

# THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PROMOTING THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined the role of education in promoting the growth of democracy. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 556 Social Studies teachers in Delta State. 200 Social Studies teachers were the sample. The instrument of the study was the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using chi-square test at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the data analyzed, showed that there is a significant relationship between education and growth of democracy; there is significant relationship between education and political participation; there is significant relationship between education and democratic reform. Based on the findings it was recommended among others that education should be made compulsory at all levels of education so as to inculcate the right type of values and attitude for the growth and protection of democracy in Nigeria.*

Education and the mass-media are increasingly acknowledged as the best means of combating diverse societal problems. It is also widely credited as pre-eminent in fostering fundamental behaviours and skills of citizens essential for the democratization of societies. Nevertheless, many nations today remain overwhelmed with numerous undemocratic challenges, such as corruption, deterioration of ethical behaviours, lack of moral qualities, lack of good governance, negligence for the common good and the like (Taneja, 2000 & Sharma, 2006). These societal problems, according to many scholars, emanate from societal failure to incorporate and put emphasis on the necessary citizenship value in their educational system (Taneja, 2000 & Sharma, 2006). It is in cognizance of this situation that many nations at present embark on rethinking on the mission of their educational system, hence, the creation of good citizenship, citizens who are well informed, mindful of the common good, committed to democratic values and principles autonomous respectful and participant (Cotton, 2006) has become the prime concern of the education system and the mass-media of many countries (Sifuna, 2007).

That education plays a critical role in society is not in doubt. What scholars and media viewers have always argued about is the extent or scope of the effects of education and the media have upon society, and the people that inhabit it. Granted, the truism that education is critical to the wellbeing of democracy is based on the fact that literacy and information have become the vital and important resources that people and society need to operate.

Education is also considered a key factor in shaping how society operates by articulating ideas and influencing perceptions and attitudes. In democratic societies, education acts as the vehicle that reflects public opinion by highlighting public concerns and making people aware of state policies and important events and viewpoints. Sometimes education is a catalyst for change. It plays a facilitative role by reflecting the political order in which people are situated (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White, 2009). In other words, the expansion or development of democracy is based on an educated and informed public which acts on what it knows.

Daron, Simon, James and Pierre (2004) agreed that education presumably broadens men's outlooks, enables them to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains them from adhering to extremist and monistic doctrines, and increases their capacity to make rational electoral choices and concluded that if we cannot say that a high level of education is a sufficient condition for democracy, the available evidence does suggest that it comes close to being a necessary condition. Recent empirical work of Barro (2009) and Adam Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi (2000), provides evidence consistent with this view. Glaeser, Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes and Shleifer (2004) went further to argue that differences in schooling are major causal factors, explaining not only differences in democracy but more generally in political institutions and they provided evidence consistent with this view.

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According to Chimutengwende (2006) democracy is a relative concept and a permanent movement in all generations and societies. It is unlikely to be completely absent or perfectly manifested in any society. In practice, there are usually powerful forces for and against it. Whatever stages the democratization of any society may have reached; it is a result of the interplay of conflicts and resolution of such conflicts in society. Democratization leads to more equity especially in the laws which govern human relations. It also leads to the elimination of conditions which promote or allow the exploitation of persons or groups of people by others. In any democracy, education is considered vital organs without which this system of governance would not survive. In fact, democracy is considered a communications-intensive mode of governance in which there is continual discussion, analysis, debate, and study. With access to education and reliable information from a variety of perspectives and a diversity of opinions on current affairs, people will arrive at their own views on important issues and thus prepare adequately for political participation (Crowther, 2000).

Education no doubt is the vehicle or channel through which people receive democratic information. Education is considered as effective tools of providing a powerful channel of information between the political elite and the electorate. It makes it possible for widely dispersed citizens to receive, disseminate and act on the information availed to them (Wheeler, 2007; Grossman, 2006). There are many factors which can enhance the development and the democratization process in society. Education is one of such factors. There is a crucial link between education and the growth of democracy. This paper thus investigates the validity of this assumption.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

1. To determine the relationship between education and the growth of democracy.
2. To investigate the relationship between education and political participation.
3. To find out the relationship between education and democratic reform.

