

## **Citizen Participation in Local Government Budgeting: An Analysis of Influencing Factors in Central Gonja District of Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

Citizen participation has received much attention in participatory budgeting literature yet few studies have focused on expanding the discussions on the perceptions around factors that influence citizen participation. This paper sought to investigate the factors that support or hinder citizens' participation in budgeting decisions in the context of a developing country focusing on demographic and behavioral factors. The research used a quantitative design with a sample of 137 respondents from the Central Gonja District in Ghana. The study employed a principal component analysis to extract factors that best described the main variables. Cronbach Alpha was used to test the reliability of the individual scales. The study found a high positive and statistically significant relationship between demographic factors and citizen participation ( $r=.791$ ) as well as between behavioral factors and citizen participation ( $r=.711$ ). The multiple regression results showed that demographic factors such age, gender, and education have positive effect citizen participation ( $\beta=.467$ ;  $\beta=.339$ ; and  $\beta=.094$ ) respectively. Also, behavioral factors (trust and attitude) was found to have a significant influence on citizen participation in the budgeting process ( $\beta=.466$  and  $\beta=.296$ ) respectively. The outcome of this study contributes significantly to our understanding of how behavioral factors and demographic factors shape and influence the level of citizen participation in budgeting processes at the local level. The study concludes that government efforts should empower citizens, especially women and young people, through education with tools of the budget formulation process to ensure their full participation.

**Keywords:** budget formulation process; citizen participation; demographic and behavioral factors; local governance

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## Introduction

Citizen participation in governance and collective decision-making processes is a central pillar of democratic development in both developed and emerging democracies. The existence of active citizenry who engage in governance contribute significantly to the acceleration of government operations. At the same time, the involvement of citizens in the daily administration of a state is linked to explicit and transparent governance (Androniceanu, 2021; Alibegović & Slijepčević, 2018). In light of this, participatory budgeting, being a growing embryo of participatory democracy, with origin in Brazil in the 20th Century, is premised on the tenets of the active involvement of citizens in decision-making thereby influencing how resources are allocated at the local level (Bartocci et. al., 2023; Dias, 2018). De Veries et al. (2021) view this as a step further into direct democracy, away from representative democracy, where the less privileged in impoverished communities are allowed to directly participate in the decision of allocating resources in the municipalities. It is the wish of every citizen to participate directly in the decision-making process in their countries (Mohammadi et al., 2018), however several factors may serve as an impediment to this as these reasons generally imply how far apart politics seem to be from the lives of the people because politicians do not heed to the cries of the people (Parvin, 2018).

In most democracies, budgeting has not only become a means to ensure that citizens are beneficiaries of public funds even amid competitive goals but also ensures the popular engagement of citizens in the decision of allocation of resources (Singer, 2022).

Cellini and Antonucci's (2022) study on participatory budgeting in Milan reveals that participatory budgeting is a vital instrument that allows citizens to be a part of the administrative aspect of how the national wealth is disbursed, that is, both in the deliberative and implementation phases of the administrative process. Thus, when the citizens have sufficient knowledge of a budget, it empowers them to hold the administration to account.

Globally, citizen participation in the budget formulation process has received considerable attention in democratic societies. For instance, according to Escobar (2021), in the past three decades, thousands of localities around the world have adopted this process which has received steady support from not only their various governments but also their institutions and civil societies. Badia's (2021) study of participatory budgeting in Italy—the origin of participatory budgeting—reports that Italy has had a back-and-forth in terms of the use of the tool due to scarcity and the politics surrounding the use. He further reports that many municipalities have employed this tool and consistently seen success from 2015 to 2019. This may be a result of the awareness of the political fraternity and the

success recorded in their past experiences of use. Also, Dias (2018) documented that through participatory budgeting processes, the citizens in Europe, North America, Asia and Africa have been actively involved in the governance machinery of their respective countries. However, unlike developed democracies that have strong democratic institutions that ensure and foster participatory budgeting, countries within the sub-Saharan Africa region face significant challenges due to scarcity of resources and the colonial heritage of patron-client relationship where citizens communicate through elected leaders rather than directly participating in governance processes.

Ghana, like many developing countries, adopted a decentralization policy in 1988, which sought to ensure the creation of sub-national governments to facilitate amongst other things, accountability to the local people, curb economic hardship brought about by centralization, come up with means to terminate any form of personalized/centralized rules and also ensure the empowerment of citizens at the local level to ensure active inclusion in the formulation and implementation of policies and the day-to-day administration of the state (Dzakaklo, 2023; Chachu, 2021; Scott & Enu-Kwesi, 2018). While Ghana's decentralization framework is meant to achieve the benefits of increased participation of citizens in governance and delivering responsive basic services to communities, little is known about how citizens participate in decision-making around budgeting at the local level yet communities play a critical role in modeling the results of developmental projects and poverty reduction (Osei-Kufuor & Koomson, 2014). To empower citizens to effectively shape the process and outcomes of the poverty reduction efforts, Ghana's 1992 Constitution mandates the District Assemblies as the highest political authorities at the local level to ensure the active involvement of citizens in the planning and design of public service delivery, especially in budget design. Achieving this is a huge challenge in Ghana.

Buhari (2019) outlines many reasons why effective citizen participation in the budget formulation process in the past three decades remains challenging in many developing countries. These include the lack of knowledge of the people in the budgeting process, over-dependency on the central government for funds, the absence of an organized system for engagement, interference from the central government, and monopoly of leaders. Androniceanu (2021) and Muthomi and Thurmaier (2020) also emphasize the need for transparency in the budgetary process to empower citizens to partake therein.

