more female than male students were involved in the study from Ghana (66.2% females and 33.8% male), but this kind of distribution was not the same in Nigeria where 236 (48.4%) females and 252 (51.6%) male participated.

Table 2

#### *Age Group Distribution of the Basic School Pupils Based on Country of Residence*

Age Group	Ghana	Nigeria	Total
10-12 years	123 (28.5%)	223 (45.7%)	346 (37.6%)
13-15 years	278 (64.4%)	241 (49.4%)	519 (56.4%)
16-18 years	27 (6.2%)	19 (3.9%)	46 (5.0%)
19-years above	4 (0.9%)	5 (1.0%)	9 (1.0%)
Total	432 (100.0%)	488 (100.0%)	920 (100.0%)

Table 2 shows that from the 920 basic 8 pupils sampled, 519 (56.4%) of them were between 13 and 15 years old, 346 (37.6%) were grouped between 10 and 12 years old, 46 (5.0%) between 16 and 18 years old, while only 9 (1.0%) were between 19 and 21 years old. It means the majority of the pupils that participated in the study were in the age group between 13 and 15 years. The pattern of distribution of age group of pupils seems to be the same in Ghana and Nigeria, with the majority falling in the age group 13-15 years, and minority in the age group of 16 years above.

### Question 1: Are there differences in the contribution of Basic education to pupils' civic dispositions in Ghana and Nigeria?

The 10 items from the questionnaire on the contributions of Basic Education to civic disposition were descriptively analysed and presented in the table below:

Table 3

#### *The Contributions of Basic Education to Pupils' Civic Disposition in Ghana and Nigeria*

Statements	Central Region of Ghana (432 basic 8 pupils)					South-Western Nigeria (488 basic 8 pupils)					
	SA	A	D	SD	Mean/ Std.Dev	SA	A	D	SD	Mean/ Std.Dev	Ave. Mean/ Std.Dev
1 Equal access to education	116 26.9 %	176 40.7 %	71 16.4 %	69 16.0 %	<b>2.78</b> <b>1.01</b>	40 8.2%	283 58.0 %	88 18.0 %	77 15.8 %	<b>2.59</b> <b>0.85</b>	<b>2.69</b> <b>0.93</b>
2 Religious Tolerance	138 31.9 %	191 44.2 %	49 11.3 %	54 12.5 %	<b>2.96</b> <b>0.97</b>	157 32.2 %	237 48.6 %	55 11.3 %	39 8.0%	<b>3.05</b> <b>0.87</b>	<b>3.01</b> <b>0.92</b>
3 Attitude of teachers towards national unity	149 34.5 %	205 47.5 %	48 11.1 %	30 6.9%	<b>3.09</b> <b>0.85</b>	77 15.8 %	300 61.5 %	44 9.0%	67 13.7 %	<b>2.79</b> <b>0.87</b>	<b>2.94</b> <b>0.86</b>
4 Political Awareness through learning	167 38.7 %	154 35.6 %	49 11.3 %	62 14.4 %	<b>2.99</b> <b>1.04</b>	160 32.8 %	187 38.3 %	99 20.3 %	42 8.6%	<b>2.95</b> <b>0.94</b>	<b>2.97</b> <b>0.99</b>
5 Participation in election of	132 30.6 %	121 28.0 %	112 25.9 %	67 15.5 %	<b>2.74</b> <b>1.06</b>	134 27.5 %	220 45.1 %	76 15.6 %	58 11.9 %	<b>2.88</b> <b>0.95</b>	<b>2.81</b> <b>1.01</b>

