Ghana Citizenship Education: A Review from the Perspective of National Education Policy and Learning Models

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the perspective of national education policy and learning model of civic education in Ghana. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The references in this study are divided into two, first, primary, namely journal articles that have high validity. Second, secondary, namely books and documents as an effort to minimize errors that are conceptual, procedural and praxis. Data analysis is gradual, namely, reduction, data display and verification. Civic education in Ghana begins at the primary level and continues through to tertiary education. The government of Ghana considers civic education an integral part of the national education system and has introduced policies and programs to strengthen civic teaching and learning throughout the education system. At the primary level, civic education is taught through social studies subjects, while at the secondary and tertiary levels it is provided as a separate subject. The Ghanaian government has also developed teaching materials and curricula dedicated to civic education, as well as conducted teacher training in integrating civic teaching into the curriculum and classroom activities. The teaching and learning model of Civic Education in Ghana emphasizes the local peaceful cultural and social context. The aim is to strengthen the values of cultural traditions and local wisdom that exist there.

Keywords: *Civic Education; National Education Policy; Learning Models*

Introduction

Population aging is a global phenomenon. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) report on World Population Ageing, more than 700 million individuals aged 65 years and older existed worldwide in 2019 (UNDESA, 2019). The population of older adults is expected to double to 1.5 billion by 2050, which is so high that the UN projects that "one in six people in the world will be 65 years of age or older by 2050" (UNDESA, 2019). This is up from one in eleven people in 2019 (UNDESA, 2019). Although a global phenomenon, the fastest increase in the number of older people is in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa. It is estimated that 80% of the world's elderly population will live in developing countries by 2050 (Asante & Karikari, 2023).

UNESCO designated the year 2000 as the 'International Year for a Culture of Peace', after the United Nations (UN) adopted a number of international conventions and strategic plans on education that promote peace, individual freedom, democratic practices, international legal order, and respect and tolerance among people. Education is considered a key element in efforts to build peaceful and stable societies and create a just world order. In this context, education is described by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) as the process of acquiring knowledge through classroom instruction and skill development through both formal and informal approaches. Higher education has had a long-standing relationship with the evolution of society and can be considered a public resource that facilitates high-level learning and research discoveries that have the potential to advance Society. Historically, this contribution has often been valued in general terms, particularly in terms of economic outcomes using a human capital theory approach. For example, education has been a key element in achieving Target 8.6 for gender equality through universal access to sexual and reproductive health education, and in achieving Target 5.6 which emphasizes decent work and economic growth by reducing the number of out-of-school youth (Tuffuor, 2023; Campbell et al., 2021).

One of the studies conducted by Piraino (2015) in South Africa, he analyzed intergenerational income levels. The conclusion obtained is that the country's income mobility level is low where this situation is among adult men. Then other factors such as gender, age, or marital status are also determinants of social mobility in the African region. This also causes education mobility to be low and the world of work has a significant decline in the African region. With this problem, there must be consideration of solutions to alleviate the level of intergenerational transmission that exists in the region. Several studies have identified education as a tool that can be realized as a solution to this problem. Education can be the key to achieving equality of opportunity and the only tool to climb the social ladder (Suárez–Arbesú et al., 2024).

One of the important goals of education in general and civic education in particular is to maintain social order and loyalty to a country. A country's democracy can be seen when citizens can collaborate the knowledge, skills and attitudes of democratic citizenship. Education in Africa, especially civic education, has problems, especially in countries where the education system is still low. This condition occurs because the majority of countries in Africa are developing countries where the situation in a country is not yet stable either due to its citizens or external factors. However, not all countries in Africa experience problems with civic education, for example Ghana. In Ghana, civic education is not new. It is seen as preparing the youth to exercise civic responsibility (Boadu & Education, 2013).

The education system in Ghana consists of three main levels: basic education, secondary education, and higher education. Ghana has inherited the school system from the British colonial era. In primary education, instruction is given in the language of the village or the local language of the student. English is introduced gradually as students progress through primary school. At the primary level, the government covers the cost of education, but many poor communities still find it difficult to afford school supplies. The subjects taught at the primary level are writing, reading, Ghanaian language, geography, history, handicrafts, music, agriculture, basic science and English.

