



Citizenship Values and their Implementation: a Comparative Study of School in Ghana and Indonesia

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Abstract

Citizenship education plays a vital role in shaping responsible, ethical, and socially active individuals in diverse societies. This study examines how citizenship values are understood, taught, and practiced in schools in Ghana and Indonesia. The purpose is to compare the cultural foundations, pedagogical approaches, and institutional practices that influence civic learning in both contexts. A qualitative descriptive-comparative design was employed, involving 50 participants (25 from each country), including students and teachers. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, open-ended questionnaires, classroom observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis. The findings reveal that citizenship values in Ghana emphasize respect, discipline, responsibility, and obedience, reflecting communal and hierarchical traditions, while in Indonesia they focus on tolerance, harmony, cooperation, and unity, rooted in Pancasila principles. Teaching approaches also differ, with Ghana favoring direct moral instruction and Indonesia emphasizing cooperative learning and structured routines. Despite these differences, both countries share challenges such as peer influence, limited parental support, and digital distractions. The study concludes that effective citizenship education depends on the alignment of cultural identity, school practices, and teacher role modeling, supported by strong collaboration among schools, families, and communities.

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INTRODUCTION

The education of citizens establishes an important ground upon which responsible, ethical, and socially active individual can be raised to play a significant role in national progress and world peace. Citizenship education is becoming more essential in modern societies characterized by the growing complexity of cultural diversity and participation in democracy as well as the social change process, as learners acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to cope with the civic life (Auh & Kim, 2024; Karatekin & Author, 2022; Warikandwa et al., 2023). This Schools are at the center of teaching important citizenship values through various subjects like Social Studies and Civic Education, and these subjects include respect, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, and environmental care. These ideals not only influence individual behavior but also group dispositions enhancing cohesion and democratic culture in society (Janmaat, 2020; Ocansey, 2021; Oti & Issaka, 2023).

Ghana and Indonesia, two culturally diverse and developing countries, have both made the education of citizenship one of their strategic nation-building pillars. In Indonesia, Pancasila is based on philosophy that encourages unity, multiculturalism, and moral uprightness (Lily, 2022; Pulhehe & Robandi, 2024).

The challenges that remain constant in schools in both countries include the lack of learning resources, haphazard parental engagement, peer influence, and the increasing influence of digital media on young people (Prasetiyo et al., 2023; Sangram, 2022). These differences provide significant issues regarding the role of cultural norms, institutional arrangements and classroom activity in influencing the application of citizenship values.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are exploring how students and teachers of Ghanaian and Indonesian schools understand the major values of citizenship.

To compare the teaching methods and classroom practices adopted in the two settings in an attempt to instill the values of citizenship. Also to

determine the school practices, institutional mechanisms that facilitate the practices of citizenship values. Furthermore To identify the similarities and differences between the interpretation and practice of the citizenship values in both countries.

Significance of the Study

This study gives contributions to theory and practice in a number of ways. **First**, it can offer comparative information that can assist educators and policymakers to improve the programs of civic and moral education in order to be more consistent with the cultural realities and global citizenship values. **Second**, the research emphasizes the best strategies like value-based routines, teacher modelling, and community participation that can be used to guide the changes in the school culture and implementation of the school curriculum. **Third**, the findings can provide evidence-based suggestions that would improve teacher preparation, family engagement, and learning resources since the two nations have identified the challenges. **Lastly**, the study will add to the academic discourse on how culture influences civic values, thus providing a wider understanding of the concept of citizenship education in the world.

Theories of Citizenship and Citizenship Education; The provision of knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills essential to them to be able to engage in civic life and contribute to the welfare of society is known as citizenship education (Hunduma, 2024; May, 2024), reference from UNESCO, (2023). In its essence, it encourages democracy, social responsibility and ethics. According to scholars, citizenship is defined as civic identity, civic knowledge, civic virtues, and civic engagement (Asante, 1970; Yazdizadeh, 2021). The schools are critical in equipping students to be active and responsible citizens who are capable of functioning in various and fast changing societies.

An important part of the process is citizenship values such as respect, honesty, cooperation, tolerance, responsibility, and environmental stewardship (Ajiboye et al., 2007) cited from NCSS, (2013). These values foster the growth of the individual character, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the multicultural

societies. Curriculum design, teacher competence, school culture and socio-cultural context within which learning takes place are very important to citizenship education (Schugurensky, 2008; Version, 2015).

Theoretical Framework: This paper will rely on three theories:

1. Social Learning Theory

According to the Social Learning Theory, Bandura argues that people acquire values by observing, imitating and modeling (Adel, 2025; Bandura, 1977). Actions of the teachers, school culture, and interpersonal relations are therefore major factors that determine civic values.