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between education and the growth of democracy?
2. What is the relationship between education and political participation?
3. What is relationship between education and democratic reform?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

1. There is no significant relationship between education and the growth of democracy.
2. There is no significant relationship between education and political participation.
3. There is relationship between education and democratic reform.

## **Method**

The study employed the survey research design. The population consisted of 556 Social Studies teachers in Delta State. A simple random sample of 200 Social Studies teachers from 100 secondary schools from the three senatorial districts in Delta were used for the study. The respondents were limited to teachers whose area of specialization was Social Studies. A questionnaire focusing on teachers views on the role of education in the growth of democracy was designed for the study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, section 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' focused on demographic variables requiring respondents to indicate their senatorial district and school, while section 'B' contained 20 items which were structured using a four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagreed (D). Test re-test method of establishing reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on 30 Social Studies teachers in Edo State. Cronbach Alpha was used in analyzing it; it gave an alpha value of 0.68. The researcher with the assistance of some research assistants in each of the senatorial district administered the questionnaire to the respondents without allowing for consultation among themselves. The data obtained were analysed using the using chi-square test of significance. The level of significance was determined at 0.05.

## **Result and Findings**

### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between education and the growth of democracy?

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>
1	Education is a prerequisite for democratic growth.	86(43%)	60(30%)	46(23%)	08(4%)
2	Countries that become more educated show greater tendency to become more democratic.	80(40%)	68(34%)	42(21%)	10(5%)
3	Education promote the growth of democracy	78(39%)	75(37.5%)	38(19%)	09(4.5%)
4	Education enlighten one to trust democratic principles	72(36%)	69(34.5%)	50(25%)	09(4.5%)
5	With the help of education people are able to criticize their leaders for non-performance	94(47%)	57(28.5%)	38(19%)	11(5.5%)
6	Education helps to predicts changes in democratic and	86(43%)	87(43.5%)	20(10%)	07(3.5%)

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	other political institutions.				
7	Nigeria will become more democratic as its population becomes more educated	84(42%)	75(37.5%)	24(12%)	17(8.5%)

**Table 1: Responses on the relationship between education and the growth of democracy**

Table 1 showed that 73% of the respondents agreed that education is a prerequisite for the growth of democracy, 27% disagreed. 74% of the respondent agreed that countries that become more educated show greater tendency to become more democratic, 26% disagreed; 76% are of the opinion that education promotes the growth of democracy, while 24% disagreed, 70.5% agreed that education enlighten one to trust democratic principles, 29.5% disagreed, 75.5% agreed that education help people to be able to criticize their leaders for non-performance, 24.5% disagreed, 86.5% stated that they agreed that education helps to predicts changes in democratic and other political institutions, while 13.5 disagreed, 79% claimed that Nigeria will become more democratic as its population becomes more educated, while 21% disagreed.

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between education and political participation?

**Table 2: Responses on the relationship between education and political participation.**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
8	Education help to educate the people that voting in elections is a must for every citizen.	34(17%)	124(62%)	14(7%)	28(14%)
9	Education helps people to learn politically, thus strengthening political participation.	26(13%)	84(42%)	68(34%)	22(11%)
10	Education influences attitude towards participating in political activities.	28(14%)	114(57%)	20(10%)	38(19%)
11	education brings about politically active citizen	20(10%)	93(46.5%)	44(22%)	43(21.5%)
12	With the help of education people are able to see the need for them to participate in political activities.	40(20%)	104(52%)	20(10%)	36(18%)

13	Education through its various organs promotes democratic participation.	44(22%)	123(61.5%)	10(5%)	23(11.5%)
14	Increase in education is more likely to result to more democratic participation	16(8%)	87(43.5%)	90(45%)	7(3.5%)

Information in table 2 reveals that 79% of the respondents agreed education help to educate the person that voting in elections is a must for every citizen, 21% disagreed, 55% agreed that education helps to strengthen political participation, while 45% disagreed, 71% agreed that education influences attitude towards participating in political activities, 29% disagreed, 56% believe that education brings about politically active citizen, 44% did not, 72% agreed that With the help of education people are able to see the need for them to participate in political activities, 28% disagreed, 83.5% are of the opinion that education through its various organs promotes democratic participation, while 26.5 differ, 51% agreed that increase in education is more likely to result to more democratic participation, 49% disagreed.

