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CIVIC DISPOSITION AS A CORRELATE OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND PARTICIPATION AMONG CIVIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN OGUN STATE

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Abstract

This study examined civic dispositions as correlate of political attitudes and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. Democratic engagement is increasingly understood as being shaped not only by cognitive competencies but also by value-based orientations such as political tolerance, civic responsibility, and commitment to democratic principles. The study was guided by two objectives and two research questions. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised Civic Education teachers in public secondary schools, from which a sample of 330 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire, and analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between civic dispositions and political attitudes ($r = .553$, $p < .05$), indicating that teachers with stronger civic values tend to exhibit more positive political orientations. The study also found a strong and significant relationship between civic dispositions and political participation ($r = .816$, $p < .05$), suggesting that civic dispositions substantially influence teachers' engagement in political and civic activities. These results support Political Socialization Theory by demonstrating that internalised civic values shape political behaviour. The study concludes that strengthening civic dispositions is essential for enhancing teachers' political engagement and effectiveness as agents of democratic socialization. It recommends the integration of value-based civic learning into teacher education, continuous professional development programmes, and the promotion of participatory school environments to reinforce democratic practices and sustain political participation.

Keywords: Civic dispositions, political attitudes, political participation, Civic Education teachers

Introduction

Democratic governance depends not only on the existence of political institutions and constitutional frameworks but also on the active involvement of citizens in public affairs. Such involvement is often influenced by individuals' civic dispositions, political attitudes, and political participation. These concepts are central to democratic citizenship because they shape how citizens perceive governance, engage with democratic institutions, and fulfil their civic responsibilities. Civic disposition refers to the values, beliefs, and behavioural tendencies that encourage individuals to act responsibly and constructively within a democratic society. It encompasses attributes such as civic responsibility, political tolerance, commitment to democratic principles, respect for the rule of law, and concern for the common good (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019; OECD, 2023). Civic dispositions provide the motivational foundation for democratic engagement and influence how individuals respond to civic and political issues.

Political attitude refers to individuals' evaluations, feelings, and beliefs regarding political institutions, political actors, public policies, and democratic processes. It includes dimensions such as political interest, political trust, political efficacy, and support for democratic governance (Reichert & Print, 2019; Schulz et al., 2023). Positive political attitudes are generally associated with stronger confidence in democratic institutions and greater willingness to engage in civic and political activities. Political participation refers to the various ways through which individuals become involved in political and civic activities intended to influence public affairs. These activities may include voting, participation in political discussions, civic engagement, advocacy, and involvement in community organisations (Theocharis & van Deth, 2018; Schulz et al., 2023). Political participation is widely regarded as a key indicator of democratic engagement and active citizenship.

The relationship among civic disposition, political attitude, and political participation is closely interconnected. Civic dispositions shape political attitudes by influencing how individuals perceive democratic values, political institutions, and civic responsibilities. In turn, political attitudes influence the extent to which individuals participate in political and civic activities. Consequently, civic disposition serves as an important foundation for the development of positive political attitudes and active political participation. Understanding these relationships is particularly important among Civic Education teachers who are expected to promote democratic values and citizenship education within the school system.

Education has long been recognised as a key mechanism for developing civic dispositions and democratic citizenship. Schools function as formal agents of political socialization where civic values, democratic norms, and participatory orientations are transmitted across generations. Civic Education, in particular, is designed to promote responsible citizenship by fostering political tolerance, respect for democratic institutions, and a sense of civic duty (Torney-Purta et al., 2015). International studies demonstrate that educational environments characterised by open classroom discussion, participatory teaching methods, and democratic practices contribute positively to the development of civic dispositions (Schulz et al., 2018; OECD, 2023). Teachers play a pivotal role in this process. Beyond delivering curriculum content, teachers model civic

behaviour and shape classroom climates that influence students' civic development. Civic Educatio n te achers, in particular, are expected to exemplify democratic values and positive civic orientations due to their specialised role in citizenship education. Their civic dispositions influence not only their teaching practices but also their personal political engagement and their effectiveness in fostering active citizenship among learners (Reichert & Print, 2019).