In addition to these factors, the Ghanaian socio-cultural context suggests that demographic and behavioral factors could equally affect citizens' involvement in government decision-making making yet current literature does not provide a sufficient understanding of the extent to which these factors matter. This paper,

therefore, argues that demographic factors such as gender, class, education, and economic levels and behavioral factors such as trust and public attitude can also help us understand citizens' ability to participate and influence budgeting. The objective of this paper is to provide detailed explanation to how local people perceive demography and behavioral factors as important factors that affect their ability to participate in the budget formulation of the Central Gonja District Assembly. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: section two reviews the literature, the third section describes the methods, the fourth section presents the results and discusses the main findings and the fifth section presents the recommendations and conclusion.

### **Citizen Participation: Conceptual Review**

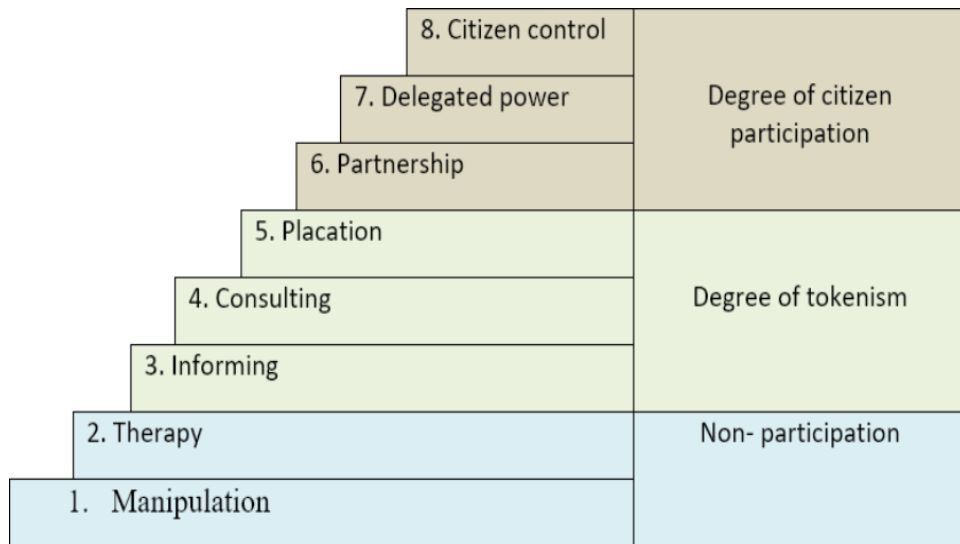
Participation is a concept that spans various disciplines, thus, having a tremendous impact on levels of development in those fields (Nsama & Pribadi, 2021). For instance, studies that investigate participation in disaster risk management (Duan et al., 2020), issues related to protected area management (Nitaet al., 2018), and participation in environmental innovation networks (Johnson, 2020), amongst other studies. Some scholars who view participation as an issue of human rights, see this as essential to the effectiveness of democratic governance and accountability (Mohammed and Farjana, 2018; Binh & Anh, 2019; Shaikh, 2019). Citizen participation, however, comes forth as a privilege when individuals in the community have relatively influential people in authority, like politicians and the media, who push their interests to the detriment of other citizens who have no such connections or ties (Duyvedak & Shapper, 2020; Wang & Chan, 2020). The power geometry gives the most powerful an upper hand in arriving at decisions in communities, this brings to light the invisible forces and hands in the participatory process making it look like a matter of privilege and not right (Wang & Chan, 2020; Waheduzzaman et. al., 2018). Active citizen participation has its roots in a modern democracy, commonly accepted as the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and serves as the bane of its existence (Androniceanu, 2021). Therefore, to operationalize the true meaning of democracy, the people (citizens) must take centre stage both at the national and local levels and this is where the concept of participation is rooted (Švaljek et al., 2019). Consequently, this study conceptualizes citizen participation as the involvement of local people in settling on choices that affect their lives through the budget process at the local level.

In non-democratic systems or top-down models, citizens may participate with little impact on the decision-making process while in democratic systems or bottom-up models, citizens' views and inputs influence the decision-making process in budgeting through participatory budgeting platforms (Aceron, 2019;

Rumbul et al., 2018; Cellini & Antonucci, 2022). The latter may however not always be the case as the budgetary process may be taken over by local elites who represent their interests overshadowing those of the general populace (Chen & Aitamurto, 2019).

As a result of the need for democracies to do more for the public, citizen-participatory budgeting has become a light of hope for the elimination of elite power, bringing government closer to the people, catering to the rights of citizens, and deepening good governance through decentralization (Cabanne & Lipietz, 2018; Cellini & Antonucci, 2022; Dias, 2018; Parvin, 2018). The importance of citizen participation in the local governance process is highlighted in Arnstein's (1969) ladder of participation (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (Masser, and Mory, 2018)**



According to Arnstein (1969), the levels of citizen participation convey a climbing request from lack of participation to partial or token participation and full participation (Kai and Linda, 2018). First, therapy and manipulation are considered non-participation, which is deemed as the lowest order. Second, informing, consulting, and placation indicate the degree of tokenism, and third, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control suggest the degree of citizen power which in Arnstein's view is real participation.