The education system at the secondary level is a bridge between primary school and junior secondary school. At the secondary level, there are four grades with students ranging in age from 12 years to 16 years. At this level students study English, Ghanaian, religion, geography, hygiene and physical exercise, nature studies, history, civics, math, arts and crafts, singing and gardening. The school building is still very simple, located at one end of the village surrounded by plants. The school building is painted white, well-ventilated, has a tin roof overhanging the inside.

Affluent students will strive to progress from high school and go on to university. The less well-off students, on the other hand, decide to enter teacher training directly from secondary school. Upon completion of teacher training, the student will receive a certificate and will be qualified to teach in a

primary school. Teacher resources are high in quantity but inadequate in quality. Therefore, the quality of students in secondary schools cannot be improved due to the inadequate quality of teachers (Stratmon, 1959).

The education system in Ghana is managed by the Ministry of Education. The problems facing the country lie in inequality, exclusion and exploitation caused by internal and external factors. Lack of access to justice and law threatens human security and sustainable peace in Ghana. The Ghanaian government is committed to improving access to and quality of education, including efforts to improve civic education, gender equality and sustainable education. One of the programs run by the ghana government is the college scholarship program, where Campbell et al., (2021) in their research looked at the influence of alumni from the ghana scholarship program with alumni contributions on the role of higher education in sustainable development.

In 2007, the African Union adopted the African Youth Charter which emphasizes the importance of civic education in building a democratic and equitable society. In line with this, Klopper (2021) in his research argues that it is very important to educate children to become responsible and participatory democratic citizens. Parents must instill democratic values in their children, as well as empower them with knowledge about democracy. Values are 'principles' by which people behave, indicating what is important in life and ideals and standards for judging what is good, right, desirable or worthy of respect. The Charter encourages countries in Africa to strengthen civic education in their education systems and promote active participation of students in political and social life.

However, there are still challenges in developing Civic Education in Ghana, such as the lack of resources and infrastructure, as well as the lack of availability of teaching personnel trained in Civic Education. However, ghana continues to strive to improve the quality of civic education to produce citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities in building a better country and society. Based on some of the explanations above, it is interesting to analyze Ghanaian civic education: a review from the perspective of national education policies and learning models.

Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach with a literature study method. The references in this research are divided into two, first, primary, namely journal articles that have high validity. Second, secondary, namely books and documents as an effort to minimize errors that are conceptual, procedural and praxis. Data analysis optimizes techniques from Miles & Huberman A. Michael (2014) which describes techniques or procedures for qualitative data analysis, in stages, namely, reduction, data display and verification.

Result and Discussion

The National Context (Political System and National Education Policy) of Civic Education Development in Ghana

In recent years, with increased data availability, the gap has been shrinking. One of the most striking studies on social mobility in African countries is that of Alesina et al., (2021), which analyzed educational mobility across 2800 African regions and differences in educational mobility, gender, rural-urban divide, and the influence of historical and geographical factors on mobility. This was one of the largest studies ever conducted for these countries, and the results showed significant variations in mobility across the continent, with some regions having higher rates of upward mobility, while others had higher rates of downward mobility. They concluded that rural areas tended to have lower mobility rates

compared to urban areas, and that factors such as infrastructure and malaria prevalence also influenced Education mobility rates (Suárez–Arbesú et al., 2024).

Other studies, such as the one conducted by Azomahou & Yitbarek (2021), also analyzed social mobility in education in nine sub-Saharan African countries. They concluded that there is a downward trend in intergenerational education, especially since 1960, although it was found that parents' education continues to be an important factor in the education of their children, especially girls, with a higher degree of correlation. The social studies program, which focuses on civic education, was introduced in the Ghanaian education system as one of the measures to address the issue of preference for "white" jobs and negative attitudes towards agriculture and manual labor. This was done to help instill a spirit of patriotism among the youth. Many researchers have pointed out that social studies programs will enable students to acquire certain knowledge, skills, and values that make them think critically and eager to contribute to the survival of their nation Pryor, Ghartey, Kutor and Kankam (Kankam, 2016) made the same claim by stating that the systematic pursuit of knowledge in social studies is an important ingredient for improving human relationships in both social and physical environments. Therefore, the relevance and social utility of social studies as part of the school program in Ghana cannot be underestimated.