In Nigeria, Civic Education was introduced into the secondary school curriculum as part of broader democratic reforms aimed at promoting political awareness, national unity, and responsible citizenship. Despite these reforms, political participation remains uneven, while public trust in political institutions continues to face significant challenges (INEC, 2022). These realities raise critical questions about the extent to which civic education initiatives have succeeded in nurturing the civic dispositions necessary for democratic consolidation. While existing studies in Nigeria have largely focused on students' civic knowledge and political attitudes, limited attention has been given to the civic dispositions of Civic Education teachers themselves. This gap is significant because teachers serve as both products and agents of civic socialization. The assumption that Civic Education teachers possess strong civic dispositions by virtue of their professional role has rarely been empirically examined. Ogun State provides an appropriate context for investigating these issues due to its diverse educational institutions and long-standing implementation of Civic Education. Examining the relationship between civic dispositions, political attitudes, and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State offers valuable insights into the effectiveness of civic education reforms and the broader challenges of democratic engagement in Nigeria.

Against this background, this study examines civic dispositions as a correlate of political attitudes and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. By focusing on the normative and affective dimensions of citizenship, the study contributes to the literature on civic education and democratic participation and provides empirical evidence to inform teacher education, civic education policy, and democratic development strategies.

Statement of the Problem

Civic Education has been widely adopted in Nigeria as a strategic tool for promoting democratic values, political awareness, and responsible citizenship. Civic Education is expected to foster positive civic dispositions such as political tolerance, commitment to democratic principles, respect for the rule of law, and a sense of civic responsibility. These dispositions are essential for developing positive political attitudes and sustaining active political participation. However, despite the institutionalisation of Civic Education, political apathy, declining trust in political institutions, and limited civic engagement remain persistent challenges. One major concern underlying this situation is the assumption that civic education automatically produces positive civic dispositions among educators and learners. While Civic Education curricula emphasise democratic values, the extent to which Civic Education teachers themselves internalise and exhibit these dispositions remains unclear. Teachers play a central role in political socialization, and their civic orientations influence how democratic values are modelled and

transmitted in classrooms. If teachers possess weak civic dispositions, the intended outcomes of civic education may not be fully realised.

Empirical research in Nigeria has predominantly focused on students' civic knowledge and political attitudes, with limited attention given to teachers' civic dispositions and political participation. This neglect creates a significant gap in understanding whether Civic Education teachers are adequately prepared to foster democratic values and active citizenship. Without empirical evidence on teachers' civic dispositions, policymakers and educators lack a sound basis for evaluating civic education reforms and designing effective interventions. Furthermore, political participation is shaped not only by civic knowledge and skills but also by citizens' normative commitment to democratic values. In contexts characterised by political dissatisfaction and institutional distrust, weak civic dispositions may undermine participation even among politically informed individuals. Understanding how civic dispositions relate to political attitudes and participation among Civic Education teachers is therefore critical for strengthening democratic culture. In addition, little empirical evidence exists on whether Civic Education teachers who possess stronger civic dispositions are more likely to participate actively in political processes within the Nigerian democratic context. In addition, little empirical evidence exists on whether Civic Education teachers who possess stronger civic dispositions are more likely to participate actively in political processes within the Nigerian democratic context. This study addresses this gap by examining civic dispositions as correlates of political attitudes and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study was to examine the civic disposition as a correlate of political attitudes and participation among civic education teachers in Ogun State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. assess the relationship between Civic Education teachers' Civic Disposition and their political attitude.
2. examine the relationship between Civic Education teachers' civic disposition and their political participation in Ogun State.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of the relationship between Civic Education teachers' Civic Disposition and their political attitude?
2. What is the extent of the relationship between Civic Education teachers' civic disposition and their political participation?

Literature Review

Civic dispositions are widely recognised in political and educational scholarship as a core foundation of democratic citizenship. They refer to the internalised values, norms, and attitudes that shape how individuals perceive political life and engage with democratic institutions. These dispositions include political tolerance, commitment to democratic principles, respect for the rule of law, sense of civic responsibility, and willingness to participate in public affairs. Scholars

argue that democracy cannot be sustained solely through formal institutions but depends on citizens who possess civic orientations that support participation and democratic norms (Hoskins & Janmaat 2019; Dalton, 2017).