Arnstein (1969) and Hart (1992) highlight tokenism as a very salient stage between genuine participation and non-participation. According to Cardullo and Kitchin (2019), it is very likely that the public may not follow through on actual planning, formulation, and implementation of the budget, as citizens are reduced to just recipients of decisions made by the higher-ups where most opportunities presented for citizen participation is reduced to tokenism. These actions are usually predetermined leaving no room for change (Keough et al., 2020). Non-participation constitutes the bottom rungs of the ladder, namely, manipulations and therapy typologies. Participation at this level entails playing a rubber-stamping role with no influence of the 'have-nots', thus, levels 1 and 2 constitute non-participation where participation is technically fixed and participants are manipulated or given therapy (Belle et al., 2021).

The next rungs, (3) informing, (4) consultation, and (5) placation, are classified as the level of 'Tokenism'. At this stage, the citizens may hear and be heard but there is no assurance that their views will influence decision making especially because they do not possess the resources to do so. At the 'information' level there is no room for negotiation or feedback. Placation is a higher level of tokenism where the citizens' concerns are heard but the power holders continue to retain the exclusive right to decide (Anokye, 2020).

Citizens' participation in decision-making is enhanced with level 6 (Partnership) where the public can negotiate trade-offs with power holders; level 7 (Delegated Power) and level 8 (Citizen Control), where the public has acquired a majority say in the budgetary formulation, planning, and implementation (Ostrom, 2009). This level allows the redistribution of power between power holders and the general public. The two topmost rungs 'delegated power' and 'citizen control' show that participation is in favor of the public and they have full control over managerial decision-making.

## **Demographic Factors that Influence Citizen Participation**

### ***Age and Citizen Participation***

First, age can be categorized into two classes, youth, and non-youth. Youth, according to the United Nations (2014), refers to persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by the member states whilst the African Union (2013) also refers to youths as individuals falling within the 15 to 35 year age bracket. The concept of non-youth refers to persons transitioning from childhood to adulthood or adolescence. However, in this study, youths refer to persons aged 20-45 in the context of Ghana. As indicated by Kpognon et al., (2020) and World Bank (2018), youthful citizens assume basic jobs usually in the

informal sector to structure a decent community and they are considered assets to any country's advancement. Their inspiration, capacities, and imaginativeness are central to accomplishing national development objectives. They create solutions to community issues through volunteering, advisory councils, social media, communications, voting, and collaboration. Despite the immense role the youth can play in a nation's development, the participation of young people in formal, institutional and political processes is relatively low when compared to older citizens across the globe. This questions the representativeness of the political system and more likely may lead to the disenfranchisement of young people (UNDP, 2013). A study conducted by Cellini and Antonucci (2022) reveals that employable citizens with no employment, low-income earning citizens, and younger citizens between the ages of 16–20 tend to shy away from participatory budgeting, giving credence to the UNDP's concerns about youth disenfranchisement.

### ***Gender and Citizen Participation***

The World Bank's document on citizen engagement (2023) mentions amongst other factors, gender dynamics, which acts as a factor that shapes the scope and opportunities for citizen involvement. Findings from many studies indicate that males are more likely to participate in decision-making at the local level than females in developing countries, particularly as a result of the long-standing societal structures in place, including the patriarchal and various religious patterns of behaviour that influence participation. The concepts of participation and 'gender' have been a part of emancipatory discourse and practices in the last three decades. A study of historical, philosophical, and political texts shows that women are marginalized in politics (Makulilo, 2022). This philosophical position of various renowned philosophers like Aristotle has undermined the support for women's role in politics and government decision-making.

Further, Ihemeje (2013) explains that the absence of women in local-level participation strengthens male presence in grassroots political participation. The historical fact of this finding is strongly associated with the attitude of women such as their lack of interest in politics and their inability to mobilize funding for political campaigns.

Mlambo and Kapingura (2019) contend that the participation of women in governance in Africa faces practical difficulties such as cultural and traditional convictions, the absence of financial strength, electoral violence, both subtle and overt, and institutional constraints, that is, the absence of viable methods for executing governmental policy regarding minorities in society. They explain that to liberate women to guarantee their participation in decision-making, it is imperative to reexamine existing protected, political, and administrative structures, including

discretionary frameworks that upset women's participation in the decision-making process. Similarly, de Duren et al., (2020) also contend that regarding political accessibility, women face an array of specific barriers and vulnerabilities in the form of gender-based discrimination that result in unequal community and public participation, and limited access to information.

### ***Education and Citizen Participation***

Evidence shows that education helps communities to participate in decision-making. Education serves as an instrument to empower people in neighborhood networks to assemble the social capital required for participatory decision-making in the local government (Namoog & Agyekum, 2024). This is firmly grounded in Freire's (1985) study where the philosophy of conscientization was propounded. This philosophy propounds that as long as people are brought to a full consciousness or awareness of their social reality (socio-economic barriers, cultural and religious barriers, amongst others) and how they could influence decisions to change the status quo, there is a high chance that they will engage in decision-making in their localities (Namoog & Agyekum, 2024). This ensures a greater commitment of citizens to participate in the governance process at the local level. Further, Cellini and Antonucci, (2022), found that the education levels of the people influence the degree of their participation in the budgeting process. In terms of participatory budgeting, some citizens may shy away from the process as they view the process as one that requires much arithmetic skills, thus, leaving it to those with higher levels of education and politicians (Rumbul et al., 2018). Similarly, Buhari (2019) found that the more a community and its people are educated, the more they are occupied with public participation obligations like the formulation of budgets.

