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## FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGES OF EDUCATION TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE TEACHING OF VALUES IN GHANA

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### ABSTRACT

Teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values have often been cited as being challenging. This research work was undertaken to investigate into teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values in RME in the colleges of education in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study used sequential explanatory mixed method survey and the sample size of 344 respondents selected, made up of students and tutors from the chosen colleges of education using-stage sampling technique. Questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect data. Deductive and inductive data analyses and interpretation were used in discussing the responses from the respondents. Major findings of the study relating to the factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values in RME include: formal education, religious affiliation, past experiences, age, emotion, intelligence, socioeconomic status, personality mood, agenda and ethnicity. The conclusion was that formal education, past experiences and religion are the major factors influencing teachers' attitudes. It was recommended that stakeholders of education take note of these factors and tailor college courses syllabi, religious activities and students' experiences to contribute positively towards teachers' attitude formation in teaching of values.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the study

Most definitions on quality education are characterized by two elements: the first identifies learners' cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education systems. Accordingly, the success with which systems achieve this is one indicator of their quality. The second emphasizes education's role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development. It is with the second element of quality education set up by Education for All movement that the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ghana Educational Service (GES) have as part of the Ghanaian school curriculum, included the subject of Religious and Moral Education. The Ministry of Education has stated that its rationale for teaching Religious and Moral Education is because Religious and Moral Education is a vital and an indispensable part of human growth and development in the Ghanaian society.

The subject reinforces the informal religious and moral training young people acquire from their homes and communities, since many homes and communities may be unable to provide this type of training adequately. It therefore becomes the responsibility of schools to provide this type of education in order to help students and pupils to become morally responsible and patriotic citizens (Ministry of Education, 2008). It is in this light that Roosevelt opines: "To educate a person in mind, and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society" (Roosevelt as cited in Hawkes, 2009). This quote by the former United State of America (USA), President, Theodore Roosevelt, illustrates in brief the significance of teaching of values in the formal education system. What the quotation seems to imply is that educating a person to acquire knowledge and skills only without the teaching of morality will inadvertently create an individual who would cause problems to society. In other words, the teaching of skills by educators must include what constitutes the ethical and moral behaviour that must guide the use of those skills. Furthermore, the development and progress of a society is in part dependent on the moral fibre of the society and its individuals. It is therefore, necessary that the teaching of values should be considered as an integral part of the formal

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education system to help build individuals in society. It is for this reason that character and values education are regarded as the first and foremost goal of education by some educationists including Power (1997) and Dewey (1934). Author such as Ayers (1993) regard education as a moral activity. In 'Divine Command Theory of Ethics', Birsch (2002) asserts that the greatest and universally acceptable pool of values is religion as source of moral values. Other religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism provide rules and guidelines to living and solving interpersonal-relationship/social problems. Perrin, (2000) found a positive relationship between the practice of honesty and religion. Strizenec (2000) asserts that there is a relationship between possessing religious knowledge and the capacity to cope with stressful situations confidently. These are examples that support the relationship of religion with morality and provide the basis for the study of religion and morality. In Ghana, Religious and Moral Education is taught at the Colleges and Senior/Junior High School levels as a means of fostering religious understanding and coexistence, and teaching morals and ethical values to the youth. Global and local trends indicate that the formation of values in the youth is increasingly being influenced by teachers' attitudes and modern technological advances, political, social and economic circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Singh, 2004). Teachers and parents alike have become downcast about the overwhelming influence of the media in imparting values to the youth.