Ghana is a country in West Africa with a diverse range of ethnic groups and cultures, including the Akan, Ewe, Dagomba, Brong, Hause, and Ga-Dangme. 70% of the country's population is Christian, 17.6% Muslim, and 5% animist (CIA, n.d). Since independence from British rule in 1957, the country has never experienced nationwide armed conflict, and has undergone three peaceful transitions of power since the 1990s (Dei, 2005; Boafo-Arthur, 2008). A center of trade and government in the region, Ghana was established as a modern nation-state by Kwame Nkrumah, a leader of the global pan-African Movement. Ghana allows dual citizenship, as well as the right to reside for people of African descent in the diaspora (constitution of the Republic of Ghana). Education and literacy rates are the highest among the three countries of Ivory Coast and Liberia (Quaynor & Borkorm, 2020).

The "culture of peace" declaration made by the United Nations (UN) contains several points, namely, granting freedom to individuals, democratic practices, international legal order, respect and tolerance for each other. Peace requires an environment for developing social justice which means the elimination of all root causes of violence in the social, economic and political structures of society. Also in sociological terms, peace can be realized when there is no social discord and people can achieve their goals in life. The basic philosophical principle behind peace education is change and transformation in society. This transformation connotes basic changes in society such as ways of thinking, perceptions of the world, values, patterns of behavior, human relationships and the structure of society. Peace education educates people in the principles of democracy, civic values, tolerance, and human rights (Susan Fountain, 1999; Harber, 2019; Jenkins, 2008).

A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, ways of behavior and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflict by addressing the root causes of problems to resolve them through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and countries. It is imperative to inculcate the values of peace to citizens so that they are aware that crime must be abandoned and the rule of law must be brought to life. One significant way to ensure that citizens understand civic values is to socialize to young people (Tuffuor, 2023).

In general, citizenship, identity and formal education are intertwined both conceptually and in practice. Most school systems seek to create citizens who have certain skills and dispositions. Identity as one of the important points in citizenship education will provide alignment between diverse students and the national culture. In many cases, students' civic participation at the national level has led to political change, as student activism was held responsible for the fall of dictators in African countries in the 1990s (Quaynor & Borkorm, 2020). Banks (2017) points out the need for nested citizenship that incorporates ethnic identities in the national and global spheres, schools can also be spaces for building ethnic

solidarity movements and national identities may be more related to material issues than school experiences.

When it comes to citizenship, discussions of ethnicity and nationalism are ideologies that can be mobilized to unite people in pursuit of common goals of peace, stability and development; call for revolutionary action and war to fight the injustices of a group; or dehumanize and oppress those outside the group. In Africa itself there is very little conflict and nationalism in the African context is often conceptualized as a sign of peace and democracy, rather than the exclusionary discourse seen elsewhere. The negative political consequences of ethnic orientation in the African context may be due to colonial rule that favored authoritarian tendencies in local governance systems, and institutionally imposed tensions among people of different ethnicities. The arbitrary formation of nation states by European states in Africa resulted in multi-ethnic states, and ethnic groups fragmented across national boundaries; hence, most African states are multi-ethnic (Quaynor & Borkorm, 2020).

Based on research conducted by Ali et al., (2019), it shows that colonial configurations have implications for today's society, as citizens in Anglophone former colonies are more likely to prioritize ethnic identity, have weaker norms towards tax payment, and experience extortion by non-state actors than citizens of Francophone former colonies. Ethnic divisions and conflicts within a society are associated with civil conflict, slow economic growth, and weak state capacity and service delivery although the causal relationship between these phenomena remains unclear. In addition, the weakness of the state apparatus in handling cases is an internal factor in Ghana. The Constitution of the Fourth Republic of 1992 stipulates that only security institutions have the legal right to provide state security. Thus, although nationalism and ethnicity can serve as tools of inclusion and exclusion, scholars often consider nationalism as a more inclusive framework in the postcolonial African context than ethnicity.