School Prefects													
6	Inter-ethnic marriage is not good	91 21.1 %	100 23.1 %	138 31.9 %	103 23.8 %	<b>2.41</b> <b>1.07</b>	88 18.0 %	114 23.4 %	197 40.4 %	83 17.0 %	<b>2.43</b> <b>0.98</b>	<b>2.42</b> <b>1.03</b>	
7	National unity	175 40.5 %	165 38.2 %	39 9.0% %	53 12.3 %	<b>3.07</b> <b>0.99</b>	141 28.9 %	218 44.7 %	69 14.1 %	58 11.9 %	<b>2.91</b> <b>0.95</b>	<b>2.99</b> <b>0.97</b>	
8	I am proud of my country at all times	113 26.2 %	181 41.9 %	68 15.7 %	70 16.2 %	<b>2.78</b> <b>1.01</b>	103 21.1 %	255 52.3 %	84 17.2 %	44 9.0% %	<b>2.86</b> <b>0.85</b>	<b>2.82</b> <b>0.93</b>	
9	Daily Salutation of National Flag is not good	102 23.6 %	110 25.5 %	124 28.7 %	96 22.2 %	<b>2.50</b> <b>1.08</b>	29 5.9% %	169 34.6 %	164 33.6 %	126 25.8 %	<b>2.21</b> <b>0.90</b>	<b>2.36</b> <b>0.99</b>	
10	School Sport Competition promote cooperation	163 37.7 %	126 29.2 %	62 14.4 %	81 18.8 %	<b>2.86</b> <b>1.12</b>	85 17.4 %	239 49.0 %	75 15.4 %	89 18.2 %	<b>2.66</b> <b>0.97</b>	<b>2.76</b> <b>1.05</b>	
<b>Grand Mean &amp; Std. Dev.</b>						<b>2.82</b> <b>1.02</b>	<b>Grand Mean &amp; Std. Dev.</b>		<b>2.73</b> <b>0.91</b>	<b>2.78</b> <b>0.97</b>			

*Note:* With the use of a 4-point Likert scale type, the expected average (mean) response per item should be 2.50 (either in favour or against the attributes being measured).

The result in Table 3 shows that participants agreed that basic education has given all children equal access to education in Ghana and Nigeria with an average mean of  $2.69 > 2.50$ . Furthermore, many of the pupils noted that participating in the democratic process of electing school prefects develops pupils' leadership skills with a mean response of  $2.81 > 2.50$ . However, most of the pupils in both countries disagreed that daily salutation to the national flag in the school has not fostered national unity, with the mean response of  $2.36 < 2.50$ . This showed that pupils held the contrary view that the national flag and singing national anthem foster national unity. Considering all the numerical evidence in Table 4, the contributions of basic education to students' civic dispositions in terms of political awareness, pupils' leadership skills, inter-ethnic marriage, national unity and school sport competitions are well appreciated in both the countries.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant gender difference in Pupils' civic disposition in Ghana and Nigeria.

Table 4

*t-test Analysis of Gender and Pupils' Civic Dispositions in the two Countries*

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	d.f.	t-cal	Sig.(p) v	t-tab	Decision
Gender difference in Pupils' Civic disposition	Female	426	25.45	4.79	918	1.45	0.14	1.96	H <sub>0</sub> is Accepted
	Male	494	25.95	5.42					

*Note:* Sig. @ 0.05; df. = 918; t-cal = 1.45; t-critical 1.96

The data in Table 4 show that female pupils in both countries had a mean score of 25.45 on the contribution of basic education to civic disposition while their male counterpart had a mean score of (25.95). It was observed that the calculated t-value of 1.45 is less than the table value of 1.96, given 918 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. As a result of these obtained values, hypothesis 6 was accepted. Hence, there is no significant gender difference in the contribution of basic education to pupils' civic disposition in both countries.

### Discussion of Findings

The study found that both Ghana and Nigeria governments appeared to have allowed teaching of civic education in basic schools. These findings indicated positive views of basic 8 pupils towards active and responsible citizenship. This is in alignment with the thesis of CDT, Ghana and Nigeria as well as societies around the world must, therefore, work with children and young people on the vision of democracy and encourage authorities, policymakers, parents and social movements to strengthen pupils' civic education and dispositions. By doing that, an important foundation can be laid for their role as good citizens. It is a fact that education is the key to ensuring that children grow into responsible adults. This assertion then means it is necessary to look up to the teachers to assist in carrying out this feat. Teachers may not be able to do much without relevant teaching aids (Obioma, 2014).

Studies have indicated that Ghana has since 1990 been among the top donor beneficiaries in Sub Saharan Africa (Amankona, Kweitsu, & Korankye, 2018; Oduro, 2005; UNESCO, 2009; World Bank, 2011). However, corruption may have hindered the provision of relevant books for basic schools in both countries. In fact, it undermines the legitimacy and has a disproportionate impact on the marginalized and vulnerable groups. Previous studies have identified corruption as a key factor hindering the smooth implementation of programmes, especially in developing nations of the world (Ezekwesili, 2006; Obanya, 2012; Odusanya, 2017; UNESCO, 2014). Although Ghana invested as high as one-quarter of her budget in education, unlike Nigeria which gave less than ten per cent (UNESCO, 2014; Ministry of Education and Science/Ghana, 2015), effectiveness and transparency in monitoring how available resources are distributed and put into proper use need reassurance. Youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow need to be properly sensitized about the harmful effect of corruption and the need to uphold the right virtues. This is in agreement with the critical democratic theory.