The Boston University School of Education in (2002) indicated that though values or character education may not be a priority or be emphasized much, it appears to be an unavoidable element which schools need to consider for future inclusion. This is because there are many societal changes that teenage students have encountered that have impacted them in several areas which include manners, language, entertainment, and sexual habits with many of these impacts being negative. This may be due to the proliferation of vast amounts of information because of the internet and media, causing negative impacts on the more impressionable minds; thus promoting promiscuity and lax attitudes toward good character development. It is therefore required that the youth have something robust to anchor upon (Singh, 2004). Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, which measures the perceived levels of public sector corruption in various countries ranked Ghana as 64<sup>th</sup>, 63<sup>rd</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> in the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively, showing very little improvement in Ghana's 64<sup>th</sup> ranking a decade earlier. Recently in Ghana, there was a release, exposing over one hundred and eighty alleged corrupt judges and judicial staff (Anas, 2015). Also, there was a news item about a doctor who endangered the lives of his patients by sodomizing them (The Daily Guide, 22/10/2014). These are just examples of incidents of corruption and the lack of ethics demonstrated by some skilled professionals which have seemingly become normal in Ghana. In his keynote address at the sixth congregation (2015) of the Pentecost University College which had the theme: "Values education: the answer to a corruption-free society", the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast at the time advocated the introduction of values education in the curricular of the different educational levels in Ghana as a means to battle corruption within the country. He stated that many other institutions and factors will influence and shape the development of our value system, but we all will agree that our schools, colleges, learning centres and institutions of higher learning have an extremely important role to play in

supporting the development of our value system and in establishing the generation of the ethical fibre of the society (Adinkrah, 2015). This clarion call implies that for the nation to be able to succeed in fighting against corruption, then its educational system at all levels should be geared towards values-education as a tool to eradicate corrupt practices. In other words, teaching of values at the nation's educational system should be the focal point, particularly, in the colleges of education in the country where teachers are being trained to teach at the first cycle institutions in the country. Teachers' role in values-education is very importance. Below is a letter a school head wrote to a newly enrolled teacher in his school.

*"Dear Teacher,  
I am a survivor of a concentration camp.  
My eyes saw what no man should witness:  
Gas chambers built by learned engineers.  
Children poisoned by educated physicians.  
Infants killed by trained nurses.  
Women and babies shot and burned by high school and college graduates.  
So, I am suspicious of education.  
My request is: Help your students become human.  
Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmanns.  
Reading, writing, arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human."*

The letter quoted above was penned by a school principal in Boston in the United States of America who handed a copy to each new teacher taken into the school. The sentiments expressed therein agreed with those expressed in the earlier quote by Ex-President Roosevelt concerning the need for value education in the education of society's youth, but if a society is to be concerned with the values education of its youth it must address value education within colleges of education. Colleges of Education produce teachers who teach at the first cycle schools where values education is very crucial. It has become increasingly clear that Ghana's educational system must embrace new approaches and paradigms which would inculcate value codes such as honesty, integrity and faithfulness in their training (Opoku Onyina quoted in Abbey, 2014). If a society is going to prevail in its fight against corruption and moral decadence, then teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values for practice in the colleges of education must be explored together with its implications on guidance and counselling, for the quality of tomorrow will be no better than the quality of our teacher force (Levine, 2006). It is the intention of the researcher to investigate the factors influencing teachers' attitudes positively or negatively towards the teaching of values in RME as well as consider the approaches to teaching values.

### **Research question**

What factors are likely to affect teachers' attitudes to teaching of values in RME in Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region?

### **Statement of the problem**

In Ghana, much like the larger global community, the teaching of values in education seems neglected with more emphasis being laid on the teaching of skills and acquisition of

knowledge in schools and colleges within the country. This is seen even in the amount of studies into values education within the context of the Ghanaian educational system. This has led to the grooming of skilled but seemingly corrupt professionals with the skill set necessary to both achieve their corrupt desires and escape justice. For that matter, Religious and Moral Education was introduced into the schools' curriculum in Ghana by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and made compulsory for all students since 1999. Decades on, it is expected that the nation would have realized some of the benefits of the purpose for which it was introduced. It is expected that through the teaching of religious and moral education, the nation should produce responsible citizens having the necessary values needed to drive the development of the nation. This implies that most of the students that have passed through the schools system would have had their moral and ethical make-up developed sufficiently enough to enable them participate actively in the nation's development. If RME was introduced to imbue in people values since 1999 and people still put up immoral behaviour what have been done or what interventions have been introduced to address this menace? What has been the success or failure of the interventions? Thus, the issue is that the attitudes of RME teachers/tutors in Colleges of Education towards the teaching of the course seem not to impact on students' values in life hence the need to explore the factors influencing on the teaching of values: the case of four Presbyterian Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