### **Research Question 3**

What is the relationship between education and democratic reform?

**Table 3: Responses on the relationship between education and democratic reform.**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD
15	Education promotes democratic reform.	116(58%)	66(33%)	16(8%)	2(1%)
16	Education is a sense of efficiency in commitment to democratic values.	84(42%)	66 (33%)	48(24%)	2(1%)
17	Education have no role in democratic reform	4(2%)	15(7.5%)	176(88%)	5(2.5%)
18	Education help to bring about changes in the electoral system	100(50%)	75(37.5%)	22(11%)	3(1.5%)
19	With the help of education people are able to see the need for violent free election.	92 (46%)	63(31.5%)	42 (21%)	3(1.5%)

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20	Through education people are able to see the need for accountability of the political class	84(42%)	75(37.5%)	38(19%)	3(1.5%)
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The result in table 3 shows that 91% of the respondents believe that Education promotes democratic reform, 9% do not, 75% agreed that education is a sense of efficiency in commitment to democratic values, 25% disagreed, 9.5% claim education have no role in democratic reform, 90.5 do not believe, 87.5% agreed that education help to bring about changes in the electoral system, 12.5% disagreed, 77% agreed that With the help of education people are able to see the need for violent free election, 23% disagreed, 79.5% are of the opinion that through education people are able to see the need for accountability of the political class, 20.5% differ in their opinion.

**Testing Hypothesis 1**

There is no significant relationship between education and the growth of democracy.

**Table4. X<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the relationship between education and the growth of democracy.**

Variable	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Strongly Agreed	83	91.8	-8.8	77.44	0.843573
Agreed	70	61.2	8.8	77.44	1.265359
Disagreed	37	28.2	12.8	163.84	5.809929
Strongly Disagreed	10	18.8	-12.8	163.84	8.714894
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>			<b>X<sup>2</sup>=16.63376</b>

Calculated X<sup>2</sup>=16.63

Table Value X<sup>2</sup>= 7.82

Df =3

Level of significance= 0.05

Table 4 shows that the calculated x<sup>2</sup> value of 16.63 is greater than the critical x<sup>2</sup> value 7.82 at .05 level of significance. So the null hypothesis, which says there is no significant relationship between education and the growth of democracy, is rejected. Therefore, significant relationship existed between education and the growth of democracy. Based on the findings, it means there positive relationship between education and the growth of democracy. There is a relationship in the sense that education enhances the support of democratic procedures and none acceptance of Undemocratic options.

**Testing Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between education and political participation.

**Table5. X<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the relationship between education and political participation.**

Variable	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Strongly Agreed	30	45.56	-15.56	242.11	5.31417
Agreed	104	88.44	15.56	242.11	2.737603
Disagreed	38	22.44	15.56	242.11	10.78938
Strongly Disagreed	28	43.56	-15.56	242.11	5.558163
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>			X <sup>2</sup> =24.39931

Calculated X<sup>2</sup>=24.40

Table Value X<sup>2</sup>= 7.82

Df =3

Level of significance= 0.05

Table 5 shows that the calculated x<sup>2</sup> value of 24.40 is greater than the critical x<sup>2</sup> value 7.82 at .05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis, which says there is no significant relationship between education and political participation, is rejected. This relationship shows a positive one. In other words, there is a relationship between education and political participation in the sense that education influences political participation. Education is the source of experiences for people as participating democratic citizens and provides a standard for the real practice of political participation.