In Nigeria, the federal structure places the responsibilities of quality education on a concurrent list where both Federal and States share the funding in fifty-fifty arrangement. Studies are ongoing about the workability of the arrangement and the need for strong financial backing by the Federal Government.

Similarly, the study shows that the commitment of teachers to teaching has further motivated pupils to attend school. However, increased attendance in school is not as important as the quality of learning in such a school. Adeosun et al. (2009), Cobbold (2007), and Odusanya (2017) concluded that current teacher training programmes in both the countries are inadequate and need to be re-focused to tackle staffing needs of each country. Since one cannot give out what one does not have, teachers need to be regularly trained on pedagogy, subject matter and profession expectations in line with international standards and practices.

It was also found that there was no significant gender difference in the contribution of Basic Education to pupils' civic disposition in Ghana and Nigeria. This finding revealed that civic disposition of female and male pupils has not changed much since the inception of basic education in both countries. However, some cultural practices may impede girls and women from exercising their civic duties, for example, the

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Some cultures impose on a woman the need to go through FGM to be tamed so that she does not become sexually promiscuous. This primitive practice is still active. The Kenya Demographic Health Survey of 1998 indicated that 50% of women aged 35 years and above are circumcised. Achieving gender parity and equality in education was also the fifth EFA goal and accordingly, both male and female citizens need to perform their civic rights and responsibilities for democracy to thrive. In other words, democracy could only be considered workable with an educated and politically responsive populace (Ichilov, 1998; Lewis, 2012; Odusanya, 2017).

Corroborating the above view, Weissboard (2010) observes that the disintegration of marital status, fragmentation of family life, selfishness, violence and lack of adult mentors have all contributed to a serious decline in moral value. Again, children tend to live in contradicting value systems, those broadly accepted and transmitted through schools, versus those shared within families, based on religion, ethnic belonging, and political ideology among others. The aforementioned, therefore, call on parents, teachers and leaders within and outside the school to communicate and model ideal character. Ministries of Education in Ghana and Nigeria need to authorize heads of the basic schools to encourage civic activities like inter-house-sport competition, community service and social clubs for pupils and to include learners' representatives in the decision-making process at the school level. By these actions, both male and female pupils develop tolerance, integrity, negotiation and dialogue for problem-solving. This is also in line with one of the theses of CDT for integrating learning experiences that lead to an informed and engaged citizenry (Colby et al., 2007).

### **Conclusion**

Ghana and Nigeria have adopted education especially at the basic level as a mechanism for building democratic societies which could compete favourably with other countries. It is education which provides the ethical cement that helps to hold together the very civilization of nations. The right kind of education, therefore, is concerned with the preparation of the individuals for interaction and functional living in the wider society. The study has shown that the content of the school curriculum must mirror the quality and aspiration of society because it is through the curriculum that a person learns the norms and values of society.

Again, civic education and pupils' dispositions should no longer be abstract or generic objectives but actual school subjects accompanied by useful material and necessary training assistance. There should be minimal over-reliance on the didactic inculcation of values which prevents learners from freely set their own moral standards from alternatives, after considering the repercussions, to enable individuals to make sound and intelligent choices. Equally as important is the implementation of legal sanctions against defaulters so that they could serve as deterrents to others. Ghana and Nigeria are part of the countries which have perennially battled corruption in West Africa. A dynamic civic education curriculum is therefore viewed as a worthy vehicle out of corruptions and other related vices troubling Ghana and Nigeria. The establishment of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Money Laundering Prohibition Act in Nigeria is a step in the right direction. The story tends to be the same in Ghana. The Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) was established to strengthen accountability in managing public funds. The days of aiding and abetting a crime should be over. Children and young adults need to develop the right dispositions so that their actions are not in any way aiding and abetting criminal conducts. By doing this, an important foundation is laid for their roles as good citizens.

The study has established that there is a dearth of relevant resources for teaching civic education on one hand and insufficient research activities on the subject matter on the other hand. Therefore, government at all levels need to invest more in education so that the SDG on education could be achieved by 2030.

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