### **Behavioral factors that influence Citizen Participation**

#### ***Attitude and Citizen Participation***

Generally, there is some consensus that a positive attitude toward local government impacts citizen cooperation in the central government's initiatives. According to Zaslove et al., (2021), citizens are influenced by social elements like citizen disposition-attitude to partake in deliberative forms of citizen participation. The stronger their attitude towards activities like participatory budgeting, the higher their support for it, thus, implying a positive relationship between attitude and citizen participation. Experiences from citizen participation in local governance in Bosnia and Herzegovina show that their participation in local government was constrained to a great extent because they did not trust that they could impact



local decision-making (World Bank, 2009). Inadequate information or knowledge on a said project, the government's response to the people, and the impact of past involvement of citizens in communal projects would determine the attitude they show forth in citizen participation (Rumbul et al., 2018; Mbithi et al., 2019).

### ***Trust and Citizen Participation***

Trust, according to Gaboyan (2010, p.7) enables citizens to readily acknowledge the authority of the government. This is the case because individuals who feel that their voice, protest, or proposals are considered by the authorities are more likely to positively respond to the government directives. Trust is viewed as the bedrock of good and effective governance (Mansoor, 2021) and a sure way of avoiding distrust among citizens is to make them active participants in governance by educating them on the intentions of the government (Buhari, 2019). According to several scholars, (Lee & Schacter, 2018; Ma & Christensen, 2019; Buhari, 2019) various empirical studies undertaken prove that when citizens have higher levels of trust in government, they tend to participate fully in governance and when citizens do not have trust in the government, they do not participate since they believe they would in no way be able to influence the decisions of the government officials. Thus, citizens would rather be pushed to participate in governance when they are not satisfied with the policy outputs of the government. For the most part, in some settings, there is a perceived reduction of public trust in governments which is a serious challenge in the public administration discourse. According to Parvin (2018), citizens do not trust politicians and the political structure enough because the politicians do not listen to them and the issues of politics are too far apart from their lives to make it impactful. This perceived or real diminishing of public trust in governments has seen the majority of the citizenry demonstrate and call for regime change as occurred in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria. Efforts of participatory democracy put in place to regain the trust of these mistrusting citizens could, according to the deliberative democrats, lend credibility to the various governmental institutions again, thus, increasing citizen participation (Cellini & Antonucci, 2022; Lee & Schacter, 2018).

### ***Background of Citizen Participation in the Ghanaian Context***

Chapter Six of Ghana's 1992 Constitution focuses on the Directive Principles of State Policy and mandates the central government to transfer an amount of power and resources to the grass-root bodies that are either wholly or partly representative of the people at the local level (Dzakaklo, 2023; the Republic of Ghana 1992, p.25). The government took steps to accelerate fiscal decentralization reforms by decentralizing budget implementation to ensure transparency and

accountability in the management of public funds at the district level as local people will be part of the budget process.

### ***The mechanism for citizen participation in the budget formulation at the local level***

Ghana adopted a composite budgeting process that mandates local governments to develop their local budgets to be fed into the central government budget. This policy allows citizens at each level of government to provide their input to the local budgets to address local needs. To further deepen citizen participation in the budgeting process, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Decentralization developed several models of participation in 2014. The first initiative was the Social Accountability Forum. It seeks to strengthen accountability and deepen trust between local authorities and the citizens through annual town hall meetings where issues of concern are discussed. Second is the Annual Planning and Budgeting Units outreach program which seeks to involve community members to plan and set budget priorities in a fiscal year. Third is the annual fee-fixing meetings that are held by the district assemblies to create awareness of the expected revenue targets, fees and tolls to be applied in the coming year. Fourth, budget hearings and rating meetings are organized by local authorities to create awareness of the district-wide specific budget priorities. The outcome of this meeting leads to the development of the composite budget for a particular fiscal year. All stakeholders are then invited to approve this budget and then passed to the General Assembly for resolution before it is forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for incorporation into the national budget.

### **Methods**

The study employed a quantitative approach using a descriptive design. Siedlecki (2020) defines descriptive research design as a study where the investigator focuses more on collecting data that seeks to answer the questions “what, who, when, how, and where” whilst ignoring the “why” questions. He further asserts that this kind of research can adapt and think of the research problem since it focuses on a specific population and how problems unfold in the said unit under consideration. In addition, Aggarwal and Ranganathan (2019) note that descriptive research provides valuable information on the problem or unit under research, be it on the same or different population to determine any form of geographic similarity or variation; this comes in handy to policymakers in policy formulation scholars in their line of research and industry players in their line of work.

### Study Setting and Sampling

The Central Gonja District is located in the southwestern part of the Savana Region of Ghana. The district was selected because it is one of the oldest local authorities in the region and one of the busiest economic hubs in the five regions of the Northern part of Ghana (Figure 1).

**Figure 2: Map of Central Gonja District**



Source: GSS (2013)