### Literature Review

Attitude research continues to occupy a central position in social psychology. Considerable work has been done investigating the variables influencing attitudes formation and change and the effects of attitudes on individual behaviour. In other words, the scope of attitude research is simply enormous, and the significance of the outcomes for theory and practice cannot be denied for almost all aspects of human life. School and university education lays considerable emphasis on skills of recall, understanding and thinking. Attitudes are often largely ignored. Although some school curricula do specify some attitude aims. In science education in Scotland as far back as 1967, Curriculum Paper 7 specified attitudinal outcomes while, more recently, the Scottish 5-14 Guidelines in Science (2000) offered some aims: "so that pupils develop informed values and attitudes towards the environment through relating their learning to the real world and themselves." However, the references are general and vague and offer teachers little guidance about how attitudes can be developed. In general, the emphasis in most school curricula is about the knowledge and skills to be developed and this is reflected in the assessments used. In a sense this is almost inevitable: part of the reason for this is the difficulty in defining what an attitude is and partly because attitude measurement is a complex area. However, while the assessment of attitudes remains problematic, it is difficult to bring them into any assessment system in a way which is fair to all. Thinking of science, many years ago Rowe (2004, pp.15) noted that, "A student's attitudes towards science may well be more important than his understanding of science, since his attitudes determine how he will use his knowledge." This perception may well be important in many subject areas in the curriculum. Much of what is learned at school is later largely forgotten. However, attitudes towards learning, specific subjects or specific teachers can remain very powerful influences in later life.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design adopted for the study was sequential explanatory mixed method approach. The population consisted of all tutors and students of four Presbyterian Colleges of Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The sampled size made up of 344 respondents (8 tutors and 336 students) purposely choosing through simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire and semi structured interview guide were used to collect data from the students and tutors respectively for the study. The Cronbach Co-efficient calculation was 0.92. Data collected were analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## RESULTS

**Data analysis:** The data for the study were analysed through the computation of frequencies and percentages. In the course of the analyses, the responses were more tilted in favour of the majority.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the students' data were tabulated. The results of the tutors' data were used to support the students' data during the analysis and discussion. Table 1 presents the responses of the students on how factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the teaching values.

**Table 1. Factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values**

Statement: Attitudes influenced by	SA	A	SD	D	NA
Education	29.1%	55.3%	5.0%	10.4%	0.2%
Religious affiliation	33.4%	50.6%	5.0%	10.6%	0.4%
Past experiences	23.0%	50.0%	4.1%	21.1%	1.8%
Personality mood	21.1%	48.4%	7.5%	21.1%	1.9%
Intelligence	19.5%	49.5%	5.1%	25.7%	0.3%
Emotion	23.8%	44.0%	10.8%	20.4%	0.9%
Socioeconomic status	16.6%	42.6%	10.3%	27.9%	2.5%
Gender	13.3%	33.7%	18.3%	34.1%	0.6%
Ethnicity	23.7%	21.0%	9.8%	44.2%	1.3%
Age	13.6%	32.0%	13.3%	38.7%	2.5%

Source: Field Data, July 2016

From Table 1, 55.3% agreed that attitudes influenced by education formed majority among the factors. This was followed by 29.1% strongly agreed, 10.4% disagreed, 5.0% strongly disagreed and 0.2% said not applicable. Similarly, six (6) out of the eight (8) interviewees confirmed that education as a factor has influence on attitude formation. Some of the responses of the interviewees are that:

*For me, education plays a very important role insofar as attitude formation is concerned, in the sense that education aims at bringing permanent change of behaviour in students. It is through education that attitudes are formed through the structure of the curriculum and the climate of the college. By the curriculum and climate of the college, I mean how the contents of the syllabi and relationships that exist among the members of the college community all come together to impact positively on the tutors and students' attitudes formation. [PCE, tutor2]*