Political attitudes represent a critical pathway through which civic dispositions influence political behaviour. Attitudes such as political interest, trust in political institutions, political efficacy, and support for democratic governance determine whether individuals perceive political participation as meaningful and worthwhile. Research consistently demonstrates that individuals with strong civic dispositions are more likely to hold positive political attitudes, while those with weak civic values often exhibit political cynicism, distrust, and disengagement (Niemi & Junn, 2015; Reichert & Print, 2019). These findings suggest that civic dispositions shape not only political understanding but also emotional and normative orientations toward political engagement. Political participation is commonly understood as the behavioural expression of civic orientations and political attitudes. It includes activities such as voting, community involvement, civic activism, and participation in political discussions and organisations. Contemporary perspectives emphasise that participation is increasingly driven by value-based motivations rather than solely by institutional opportunities or mobilisation efforts. Theocharis and van Deth (2018) argue that citizens are more likely to engage in political activities when participation is grounded in a sense of civic obligation and democratic commitment, highlighting the importance of civic dispositions in sustaining political engagement.

Empirical studies across democratic contexts provide strong evidence of the relationship between civic dispositions and political participation. Hoskins and Janmaat (2019) found that civic values such as tolerance, social responsibility, and democratic commitment significantly predict levels of political participation across European societies. Similarly, Dalton (2017) observed that citizens with strong civic dispositions are more likely to engage in participatory politics and support democratic norms, even in contexts characterised by political dissatisfaction. These findings demonstrate that civic dispositions serve as a stable foundation for democratic engagement across political environments. Education plays a central role in the development of civic dispositions. Schools function as formal agents of political socialization, transmitting civic norms and democratic values to learners. Civic Education, in particular, is designed to promote informed, responsible, and participatory citizenship. Research suggests that civic education programmes that emphasise democratic values, open classroom discussion, and participatory learning environments are effective in fostering civic dispositions and political engagement (Torney-Purta et al., 2015; Schulz et al., 2018).

Teachers are key actors in the civic socialization process. Beyond curriculum delivery, teachers model democratic values and shape classroom climates that influence learners' civic development. Civic Education teachers, due to their specialised role, are expected to demonstrate strong civic dispositions and to promote democratic engagement among students. Reichert and Print (2019) argue that teachers' civic orientations influence their instructional practices and the extent to which democratic values are meaningfully conveyed. Teachers who value democratic norms are more likely to encourage open dialogue, critical thinking, and civic participation.

Empirical evidence has consistently demonstrated the importance of civic values in shaping political behaviour. For example, Reichert and Print (2019) reported that civic learning experiences significantly predicted political engagement among secondary school students. Similarly, Schulz et al. (2023) found that civic attitudes and democratic values were positively associated with political participation across several democratic societies. Within Nigeria, studies have linked civic awareness and democratic values with increased political engagement; however, such studies have focused largely on students rather than teachers. Consequently, empirical evidence concerning Civic Education teachers remains limited.

Despite the recognised importance of teachers in civic education, empirical research on teachers' civic dispositions remains limited, particularly in developing democracies. Much of the existing literature has focused on students' civic knowledge and attitudes, often assuming that teachers inherently possess strong civic values. However, emerging evidence suggests that teachers' civic dispositions vary and are shaped by broader political and institutional contexts (Knowles et al., 2018). This variation has implications for the effectiveness of civic education and democratic socialization. In the African context, studies highlight persistent challenges related to political trust, democratic consolidation, and civic engagement.

Bratton and Gyimah-Boadi (2016) noted that weak political institutions and governance challenges can erode civic values and reduce citizens' willingness to participate in democratic processes. In Nigeria, Civic Education was reintroduced to promote democratic values and political participation, yet research reports mixed outcomes, including persistent political apathy despite increased civic awareness (Akinyemi & Adebayo, 2020). These findings suggest that strengthening civic dispositions, particularly among educators, is essential for fostering sustainable democratic participation. Examining civic dispositions as correlates of political attitudes and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State therefore addresses a critical empirical gap and contributes to understanding the value-based foundations of democratic engagement.