The sample was selected from five (5) main communities in Buipe, the capital of the Central Gongga District (Bridge East, Bridge West, Borowase, Warantu, and Yipala). The Central Gonja District Assembly had selected and used 128 participants from each of these five communities to participate in the budget formulation process during the 2014/2015 and 2017/2018 budget years implying that 640 community members participated in the budget during these periods. In addition, 13 budget committee members and 1 representative from each of the 12 institutions working in the district also participated in the process making a total of 665 participants. Out of the 665, a simple random sampling method was used to select the participants for the data collection. Out of this target population, a sampling error of 0.05 was derived because the 95% confidence level is the baseline in most social science research which provides the basis for reliable prediction of the behaviour of the independent variables enough to yield the changes in the criterion variable. Also, Copper and Schindler (2006) argued that a

sample size must be enormous enough to be illustrative of the study population. Consequently, the Yamane's (1967) sample size formula was used to select 250 participants from the 665-sample frame. A table of random numbers was created using a three-digit number since the population size has three numbers (665). The simple random involved selecting every third number from the written numbers from 1 to 665 representing the five communities with each community assigned 45 participants (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Sample Distribution of Respondents**

| Category   | Sample Size | Sampling Method        |
|--|-------------|------------------------|
| Bridge East  | 45          | Simple random sampling |
| Bridge West  | 45          | Simple random sampling |
| Borowase   | 45          | Simple random sampling |
| Warantu  | 45          | Simple random sampling |
| Yipala   | 45          | Simple random sampling |
| Representatives of companies/institutions                            | 12          | Simple random sampling |
| Established Post (permanent Assembly Staff/Budget Committee Members) | 13          | Simple random sampling |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>250</b>  |                        |

A survey questionnaire was used for data collection from the participants from July to August 2019. Out of 250 questionnaires mailed to the participants, 150 questionnaires were completed and received representing a response rate of 60%. However, 137 questionnaires were used for the analysis after a careful screening.

### **Results and Data Analysis**

The data analysis for this study includes demographic information, factor analysis, descriptive statistics, and bivariate and regression analysis using the SPSS version 20. Factor analysis was used to validate the measures we adapted from previous studies (Mutwiri, 2016, Siala, 2015). The descriptive statistics provided a snapshot of the mean and standard deviation. The bivariate and standard regression techniques were used to test the strength and the direction of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables as well as their statistical significance. There were 85 males and 52 women with age ranges between 20–30 representing 19.7%, 31–40 (23.4%), 41–50 (40.9%), and 51+ (16.1%). The educational level showed that the majority of the participants had a first degree (47.4%), followed by diploma holders (32.8%), and 19.7% postgraduate holders.

### **Factor Analysis**

To be able to validate the measures used, a principal component analysis (PCA) method of extraction was performed to reduce the factors that best explain the three main variables: citizen participation, demographic, and behavioral factors (See Table 2). The factor analysis results showed that the six items for the dependent variable: citizen participation loaded on two components using varimax rotation. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) (0.613), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were statistically significant with a p-value being 0.000 (1%). Although the factors loaded on two components provided 66.2% total variance explained, a decision was made to include all the items because removing the rest of the four items will lead to a significant loss of vital information which is 33.8% of the total variance explained.

### Table 3: Factor Analysis for Citizen Participation Scale

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues |               | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |       | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |              |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
|           | Total               | % of Variance | Cumulative %                        | Total | % of Variance                     | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 2.362               | 39.365        | 39.365                              | 2.362 | 39.365                            | 34.827       |
| 2         | 1.610               | 26.835        | 66.200                              | 1.610 | 26.835                            | 31.373       |
| 3         | .759                | 12.654        | 78.854                              |       |                                   |              |
| 4         | .588                | 9.805         | 88.659                              |       |                                   |              |
| 5         | .362                | 6.030         | 94.689                              |       |                                   |              |
| 6         | .319                | 5.311         | 100.000                             |       |                                   |              |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

KMO=0.613; Chi-Square=217.122; df=15: Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=0.000

Further, to indicate which of the factors correlated most with the two principal components, 1 & 2, in Table 2, the results showed that the rotated component matrix for “*More positive comments on the formulation of budgets has been received from the citizens*” (**0.792**) loaded highest followed by “*Development projects initiated by the government are operating efficiently under the management of the local community members*” (**0.765**). The factor loading further revealed that the question of whether the majority of the citizens take part in the budget formulation was the fifth with a negative relationship (**-0.655**). See Table 3 for details.

**Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix for Citizen Participation Scale**

| Item Description  | Component    |               |
|---|--------------|---------------|
|   | 1            | 2             |
| 1. Majority of citizens participate in the budget formulation at the very basic level   | 0.475        | <b>-0.655</b> |
| 2. What is the level of citizens' participation in the formulation of budgets in CGDA?  | 0.340        | <b>0.745</b>  |
| 3. The number of local citizens participating in the budget formulation in CGDA has generally increased.                          | 0.536        | <b>-0.601</b> |
| 4. Development projects initiated by the government are operating efficiently under the management of the local community members | <b>0.765</b> | 0.397         |
| 5. The number of complaints from local citizens on the district development programs or policies has decreased                    | <b>0.722</b> | 0.284         |
| 6. More positive comments on the formulation of budgets have been received from the citizens                                      | <b>0.792</b> | -0.163        |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 2 components extracted.

### Demographic factors

The demographic factors loaded on only one component with an Eigenvalue of 3.886 and were able to explain a total variance of 64.77%. The KMO (0.846) and Bartlett's test was also significant at  $p=0.000$  suggesting strong support for the sample dataset (See Table 4).