*...I think that education gives tutors and pre-service teachers a bigger platform to build their attitudes. By this I mean, times to do everything on campus have been planned and there are rules and regulations governing whatever one does with the aim of helping students to acquire good attitudes. For me, it was through education that I developed good attitudes in life. That does not mean that education makes everybody to develop good attitudes. On the other hand, the educational system has also contributed negatively in some tutors and students acquiring bad attitudes. But those people are of the minority. [APWCE, tutor1]*

It can be gathered from the two tutors' statements that education has high influence on attitude formation. Analytically, the result from the study might be attributed to the provision of intellectual knowledge; skills and behavioural changes education brings to students and teachers. In support of this finding, Namale (2015) in his work *Teacher-Parent towards Female Education in Sissala East District* argues that the teacher should liberate himself from any outside systems that may influence his or her attitude to renege on his/her professional responsibilities to assist both boys and girls in getting education. Nkansah (2000) also added that Socio-economic changes have made education necessary, not just for the purpose of providing income earning opportunities, but also to change the negative attitudes of people to be more acceptable in society. Likewise, a pastoral letter issued by the Catholic Church of the United States of America stated that an education that quickens the intelligence and enriches the mind with knowledge but fails to develop the will to direct it to the practice of virtues may produce scholars but it cannot produce good men (cited in Lickona, 1993). These writers' arguments buttress the point that education is very important and changes lives of people holistically, in areas such as social, economic, intellectual, attitudes among others for the better.

Notwithstanding the role education play in moulding people, education in its quest to providing tutors and pre-service teachers with skills, knowledge and behavioural changes sometimes appears to impact negatively on some students lives. This is owing to some teachers' and students negative behaviours, as well as unattractive college culture and climate. These factors might have contributed in influencing some students' attitude and values formation negatively in colleges of education. If education has the tendency to impact on students' attitude and values development positively or negatively then this calls for new ways of teaching values for students to fully benefit from the goals and purposes of education in the colleges of education. The next factor assumed to influence attitudes which was selected by the respondents was religious affiliation. From Table 3, 50.6% strongly agreed, 33.4% agreed, 10.6% strongly disagreed, 5.0% disagreed and 0.4 said not applicable in that order respectively. Likewise, all the eight (8) tutors interviewed contended that religious affiliation influence attitude formation because of the worshippers' respect for their object of worship. Some of the responses by interviewees are stated below:

*In actual fact, a person's religious affiliation has strong influence on his or her behaviour, for that matter, the person's attitudes formation. Every religion has its dos and don'ts, for fear of punishment and high respect the worshippers have for their object of worship, they adhere strictly by their rules.*

*Sometimes one can even tell by the conduct and behaviour of a group of people, their religious affiliation. [PCE, tutor1]*

*...For religious matters, people can even kill. It tells you how religion has influenced on its adherents. Some people even choose to obey their religious leaders than their parents and teachers. I think that the spiritual dimensions of religion makes religious people very careful of whatever they do because of the belief that their object of worship sees whatever they do everywhere. This, as it were has positive or negative influence on religious people's feelings and thoughts, and their behaviour patterns. [APWCE, tutor1]*

It can be inferred from the statements that religion plays major role in attitude formation. This result could be ascribed to the fact that every religion has its creed, cult and codes and its adherents in effect to put them into practice affect their attitudes. This finding confirms what (Awuah & Owusu, 2005) have argued that religious education aims at deepening and widening the individuals' understanding of religious and moral issues so as to help society as well as individuals to make constructive judgement about the different religions. They concluded that this aim has influenced positively on tutors and pre-service teachers attitude formation. Also, Hull (1984) in his comments on the function of religion said that the function of religion has an indispensable aspect in all human life. It is those higher beliefs or ultimate concerns which keep us all going and influence our attitudinal behaviours. However, the opposite might also be true that religious affiliations of some individuals have influenced them negatively to commit murder and all sorts of atrocities in the societies. This finding makes it imperative for colleges of education authorities to regulate and plan all religious activities that take place in colleges of education with the aim of inculcating in students good attitudes and values since some students can hide behind religion and misbehave. The next factor to be discussed is past experiences. The score from the Table 3 indicated that 50.0% agreeing. It was followed by 23.0% strongly agreeing, 21.1% strongly disagreeing, 4.1% disagreeing and 1.8% responded not applicable respectively. Correspondingly, during the interviews, a question posed to interviewees was: What are factors likely to influence teachers' attitudes to teaching of values in RME? One of the common themes running through the responses was that past experiences is one of the factors influencing teachers' attitude formation. Six (6) out of the eight (8) interviewees mentioned past experiences. Some statements are captured below.