Theoretical Framework: Political Socialization Theory

This study is anchored in Political Socialization Theory, originally advanced by Almond and Verba (1963) and subsequently developed by other scholars. Political Socialization Theory explains how individuals acquire political values, norms, attitudes, and dispositions through interactions with social institutions such as family, school, peers, and the political system. The theory emphasises that democratic stability depends on the successful transmission of civic values that sustain political engagement across generations. Political Socialization Theory is particularly relevant to the study of civic dispositions because it highlights education as a key mechanism through which democratic norms and values are internalised. Schools are regarded as formal agents of political socialization, and teachers serve as influential actors in shaping learners' civic orientations. Through classroom interactions, instructional strategies, and personal conduct, teachers model civic values such as tolerance, participation, and respect for democratic institutions.

Within this theoretical framework, civic dispositions are viewed as outcomes of long-term socialization processes rather than as automatic products of cognitive learning. Political attitudes and participation are shaped by the extent to which individuals internalise democratic norms and develop a sense of civic responsibility. Individuals with positive civic dispositions are therefore more likely to demonstrate constructive political attitudes and engage actively in political processes. Applying Political Socialization Theory to Civic Education teachers allows for an examination of their dual role as recipients and transmitters of civic values. Teachers' civic dispositions reflect their own socialization experiences and influence how democratic values are communicated to students. When teachers possess strong civic dispositions, they are more likely to foster participatory classroom environments and encourage democratic engagement.

The theory is appropriate for this study because it provides a coherent explanation of the relationship between civic dispositions, political attitudes, and political participation within an educational context. It explains how internalised civic values influence political behaviour and highlights the critical role of teachers in sustaining democratic culture. By grounding the study in Political Socialization Theory, this research offers a solid conceptual foundation for examining civic dispositions among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Research Method

This study adopted a descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationships among civic dispositions, political attitudes, and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the investigation of the nature and strength of associations among variables without any form of manipulation. The target population comprised all Civic Education teachers across five hundred and eleven (511) public secondary schools in Ogun State. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed to ensure adequate representation. In the first stage, selected local government areas were stratified based on geographical distribution. This was followed by the random selection of schools within each stratum, after which Civic Education teachers were proportionately sampled from the selected schools. A total of 330 teachers participated in the study, providing sufficient data for statistical analysis. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled 'Civic Disposition as a correlate of political attitude and participation questionnaire (CDPAPQ)' divided into four sections: demographic characteristics, civic dispositions, political attitudes, and political participation. The civic disposition scale measured respondents' commitment to democratic values, civic responsibility, and political tolerance. The political attitudes scale assessed variables such as political interest, trust in political institutions, and political efficacy, while the political participation scale measured involvement in voting, civic engagement, and related activities. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in civic education and educational measurement. A pilot study involving 30 teachers outside the study sample yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87, indicating high reliability. Data were analysed using

descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance. Ethical standards, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed.

Results

Research Question 1 What is the extent of the relationship between Civic Education teachers' Civic Disposition and their political attitude?

Table 1: Relationship Between Civic Education Teachers' Civic Disposition and Political Attitude

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	r	Sig.	Remark
Civic disposition	330	45.18	6.475	328	.553**	.000	Significant
Political attitude	330	17.08	2.419				

Note. S.D = Standard deviation, N = Number of respondents; degree of freedom (df) = 328. Decision rule: *.= p < .05, **.= p < .01.

The results in Table 1 revealed that there is a significant positive Civic Education teachers' civic disposition and their political attitude in Ogun State (r = .553, p < .05).

Research Question 2: What is the extent of the relationship between Civic Education teachers' Civic Disposition and their political participation

Table 2: Relationship Between Civic Education Teachers' Civic Disposition and Political Participation

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Df	R	Sig.	Remark
Civic disposition	330	45.18	6.475	328	.816**	.000	Significant
Political participation	330	22.41	4.065				

Note. S.D = Standard deviation, N = Number of respondents; degree of freedom (df) = 328. Decision rule: *.= p < .05, **.= p < .01.

The results in Table 4.8.1 revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between Civic Education teachers' civic disposition and their political participation in Ogun State (r = .816, p < .05).