In the field of education, most policies at the national level are designed to promote national unity through civic education and a common language of instruction. However, with varying degrees of equality for minority groups, nationalism-focused education without recognition of minorities often marginalizes students of certain ethnicities (Mulimbi & Dryden-Peterson, 2018; Dei, 2005). One typology of international education is transnational education (TNE) which refers to the mobility of educational programs and service providers across national boundaries. TNE is the mobility of educational programs from academic providers across countries and the development of students' knowledge and skills to meet the growing demands of the global job market (Owusu-Agyeman & Amoakohene, 2020). TNE (Transnational Education) Ghana was established in 2006. Since its establishment, Ghana has become a popular destination for foreign educational institutions to host their educational programs in the country. TNE Ghana has provided Ghanaian students with the opportunity to access international quality education without having to leave their country. TNE's programs cover various levels of education, ranging from higher education to vocational education. TNE is one of the efforts made by the government in improving education in Ghana, especially tertiary education.

Civic education has been an ongoing government priority in Ghana in the post-colonial era, illustrated by Kwame's focus on free education and the establishment of the Young Pioneers Movement, a government-sponsored youth group in schools intended to provide anti-colonial political education. Apart from the government, protestant church organizations also participated in shaping young people by instilling good citizenship values. In the late 1950s, the Protestant church argued that young people should be given sex education, as young people, especially girls, had low levels of knowledge about sex and their own bodies. The increasing accessibility of education and the rise of young people living in cities are important factors in implementing sex education programs in schools. This is one of the efforts made so that young people can understand the importance of taking care of themselves, controlling their sexuality and reducing the abortion rate among female students. Although the education offered by Christian organizations is mainly concerned with the moral sphere, physical, medical and health aspects are also seen as important. They promote the spread of biomedical knowledge about the bodies of young

women and men, to protect their moral citizenship. The use of the term 'moral citizenship' here is to indicate the importance of morality, or what Kate Skinner calls 'good character', for national citizens (Skinner, 2009).

In the context of decolonization and the drive for development in Ghana in the mid-20th century.1 Following this push for sex education, in 1961, the Christian Council established the first regular family planning clinic. The Medical Advice Center (MAC) was based in Accra but soon had branches in Kumasi and Ho. The Christian Council's success in providing family planning was such that it became the foundation for the National Family Planning Program (NFPP) when it was launched in 1970. However, MAC, like the Christian Council's approach to sex education, was primarily concerned with the promotion of moral citizenship through Christian family life and responsible parenthood, which prioritized helping infertile couples over curbing fertility and taking an educative role. In 1987, civic education was integrated into social science as a core subject taught in the newly universalized basic education, which covered primary and junior secondary schools. The civic education initiative by Ghana's Education ministry and civic organizations is rooted in the goal of ensuring citizens have knowledge of the history, rights, principles and values enshrined in Ghana's constitution (Ashford, 2022).

In 2002, according to a presidential commission report, civic education was integrated into the primary school curriculum to teach nationalism and citizenship to young people at the primary level, and continues to be taught as a core subject in primary and secondary schools. In studying primary school curriculum trends internationally, sociologists note a focus on national patriotism in countries as diverse as Nigeria, the Philippines and Sweden, with the rationale focusing on national heritage and history in response to a perceived need to promote social cohesion. Civic education documents how young people learn narratives about integrating national and ethnic identities in secondary school, which overall integrate ethnic identities into national stories. This report aligns with the analysis of civic education in secondary schools in other texts.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that civic education in Ghana has an important position in helping and shaping citizens who have knowledge of history, have nationalism, are responsible, understand their rights as citizens and become democratic citizens. Civic education in Ghana is closely related to peace education initiated by the United Nations (UN). Although there are still many challenges in maturing civic education in Ghana, such as the lack of adequate educational resources and infrastructure, but it does not make this country desperate in solving all problems in education.