**Table 4: Eigenvalues for Demographic Factors**

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues |               |              | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|           | Total               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 3.886               | 64.773        | 64.773       | 3.886                               | 64.773        | 64.773       |
| 2         | .739                | 12.323        | 77.096       |                                     |               |              |
| 3         | .488                | 8.131         | 85.228       |                                     |               |              |
| 4         | .430                | 7.173         | 92.400       |                                     |               |              |
| 5         | .282                | 4.699         | 97.100       |                                     |               |              |
| 6         | .174                | 2.900         | 100.000      |                                     |               |              |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, KMO=0.846; Chi-Square=468.730, df=15; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=0.000

The rotated communalities showed that the various factors loaded low on the one component extracted from the demographic factors. From Table 5, four (4) items were retained for further analysis because factors loading below 0.2 were excluded since they could not provide enough explanatory power in the bivariate and regression analysis. The factor extracted was “*multiple roles of women in the family setup limits their participation in annual budget public forums*” (0.227), followed by “*lack of confidence on the part of women by the wider society limits their participation in the budget formulation*” (0.219). Also, low education among local communities affected their participation in budget processes (0.210). The factor loading for this variable is the ratio of younger people to older persons participating in the budget formulation process loaded (0.207 See Table 5). Although the items loaded very low on this variable, the decision was made to retain all the items because the reliability statistics showed these items together provided an alpha Cronbach of 0.90 which is very high.



**Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix for Demographic Factors**

| Item description  | Component    |
|---|--------------|
|   | 1            |
| Low levels of education among local communities have decreased citizens' participation in budget formulation              | <b>0.210</b> |
| Participation of young people in the budget formulation is relatively low compared to older citizen                       | <b>0.207</b> |
| Low education levels of women hinder their citizens' participation in the budget formulation at the local-level           | 0.186        |
| Multiple roles of women in the family setup limit their participation in the district's annual budget meetings            | <b>0.227</b> |
| Lack of confidence on the part of women by the wider society limits their participation in the budget formulation in CGDA | <b>0.219</b> |
| Women's attitude to the process of governance limits their participation in the budget formulation in CGDA                | 0.189        |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, Component Scores.

### Behavioral factors

Table 6 displays the results of the factor analysis for the behavioral factors which loaded strongly on two components with Eigen values of 4.266 and 1.086 giving a total variance explained to be 66.901%. However, all the items were retained except for the last item 8, the rest loaded more than 0.2.

**Table 6: Eigenvalues for Behavioral Factors Scale**

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues |               |              | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |               |              |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|           | Total               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total                             | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 4.266               | 53.322        | 53.322       | 4.266                               | 53.322        | 53.322       | 2.892                             | 36.144        | 36.144       |
| 2         | 1.086               | 13.579        | 66.901       | 1.086                               | 13.579        | 66.901       | 2.461                             | 30.757        | 66.901       |
| 3         | .765                | 9.566         | 76.466       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 4         | .557                | 6.968         | 83.434       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 5         | .496                | 6.205         | 89.639       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 6         | .356                | 4.448         | 94.087       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 7         | .278                | 3.470         | 97.557       |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |
| 8         | .195                | 2.443         | 100.000      |                                     |               |              |                                   |               |              |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

KMO=0.841; Chi-Square=525.536, df=28; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=0.000

Also, the extracted factors showed that the 8 items loaded on two components. While six items loaded better on one component with the highest loading from “*positive attitudes of citizens towards local government*” (**0.823**), the lowest came from the perceived acting by public officers to show the best interest in local people in the budget participation (**-.535**). Further analysis was performed since previous studies have provided evidence to support this measure. Hence, 7 items were retained for further analysis. Table 7 shows the factor loading of the behavioral factors.

**Table 7: Rotated Component Matrix for Behavioral Factors**

| Item Description   | Component    |               |
|--|--------------|---------------|
|  | 1            | 2             |
| Demanding citizenry encourages citizens' participation in the budget formulation in CGDA   | <b>0.791</b> | -0.194        |
| A high level of community trust in political institutions can encourage citizens' participation in CGDA                                | <b>0.766</b> | -0.081        |
| The declining level of community trust in politicians has discouraged citizens' participation in CGDA                                  | <b>0.762</b> | 0.271         |
| Citizens' attitude toward local government determines the extent of citizens' participation in the budget formulation in CGDA          | <b>0.809</b> | -0.349        |
| A positive attitude towards local government affects citizens' support for government initiatives including budget formulation in CGDA | <b>0.823</b> | 0.080         |
| Perceived benefits by the citizens on development initiatives influence their participation in the budget formulation in CGDA          | <b>0.800</b> | 0.161         |
| Acting in the best interest of local people encourages citizens' participation in the budget formulation in CGDA                       | 0.499        | <b>-0.535</b> |
| People with higher trust in the budget formulation process participate more effectively in CGDA  | 0.501        | <b>0.727</b>  |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.   |              |               |
| a. 2 components extracted.   |              |               |

Further, a reliability test was performed to validate the items for the three main scales and the results showed that, apart from citizens' participation which had an alpha Cronbach of 0.69, the rest had an alpha Cronbach greater than 0.70 (See Table 8).

**Table 8: Reliability Test for Variables**

| Variable                | Cronbach Alpha | No. of Items | No. of Responses |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|
| Citizens' Participation | 0.69           | 5            |                  |
| Demographic Factors     | 0.90           | 6            | 137              |
| Behavioral Factors      | 0.88           | 7            |                  |

### **Demographic Analysis**

This section presents the results and analysis of the main variables of the study. First, the demographic results indicate that males were 85 (62.0%) whilst the females constituted 52 (38.0%). Table 6 depicts the gender, age, education, and income distribution of respondents. However, these demographic characteristics were not included in further analysis of the data because the scale for demographic factors was adapted from Mutwiri's (2016) study of a county in Kenya using a five-point Likert scale.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

The descriptive analysis included the generation of the means and standard deviations for the main variables of the study (that is, citizen participation as the dependent variable and the perceived influential factors as the independent variable) using the SPSS Version 20. The output in Table 9 indicates the standard deviations and combined means for each variable (both dependent and independent). 'Trust and attitude' showed the highest mean scores of 9.58 and 9.27 followed by 'community awareness' (8.74), while 'behavioral factors' had the lowest mean score of 2.872. Another observation of the results is that the main variables of the study: demographic factors, behavioral factors, and citizen participation had the smallest standard deviations suggesting a good fit of the dataset for the sample population (See Table 9).