2. Cultural Theory

Cultural Theory (Cardinal & Loughmiller-cardinal, 2025), describes how people conform to societal expectations in order to determine their values and expectations of the civil society. The expression of citizenship varies with the cultural beliefs, traditions and national ideologies.

3. Civic Education Theory

According to the Civic Education Theory, the process of creating responsible citizens incorporates the cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitudes), and behavioral (actions) aspects (Branch et al., 2024), in NCSS, (2013) research.

Such frameworks give a more in-depth insight into Ghanaian and Indonesian differences in approaches.

Education of Citizenship in Ghana; Ghana citizenship education is based on the 1992 Constitution and cultural beliefs that promote respect of authority, collective existence, obedience, and uprightness (Adzika, 2024), Ghana Constitution, (1992). These values are mainly taught by means of Social Studies in the basic and secondary levels. The curriculum will generate responsible, patriotic citizens who will contribute to the development of the country and social harmony (Adzika, 2024; Muhsin et al., 2024).

Education about Citizenship in Indonesia; Pancasila, the national ideology of Indonesia that focuses on unity, multicultural harmony,

democracy, and social justice, has a very strong influence on citizenship education (Kabir et al., 2024; Rizki Fitria Ritonga; Panggih Nur Adi2, 2022), cited from Indonesia Constitution, (1945). These values are combined in Social Studies (IPS) and Civic Education (PPKn) to foster the values of national character, tolerance and cooperation.

Comparison, Ghana and Indonesia; Shared Themes: Both countries emphasize:

Ethical standards (courtesy, accountability, dignity). The teachers as role models.

Schools as the means to promote civic identity through the use of school rituals.

Civic learning by the community.

Values in the curriculum of Social Studies/Civic Education.

Table 1. Key Differences

Aspect	Ghana	Indonesia
Cultural Foundation	Communal traditions, respect for authority	Pancasila, multicultural harmony
Teaching Style	More teacher-centered moral instruction	More structured routines and cooperative learning
Value Expression	Obedience, discipline, respect	Tolerance, harmony, unity
School Practices	Flexible teacher-driven routines	Formalized national routines (Piket kelas, flag ceremonies)

These differences reflect how cultural and national ideologies shape the interpretation and implementation of citizenship values (Auh & Kim, 2025; Touseef et al., 2023).

Formulation of the Literature and Research Gap;

In the literature, it can be seen that Ghana and Indonesia assign high priority to the values of citizenship but the methods of application are different. The research that has been done, has concentrated on teacher roles, school culture and effects of national ideologies but there is a lack of comparative studies on the simultaneous

interpretation, teaching and application of citizenship values in both nations.

This gap provides the rationale of a comparative study which:

1. Considers teacher opinion.
2. Examines the knowledge of students.
3. Notices classroom activities in a real world.
4. Studies the effects of culture.

The current research will fill this gap by providing a comprehensive and comparative study that will contribute to the existing worldwide knowledge on culturally responsive citizenship education.

METHOD

Research design

The research design employed in this paper was a qualitative, descriptive-comparative design aimed at investigating the way in which citizenship values are comprehended, taught and applied in Ghana and Indonesia schools. We selected qualitative methodology since it enables an in-depth examination of the perceptions, classroom activities and contextual factors influencing the participants in natural environments (Ioannis Katsantonis; Ros McLellan, 2023) cited in (Creswell, 2013). Comparative analysis enabled us to establish that there is similarity and differences between the two national settings.

Locations and research subjects; In Ghana, the sample included five teachers in Social Studies/SSS and JHS (one teacher in five schools) and twenty-five students who were selected in JHS and SHS classes. The Ghanaian schools were: Tamale Senior High School (Northern Region), Akropong Salem Presby Junior High School (Eastern Region), Larteh Anglican Junior High School (Eastern Region), Accra High School (Greater Accra) and Kumasi Anglican Senior High School (Ashanti).

The sample population in Indonesia consisted of five PKKn teachers (one teacher per 5 schools) and twenty-five students selected based on SMP and SMA classes. The Indonesian schools were: SMA 1 Semarang, SMA Semesta, SMA Kolase Loyola, SMP 1 Ksatrian and SMP 22 Semarang.

The sample size of the study was 50 persons 25 Ghanaian and 25 Indonesian. The respondent

group of each country comprised both teachers and students so that there are various ways of viewing the teaching and the implementation of values in schools.

Primary data

Semi-structured interviews: Interviewed with teachers and school administrators in order to receive information about the implementation of curriculum, teaching strategies, and institutional support of citizenship values in detail and in context. The interviews took 25-45 minutes and were recorded with prior consent.