*...I think that past experiences teach lessons to everyone. These lessons determine or shape one's thoughts and behaviour pattern. No wonder, it is popularly said that experience is the best teacher. This is true because whatever one goes through in the past whether good or bad if the person was to go through similar experience in the presence, the person would have learnt something from the previous experience and one would be in the position to apply the previous knowledge to the present situation. Therefore, one's past experiences, to some extent, determine one's outlook in the present. [KPCE tutor2]*

*In my opinion, the question demands yes and no answer. Yes, because one's past experiences, when one is able to learn lessons from them, serve as a teacher or guiding principles which in effect refine one's character or help one to develop good attitudes. On the contrary, no, because*

one's past experiences can also destroy one's good attitudes formation. This is possible when a person continues to dwell in the past instead of learning his or her lessons from the past and move on. In this instance, the past experience did not teach the person any lesson but rather destroys the person's feelings and thoughts. [PCE, tutor2]

This finding could be interpreted to mean that past experiences is one of the factors influencing attitude formation. Rationally, the respondents might have come to accept the adage that experience is the best teacher. This finding confirms what Asiedu (2009) said, when he contends that attitude is the "advance man" of our true selves. Its roots are inward, based on past experiences, but its fruit is outward. It is our best friend or our worst enemy. It is more honest and more consistent than our words. It is a thing that either draws people to us or repels them. It is never content until it is expressed. Similarly, Adinkrah (2015) also opines that attitude is the librarian of our past, the speaker of our present, and the prophet of our future. Yet, one's attitude is within one's control? In as much as one's past experiences have influence on one's attitudes, the attitudinal change in the individual could be negative or positive depending on the nature of the past experiences. This finding suggests that issues of attitudes have many factors influencing them and also have two sides – positive and negative. Teachers therefore need to take this factor seriously during teaching of values to start from known (past experiences) to the unknown because of the finding that students past experiences have influence on their attitude formation. Among the least factors affecting teachers' attitudes to teaching of values were ethnicity, age and gender in that order, according to the respondents. In summary, respondents were in agreement that attitudes are influenced by education, religious affiliation and past experiences in an order such as were 84.4%, 84.0% and 73.0% respectively.

### Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: the study established that there are ten factors that influence pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values in RME. The most dominant ones are formal education, religion and past experiences. Therefore, Formal Education, religion and past experiences play important role in influencing teachers' attitudes. While ethnicity, gender and age have less influence on pre-service teachers' attitudes formation.

### Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- The study has revealed that three major factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of values are education, religion and past experiences. It is recommended that stakeholders of education take note of these factors and tailor courses syllabi, religious activities and students' experiences to contribute positively towards teachers' attitude formation to teaching of values.
- The study has further revealed that factors that influence teachers' attitudes positively if not handle well could also influence teachers' attitudes negatively.

Stakeholders of Education are therefore encouraged to use educational inputs, religious activities and past experiences of pre-service teachers to influence teachers' attitudes positively since the same factors can affect teachers' attitudes negatively.

- Finally, religious affiliation or religion emerged as one of the factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards values education in the colleges. Therefore, leadership of the various religious bodies who have colleges of education through the Governing Councils, should assist to design and handle religious issues and programmes with the intension of promoting good attitudes and values formation in pre-service teachers. This should be so because religion as a factor has influence on teachers' values formation.

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