**Table 9: Descriptive statistics**

| Variable              | N   | Min  | Max   | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------|-----|------|-------|--------|----------------|
| Community awareness   | 137 | 4.5  | 13.00 | 8.7464 | 2.16017        |
| Education             | 137 | 2.00 | 6.00  | 4.2993 | 1.19043        |
| Age                   | 137 | 1.00 | 4.00  | 3.0219 | 0.83549        |
| Gender                | 137 | 4    | 9.33  | 6.7762 | 1.55199        |
| Attitude              | 137 | 4.50 | 13.00 | 9.2719 | 2.41557        |
| Trust                 | 137 | 5.50 | 13.00 | 9.5803 | 1.80199        |
| Demographic factors   | 137 | 1.83 | 4.0   | 2.9586 | 0.61029        |
| Behavioural factors   | 137 | 1.86 | 4     | 2.8717 | 0.62060        |
| Citizen participation | 137 | 1.80 | 4     | 2.9518 | 0.58033        |

**N=137**

### Bivariate Correlation Analysis

The Pearson Correlation indicated that variables are positive with significant effects. Two bivariate correlations were performed. The first part involved the sub-indicators of the variables and the second part was performed for the main variables of the study. The first correlation sought to test the relationship between the sub-indicators of the variables which suggests that all the variables are positive and statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . The highest correlation was found between “attitude and education” ( $\beta = 0.872$ ), followed by “gender and attitude” ( $\beta = 0.809$ ). The rest had positive and strong relationships (See Table 10).

**Table 10: Correlation Coefficients for Sub-indicators**

| Variables                | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        | 5        | 6 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---|
| 1.Education              | 1        |          |          |          |          |   |
| 2. Age                   | 0.681*** | 1        |          |          |          |   |
| 3. Gender                | 0.801*** | 0.660*** | 1        |          |          |   |
| 4. Attitude              | 0.872*** | 0.728*** | 0.809*** | 1        |          |   |
| 5. Trust                 | 0.730*** | 0.684*** | 0.780*** | 0.743*** | 1        |   |
| 6. Citizen participation | 0.685*** | 0.755*** | 0.723*** | 0.685**  | 0.642*** | 1 |

\*\*\*: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=137

In Table 11, the correlation results showed a positive and strong relationship between the main variables with “demographic and behavioral factors” indicating a near-perfect correlation ( $\beta=0.919$ ) followed by “citizen participation and demographic factors”. Also, a moderate relationship is between “citizen participation and behavioral factors” (See Table 11).

**Table 11: Bivariate Analysis for Main Variables**

| Variables                | 1        | 2        | 3 |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---|
| 1.Demographic Factors    | 1        |          |   |
| 2.Behavioral Factors     | 0.919*** | 1        |   |
| 3. Citizen participation | 0.791*** | 0.711*** | 1 |

\*\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). N=137

### **Regression Analysis**

Three separate models were performed using the standard multiple regression techniques. The first model involved the three sub-indicators of demographic factors: education, age, and gender as independent variables with the dependent being citizen participation. Also, the first model indicates a strong positive effect of age ( $\beta=0.467$ ) on citizen participation followed by gender ( $\beta=0.339$ ) and education ( $\beta=0.094$ ). The total variance explained showed 66.2 percent. The second model used the two behavioral factors: trust and attitude which tested for their effect on citizen participation which provided a variance of 50.9 percent 15.3 percent decrease from the first model. The implication is that the demographic factors predicted citizen participation better than behavioral factors in the sample. The third model combined both demographic sub-indicators and behavioral sub-indicators and the  $r^2$  only increased marginally to 66.3 percent a 0.1 change in the first model and a significant increase in the second model with a 15.4 percent point change. The third model included three controlled variables to test whether being a female or age in years and educational level had any effects on the dependent variable. The results showed that both age in years ( $\beta=-0.536$ ) and sex ( $\beta=-0.096$ ) were negatively associated with citizen participation while education level was positively related to citizen participation. Except for sex, the two variables controlled for were statistically significant at  $p=0.000$  and  $p=0.005$  respectively (See Table 12).