### Testing Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between education and democratic reform.

**Table 6: X<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the relationship between education and democratic reform.**

Variable	Observed (O)	Expected (E)	O-E	(O-E) <sup>2</sup>	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
Strongly Agreed	80	95.9	-15.9	252.81	2.636184
Agreed	60	44.1	15.9	252.81	5.732653
Disagreed	57	41.1	15.9	252.81	6.151095
Strongly Disagreed	3	18.9	-15.9	252.81	13.37619
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>			X <sup>2</sup> =27.89612

Calculated X<sup>2</sup>=27.90



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Table Value  $X^2 = 7.82$

Df = 3

Level of significance = 0.05

Table 6 shows that the calculated mean value of 27.90 is greater than the critical  $x^2$  value 7.82 at .05 level of significance, so the null hypothesis, which says there is no significant relationship between education and democratic reform, is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between education and democratic reform. The result indicated a positive relationship. This due to the fact that education could impact on the citizenry democratic values and impress the right type of values and attitude that will help safeguard democracy thereby brings about democratic reform.

### **Discussion**

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between education and growth of democracy. The findings of this present study showed that education significantly influence the growth of democracy in Nigeria. The finding of this present study is in agreement with Evans and Rose (2007), Sifuna (2007) and Dorsey (2009) who observed that people's levels of schooling predict their endorsement of democratic procedures and their rejection of non-democratic alternatives and They affirm that the greatest aggregate gains in support for democracy are likely to be obtained by increasing the proportion of the population who completed primary education. The result also supported Berman (2007) who observed that participatory and democratic school culture, not a class in civics, is what contributes to social consciousness and increased adherence to democracy. This finding rejects the first hypothesis, that there would be no significant relationship between education, the mass-media and democratic growth.

The result of hypothesis two showed that there is significant relationship between education and political participation. Education has significant relationship with political participation, thereby rejecting the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between education and political participation. In agreement to this, the level of educational provision influences political participation of the citizenry. Political participation, democratic and political attitudes are shaped through what is termed the latent curriculum. This includes how classes are taught, that is the level of self-expression and critical thinking that are promoted as well as the larger climate of school governance. The findings of this study are in line with that of Yusuf (2005) and Sears and Hughes (2006) in their study on the influence of Social Studies Education on students' opinion on political participation and democratic reforms in Nigeria found that there was a significant influence of education on political participation. The result of the study also conforms with that of Taneja (2000) and Educational Equality Project (2005), who concluded that levels of education, provide education experiences for students as participating democratic citizens. The finding is

also consistent with Dorsey (2009) who concluded that education remains a training edge that provides a benchmark for the actual practice of political participation. The result of hypothesis three revealed that there is significant relationship between education and democratic reform. The study is in agreement with Yusuf (2005) who stated that education plays inestimable role in the development of society. The finding also affirms the position of Ochonogor and Ukaegbu (2010) that concluded that education is part of a dynamic functional process which reflect society and at the same time influence society. Thus, the influence of education in bringing about democratic reform can never be quantified.

### **Conclusion**

This study has revealed and established that there is a relationship between education and the growth of democracy. It can be concluded that education plays a positive role in enhancing democracy, and that it can be effectively play this role if its aims, curriculum, method of teaching, administration and organisation are transformed so as to make them responsive to the ideals of democracy. Despite the obstacles that Nigeria may face in the provision of the education for democracy through the school system, she has vast potential of achieving her much sought democratic growth. Students should thus, be made to explore education so as to imbibe democratic values and attitude as well as inculcate the right type of values and attitude that would help enhance political participation and democratic culture for the growth of the nascent democracy.

### **Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Education should be made compulsory at all levels of education so as to inculcate the right type of values and attitude for the growth and protection of democracy in Nigeria.
2. Basic democratic concept that would enhance the growth of democracy should be integrated into the school curriculum at primary, basic secondary, upper basic secondary and tertiary levels. The concepts are to be taught without delay, not just as a study but as a way of life.
3. Democratic knowledge, skills, values and attitudes should be offered as an integrated course with other relevant lessons throughout the whole educational process.
4. School curriculum must provide opportunities for students to implement their democratic knowledge, skills, attitude and values both in and out of school.

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