Teaching and Learning Models for Civic Education

Many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have used non-traditional teacher education programs to address the problem of inadequately trained teachers. Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa have unqualified teachers as a result of the rapid expansion of access to education. SSA countries have therefore embarked on teacher education reform as part of overall education reform. The success of education reform efforts depends largely on the provision of qualified teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas. Inadequate teacher provision is the result of an over-reliance on traditional teacher training programs (Akyeampong, 2017).

Therefore, non-traditional teacher education programs are essential for the provision of quality education in shortage communities. Trained teachers are not willing to accept placements in shortage communities, so these communities must develop their own trained teachers. One initiative to address the acute teacher shortage in Ghana is the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE). The main objective of the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) is to provide an opportunity for all untrained teachers to gain access to professional teacher training (Sofo et al., 2019). There are several strategies used by SSA countries to address the inequitable distribution of teachers in remote areas. First, some countries use financial incentives to encourage qualified teachers to accept

placements in schools located in disadvantaged areas. Second, schools in some countries advertise and recruit their own teachers. Third, some countries recruit unqualified teachers and provide in-service training. The three measures mentioned can provide opportunities for people from the regions to obtain the same professional qualifications where they live (Aidan mulkeen, 2010).

In addition, the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in science learning, teachers, students and education authorities have very important roles. Teachers need to improve their knowledge of the latest technologies and suitable pedagogical approaches to integrate ICT in learning, while education authorities should prepare appropriate learning materials and curricula for professional training. Although there have been a number of policies promulgated and implemented through professional training for teachers, the concept of applying ICT in learning is still not optimally implemented in Ghana (Amedeker, 2020)

Furthermore, talking about the teaching and learning model of civic education in Ghana is usually done through the Citizenship and Character Education (CCE) program. The program is designed to strengthen students' civic values and character, and increase community participation in national development. The success of this program relies heavily on educational institutions, one of which is the school. In addition, civic education itself has a very important role and task in helping to build conscious and responsible citizens. Education also has a role in promoting and advertising civic values and national integration in Ghana. Nation building in Ghana also depends on how civic education is successfully realized in citizens. Generally, the teaching materials for civic education in Ghana cover several topics, including human rights, governance and democracy, political participation, citizens' obligations, and children's rights. The civic education learning model in Ghana emphasizes student-centered learning and is based on real-life experiences. Research conducted by Aboagye & Yawson, (2020) revealed that teachers consider the new curriculum in Ghana very important because it encourages students to be active in group work, helps students to gain skills to face life, prepares students for the job market, promotes inclusive education, promotes gender equality, and considers Ghanaian culture and society.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Aidoo et al., (2022) which was limited to three tertiary institutions in Ghana, showed that the flipped classroom approach produced some positive learning outcomes, which could improve their understanding, concept learning, and skill development. Poor internet connection and internet access are significant challenges that impact the implementation of the flipped classroom approach. Institutions, policy makers and government should pay attention to the provision of ICT infrastructure in schools and universities to implement e-learning.

From the above material, it can be concluded that the teaching and learning model of Civic Education in Ghana is based on the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education. There are several aspects of the teaching and learning model of Civic Education in Ghana, namely: Civic Education Curriculum, Active Learning Methods, Community Engagement, Discussion and Debate, Use of Multicultural Learning Resources. The teaching and learning model of Civic Education in Ghana continues to evolve according to the needs and development of society. The goal is to form active, critical thinking and responsible citizens in building a democratic and inclusive nation.

Conclusion

The problems that occur in Ghana are common problems in South Africa. Education is one of the pathways that can be taken to solve problems in Ghana, especially civic education. Education in Ghana starts at the primary level and continues up to tertiary level. The government of Ghana considers civic education an integral part of the national education system and has introduced policies and programs to strengthen civic teaching and learning throughout the education system. At the primary level, civic

education is taught through social studies subjects, while at the secondary and tertiary levels civic education is provided as a separate subject.

The Ghanaian government has also developed teaching materials and curricula dedicated to civic education, as well as conducted teacher training in integrating civic teaching into the curriculum and classroom activities. The teaching and learning model of Civic Education in Ghana emphasizes the local peaceful cultural and social context. The aim is to strengthen the values of cultural traditions and local wisdom that exist there.

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