Discussion of Findings

Research question one revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between civic disposition and political attitudes among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State. This finding suggests that teachers who possess stronger civic values, democratic orientations, political tolerance, and a sense of civic responsibility are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards political institutions and democratic processes. The finding is consistent with Reichert and Print (2019), who reported that civic learning experiences significantly contribute to the development of positive political attitudes and democratic engagement among citizens. It also supports the position of Hoskins and Janmaat (2019), who argued that civic dispositions serve as important predictors of political engagement and

citizenship behaviour. Furthermore, Schulz et al. (2023) found that individuals who demonstrate strong civic values and democratic commitments are more likely to develop favourable political attitudes and support democratic institutions. The finding therefore reinforces the view that civic dispositions are important foundations for the development of positive political orientations and democratic engagement among Civic Education teachers.

Research question two examined the relationship between civic dispositions and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between civic dispositions and political participation, indicating that teachers who exhibit stronger civic values and democratic orientations are more likely to engage actively in political processes. This suggests that civic dispositions play a crucial role in shaping participatory behaviour beyond mere political awareness or institutional knowledge. This finding aligns with the propositions of Political Socialization Theory, which emphasises that political behaviour is largely influenced by internalised values and normative commitments developed through socialization processes. Teachers who demonstrate a strong sense of civic responsibility, political tolerance, and commitment to democratic principles are more inclined to participate in activities such as voting, civic engagement, and political discussions. The result is consistent with earlier empirical studies which reported that civic values and democratic orientations significantly predict political participation across different democratic contexts (Hoskins & Janmaat, 2019; Schulz et al., 2023).

However, the finding also suggests that the presence of civic dispositions does not automatically translate into high levels of participation for all teachers, as broader political and institutional factors may shape participation decisions. Nonetheless, the result underscores the importance of strengthening civic dispositions among Civic Education teachers as a means of promoting sustainable democratic participation.

Conclusion

This study examined civic dispositions as correlates of political attitudes and political participation among Civic Education teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings provide empirical evidence that civic dispositions play a significant role in shaping teachers' political orientations and participatory behaviour. Civic Education teachers who possess strong democratic values, political tolerance, and a sense of civic responsibility tend to exhibit more positive political attitudes and greater willingness to participate in political activities. The study demonstrates that civic dispositions constitute a critical foundation for democratic engagement. While civic knowledge and instructional competence are essential, democratic participation ultimately depends on internalised civic values that motivate individuals to engage constructively in political processes. The findings highlight the importance of viewing Civic Education teachers not only as transmitters of curriculum content but also as citizens whose civic orientations influence both their professional practice and their political behaviour.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings support Political Socialization Theory by illustrating how internalised civic values are linked to political attitudes and participation.

Teachers' civic dispositions reflect broader socialization experiences and shape their engagement with democratic institutions. This underscores the need for sustained civic development beyond formal curriculum implementation. Practically, the study has implications for teacher education, civic education policy, and democratic development initiatives. Strengthening civic dispositions among Civic Education teachers can enhance their effectiveness as role models of democratic citizenship and contribute to improved political participation. Addressing civic values within teacher training programmes and professional development initiatives is therefore essential for consolidating democratic culture.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature on civic education, political attitudes, and political participation by focusing on an underexplored group Civic Education teachers. However, the study recognises that political participation is influenced not only by civic dispositions but also by broader challenges such as political distrust, electoral apathy, socioeconomic constraints, and perceptions of government responsiveness. Despite these challenges, the findings highlight the central role of civic dispositions in promoting democratic engagement. The study therefore provides a basis for policy interventions aimed at strengthening civic culture, democratic values, and participatory governance in Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Civic dispositions should be explicitly integrated into Civic Education teacher training programmes.
2. Regular professional development should focus on democratic values, political tolerance, and civic responsibility.
3. Education authorities should promote participatory school environments that model democratic practices.
4. Civic Education curricula should emphasise value-based learning alongside cognitive content.
5. Government and civil society organisations should support civic engagement initiatives that encourage Civic Education teachers' active participation in democratic and community affairs
6. Further research should examine contextual factors influencing teachers' civic dispositions and participation

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