Questionnaires (open ended): Students and teachers were provided with short, manual, open-ended questionnaires in which they were to provide personal perceptions and experiences regarding the value of citizenship and common classroom practices. The questionnaires were in paper format and filled by the participants at the venue.

Observations in the classroom: non-participant the classroom observations were based on classroom routine, teacher modeling, student interactions, assemblies, and any practices that reinforced values (e.g., flag ceremonies, piket kelas). Detailed field notes were made and a structured observation checklist was used to record the observations.

Secondary data

Primary data was put into context by going through relevant documents and policy materials. They were national curriculum documents (e.g.: Social Studies / PPKn syllabi), school rules, lesson plans, and local monitoring reports. The secondary sources were used to give institutional background and supportive facts of perceived practice and interview assertions (NaCCA, 2023; Subkhan & Johan, 2022).

Instruments

The following were the instruments used: Interview guide, Open-ended questionnaire and Observation checklist. All the instruments were written and completed manually (paper and pen). It did not utilize any computer-based data collection and analysis program.

Data collection procedures

The data collection process in every country took place in three stages:

Documents review (secondary data): National and school-related documents were gathered and analyzed in order to create interview and observation guides.

Fieldwork-primary data collection: The researchers went to the selected schools and collected primary data using questionnaires, interviews, and observed classes and assemblies.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data hand in hand, with preference to the six steps of Braun and Clarke: familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme search, theme review, theme definition, and theme naming as well as generating report (Braun, 2006).

All the work of analysis (coding, thematic grouping, triangulation) was carried out manually; no computer-assisted qualitative data analysis systems (CAQDAS) were used.

Thematic analysis required reference: (Braun, 2006). Reliability and moral aspects. In order to guarantee credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

The fieldwork was conducted based on an ethical approval given by the corresponding institutional body. The participation was voluntary, and informed consent in participation was signed by all adult participants. In the case of student participants who were underage, both parental/guardian approval and student consent were obtained. Pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity and remove any identifying information in reports, and confidence was ensured by (Shenton, 2004) Reference from Nowell et al., (2017).

Limitations

The qualitative study design and purposive sampling restrict the inference of the results to the non-sampled schools. The sample size 25 respondents each country is suitable to conduct a qualitative in-depth inquiry, but not to consider statistical inference.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section reveals results of interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and classroom observations of students and teachers in Ghana (n=25) and in Indonesia (n=25) are given. Findings are presented in the form of large themes, each of

which is represented by conversational-style snippets of the voices of participants in both nations.

Rationalization of Citizenship Values.

Ghana

Teacher Ghana: *In our case, citizenship implies respecting authority, acting accordingly, and giving back to the school and the community. A citizen should be well-disciplined.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by students:

Student Ghana: *We are socialized that we should respect teachers, senior people, and school rules. That is a sign that you are a good citizen.*

Indonesia

Teacher Indonesia: *Citizenship implies coexistence, tolerance of diversity and observing the Pancasila in everyday life.*

Harmony and cooperation were stressed by students:

Student Indonesia: *We are always taught how to cooperate, help our friends and be polite. That is how it is to be a good Indonesian citizen.*

One of my fellow-pupils of another school contributed:

Comparison

Ghanaian participants also focus on respect and discipline, whereas Indonesian participants focus on tolerance and harmony- there is a difference in civic interpretation between the two cultures.

Citizenship Values teaching approaches.

Ghana

Teacher Ghana: *I refer to stories and real-life examples of good behavior. Just now and then we stop the lesson just to discuss manners or discipline.*

Students confirm this:

Student Ghana: *We are addressed about character and conduct by our teachers. They are quick to correct us whenever we go wrong.*

Indonesia

Teacher Indonesia: *The combination of values is achieved in group work, piket*

kelas, and Pancasila discussions. Students study responsibility in day-to-day activities.

Students support this:

Student Indonesia: *The cleaning of the class is done in groups each day. That is what teaches us to cooperate and be responsible.*

Comparison

The Ghanaian teachers tend to be more directive and corrective on behavior whereas the Indonesian teachers are more structured and cooperative in learning.

School Instructions in Favor of Citizenship values.

Ghana

School rituals include assemblies, inspections and leaders of prefects:

Teacher Ghana: *“The values are strengthened in our morning assembly. Students are the ones who pray, deliver moral messages and educate on discipline”.*

Students point out leadership activities:

Student Ghana: *“Prefects assist in the preservation of order and in educating us on the responsibility aspect”.*

Indonesia

School culture incorporates formalized school routines in Indonesian school:

Teacher Indonesia: *“All the classes do piket kelas. Students are aware of their daily task, cleaning, setting of chairs, assisting teachers”.*

Students add:

Student Indonesia: *“We hoist the flag during Mondays and sing national songs. It makes us feel united.”*

Comparison

The Ghanaian practices are more informal and teacher centered whereas the Indonesian practices are categorical and conforming to national standards.