**Table 12: Multiple Regression Results**

| Model | Variable            | B         | T-Stat | P-Value | Summary Statistics        |
|-------|---------------------|-----------|--------|---------|---------------------------|
| 1     | (Constant)          |           | 8.375  | 0.000   | R: 0.814                  |
|       | Education           | 0.094     | 1.045  | 0.298   | R <sup>2</sup> :0.662     |
|       | Age                 | 0.467***  | 6.557  | 0.000   | Adj R <sup>2</sup> :0.654 |
|       | Gender              | 0.339***  | 3.848  | 0.000   | S.E: 1.54202              |
| 2     | (constant)          |           | 6.369  | 0.000   | F=86.876                  |
|       | Attitude            | 0.466***  | 5.153  | 0.000   | df:3, 133                 |
|       | Trust               | 0.296***  | 3.270  | 0.001   | p=0.000                   |
|       |                     |           |        |         | R: 0.713                  |
|       |                     |           |        |         | R <sup>2</sup> :0.509     |
| 3     | (constant)          |           | 7.188  | 0.000   | Adj R <sup>2</sup> :0.502 |
|       | Age                 | 0.485***  | 6.217  | 0.000   | S.E: 1.85197              |
|       | Education           | 0.130     | 1.167  | 0.245   | F=69.450                  |
|       | Gender              | 0.366***  | 3.632  | 0.000   | df:2, 134                 |
|       | Attitude            | -0.056    | -0.473 | 0.637   | p=0.000                   |
|       | Trust               | -0.029    | -0.330 | 0.742   |                           |
|       |                     |           |        |         |                           |
| 4     | (constant)          |           | 4.885  | 0.000   | R: 0.814                  |
|       | Demographic factors | 0.742***  | 4.801  | 0.000   | R <sup>2</sup> :0.663     |
|       | Behavioral factors  | 0.125     | 0.813  | 0.418   | Adj R <sup>2</sup> :0.650 |
|       |                     |           |        |         | S.E: 1.55159              |
|       | Sex                 | 0.-0.096  | -1.099 | 0.274   | F=51.559                  |
|       | Age in years        | -0.536*** | -4.112 | 0.000   | df:5,131                  |
|       | Educational level   | 0.399***  | 2.889  | 0.005   | p=0.000                   |
|       |                     |           |        |         |                           |

NB:\*\*\*= significant at  $p < 0.01$ : Dependent Variable: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION: 1. Predictors: (Constant), education, age, gender: 2. Predictors: (Constant), trust, attitude: 3. Predictors: (Constant), education, age, gender, trust, attitude: 4. Predictors: (Constant), BEHAVIORAL FACTORS, DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS, age in years, sex, educational level:

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find the influence of demographic and behavioral factors on citizen participation in the budget formulation at the local level. The findings revealed that more males take part in budget formulation due to socio-cultural factors that give men an advantage over women in decision-making in the traditional setup between women and males. These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the influence culture has on citizen participation in budget formulation (Aceron, 2019; Baida, 2022). Age and education equally played a role in determining citizens' participation because, in this sample, the majority of the respondents reported that young people lack opportunities to participate since older people mostly dominate the budgeting process.

The findings from this study showed that demographic characteristics played a significant role in citizens' participation in the budget processes at the local level. Some of the demographic characteristics identified were multiple roles of women in the family setup hinder their participation in budgetary processes; low educational levels among local communities have also decreased their participation in the formulation of the budgets. These findings are similar to the UNDP's (2013) study that shows that young men and women participate moderately low in the institutional and formal political process as compared with older people (Anokye, 2020).

Another objective was to ascertain the influence of behavioral factors on the participation of citizens in the budget formulation process at the local level. Findings from this study revealed that behavioral factors do influence citizens' participation in the formulation of budgets. The findings also revealed that declining trust levels of citizens of the government and politicians have decreased citizens' participation in the formulation of budgets and at the same time, citizens' attitude towards local government is affecting their interest generally at the local level. Also, it was observed that demanding citizenry encourages participation in the budget formulation process. These findings align with findings that youth were restricted in participating in making decisions (Chen & Aitamurto, 2019).

The research found that the absence of women in decision-making roles restrict their participation in the budget formulation process. The findings are similar to the evidence that women's involvement in governance faces difficulties including religious and social challenges and the absence of financial strengthening (Gaboyan, 2010; Lean et al, 2021). The absence of useful means of executing affirmative action, the dominance of men in politics, the numerous duties of women in the family, the low educational levels of women, and the attitude of women towards governance do affect citizen participation in budget formulation (Lean et al., 2021).



## Implications for Policy and Practice

This research makes two major contributions to both theory and practice. First, the research provides significant data on citizen participation literature on budget formulation, which will build theory in public policy, public administration, public budgeting, and governance. Moreover, the study gives further insight into the factors influencing citizen participation in budget formulation. More so, the study highlights the interplay between citizen participation and budget formulation at the local level within the Ghanaian experience.

Second, the study amplifies policy and practice about how citizens can be involved more effectively and appropriately in the budget formulation process of local government authorities. This study's framework for budget formulation will allow the government to state clearly its fiscal policy and legislation for the citizens to monitor the formulation and implementation of budgets at the local level using the participation ladder as a guide. This ultimately will make the government politically accountable and efficient. The lack of an empirical framework for budget formulation can hamper the development of appropriate policies and interventions to encourage citizen participation in the budget formulation process at the local level.

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that, first, demographic factors: gender, age, and educational level, are among the factors that can influence citizens' participation in the formulation of budgets in Ghana. Second, behavioral factors, which include the trust and attitude of citizens can also influence citizen participation. On this basis, governments must take steps to empower citizens, especially women and young populations to play an active role in the budgetary process. This will require increased investment in public education to sensitize them to demand their voices be heard. The National Commission for Civic Education should engage citizens through outreach programs to educate young people and women to participate in the budgeting process.

The research findings help deepen our understanding of the interplay between citizen participation and budget formulation in Ghana. The study contributes to policy and practices about how citizens can be involved more effectively and appropriately by local government authorities in the budget formulation process.

The study had limitations although efforts were deliberately adopted to address them. The study sample size for the analysis was relatively small with only 137 responses used for the analysis. Similarly, the study was limited to one local government authority and hence future studies should focus on a

comparative analysis of three local authorities to provide further experiences of citizen participation in the budgetary process at the local level. Future studies on this topic should explain how budgeting policies are implemented to enhance community participation in budget decision-making under the Local Government of Ghana Act 936, 2016 which focuses on a people-centered and politically engaged open society.

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