Practical Demonstration of Citizenship Values of Students.

Ghana

Students are punctual, responsible and respectful:

Student Ghana: *We meet teachers, assist in classroom activities and do not fight.*

Teacher Ghana: *There are also those students who are honest and responsible particularly in the case of reflecting items.*

Indonesia

The collaborative and tolerant approach is valued by the Indonesian students:

Student Indonesia: *We assist one another when we have to do a group work and also, we tolerate other religions.*

Teacher Indonesia: *Students are tolerant of celebrations and discussions. They are calm and respectful.”*

Overview of Major Themes of Dialogues.

In both countries, respondents will show:

1. Good sense of citizenship meaning;
- (2) Engagement in value -based school activities;
- (3) One of the significant influences is on teacher modeling;
- (4) Interpretation of citizenship based on cultural values; and
- (5) Media and peer pressure problems.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that citizenship values are not universal abstractions but are instead products of specific national imaginaries defined by cultural foundations, institutional environments, and pedagogical strategies (Özdemirci, 2022). In Ghana, citizenship is primarily interpreted through the virtues of respect, discipline, and obedience, which are rooted in communal social structures and hierarchical norms that prioritize deference to authority (Osei-tutu et al., 2023) referenced from (Mbiti, 1969; Geertz, 1963). Conversely, Indonesian participants define citizenship through the lenses of tolerance and *gotong-royong* or mutual cooperation. This conceptualization reflects the ethical framework of *Pancasila*, which seeks to unify a diverse population through social harmony (Rahman, 2021).

The divergence in teaching methods further mirrors these national values, as Ghanaian educators focus on direct moral guidance and corrective intervention in line with traditional preferences for

teacher-led authority (Karikari et al., 2022; Kofinti, 2025). Indonesian schools, however, utilize structured communal routines such as *piket kelas* to embed responsibility into daily life (Rachmadtullah et al., 2020), which aligns with constructivist theories suggesting that collaborative engagement is the most effective vehicle for acquiring civic values (NaCCA, 2023). These values are reinforced by institutional rituals, including Ghanaian morning assemblies and Indonesian flag-raising ceremonies, which provide the uniformity required to instill national identity (Ma'arif et al., 2024).

Despite these robust frameworks, both nations face challenges from peer pressure and digital distractions, reflecting a global trend where youth socialization is increasingly mediated by online content (Amadu, 2024). In Ghana, a disconnect between school values and the behavior of adults in the wider community suggests that civic education is weakened when not supported by home and community settings (Adzika, 2024). Similarly, Indonesian educators noted that digital media can impede the spirit of collaboration (Nugroho, 2025). These findings emphasize that effective citizenship education requires a synchronized effort between schools, families, and digital literacy initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that citizenship education in both Ghana and Indonesia is strongly shaped by cultural values, educational practices, and school environments, although its interpretation and implementation differ across contexts. In Ghana, citizenship emphasizes respect, discipline, responsibility, and obedience, reinforced through teacher-directed instruction and school routines, while in Indonesia it highlights tolerance, cooperation, harmony, and unity, supported by structured routines and collaborative learning grounded in Pancasila. Despite these differences, both systems demonstrate a shared commitment to developing responsible and ethical citizens, though they face common challenges such as peer influence, limited parental involvement, and the impact of digital media. Overall, the findings suggest that effective citizenship education requires alignment between cultural identity, school practices, and teacher role modeling, as well as

stronger collaboration among schools, families, and communities to sustain civic values in a rapidly changing social environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance citizenship education in Ghana and Indonesia, several strategic actions are recommended. First, teacher training programs should be improved to ensure that educators can effectively apply culturally responsive pedagogies and develop mechanisms to counter negative digital influences among students. Curriculum developers and school administrators should also ensure that citizenship values are more deeply enshrined in lesson plans through the introduction of value-based outcomes and project-based learning. This shift toward application-based scenarios will allow students to practice civic virtues in more context-driven environments.

Furthermore, both nations should continue to strengthen school rituals that support civic behavior, such as the Ghanaian prefect system and Indonesian cooperative duties, to reinforce unity and discipline. It is also critical to foster closer relationships between schools, parents, and community members to ensure that the values taught in the classroom are consistently modeled at home. Additionally, digital citizenship should be formally incorporated into Social Studies and Civic Education to mitigate the impact of inappropriate online behavior. Finally, further research is needed to explore the influence of school leadership and rural-urban disparities on citizenship practices to ensure the long-term sustainability of these educational goals.

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