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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Civic Engagement and Its Relationship with Parental Civic Socialization of Adolescents in Addis Ababa

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Abstract:

Background:

This study examined the levels of civic engagement of adolescents and its relationship with parental civic socialization.

Methods:

The research employed both quantitative research design and qualitative method. Participants were 960 school adolescents aged 15 to 19 years (Mean age was 17.7, 53.5% female) drawn from secondary schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Results:

The findings suggested that the majority of adolescents tended to fall within moderate to high levels of civic engagement and a quarter falling in the bottom quartile. Mobilizing adolescents and other young people to help the most deprived, promoting awareness on their rights, volunteering, monitoring delivery of social services, and participating in public discussion on community matters were found to be the most common types of civic engagements of adolescents. While significant positive relationship was found between parental civic socialization and adolescents' civic engagements, sex differences were noted in civic engagements, in favor of males. ANOVA also revealed significant main (across levels of civic socialization and sex) and interaction effects. High parental civic socialization had higher effect on male adolescents than female. Interviewed adolescents also confirmed that civic socialization and support they went through in their life has contributed to their enhanced or low civic engagements at large.

Conclusion:

Implications for family, school and community interventions were drawn.

Keywords: Adolescents, Civic, Engagement, Parental, Civic socialization, Relationship.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Study Context of Ethiopia

The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations define adolescents as individuals between 10 and 19 years of age [1], while Ethiopia's National Youth Policy defines those aged 15-29 as youth [2 - 5]. In Ethiopia, the proportion of those aged 15 to 29 years accounts for about a quarter of the total population of the country [2, 3] and the number of people in this age group is projected to rise significantly in the near future. The 2018 population projection as of July 2017 estimated that adolescents within the age group

of 15-19 accounted for 11% of the total population [4].

Recognizing the country's potential resting on this greater population of young people, the Ethiopian government issued the first national youth policy nearly a couple of decades ago [5] and also charted out a governance structure at the ministerial level, which, in fact, was reshuffled four times since then. The policy was crafted with the goal of ensuring the active participation of youth in political, governance, economic, social, and cultural activities and enabling in due course the youth to benefit from the results. The policy had four overarching principles (youth empowerment, participation and benefits thereof, realizing unity through diversity, young people organizing themselves freely and capacity building of the youth) that are to be translated into action through seven strategies in ten sector areas and by four actors. About 3000

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youth personality development centers were established in different regions of the country to expedite positive youth development [6] that made different contributions to the development of young people [7]. Further, young people were mobilized for voluntary services to promote civic responsibility skills. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, over 10 million youths were engaged in self-initiated voluntary services in a period of 3 months alone [8]. These and related stories would count positively on young people to the extent that the youth policy initiatives and plans are effectively implemented. However, a national assessment of the implementation of the youth policy has suggested that the implementation was not to the expected level [9]. This would then cast shadows on young people's engagements in various realms of functioning that promote their development in Ethiopia and needs to be thoroughly investigated.

Civic engagement, as a substantive subfield within developmental science [10 - 12], needs to be examined in the Ethiopian context not only in lieu of the absence of data in the field but also because available literature takes a more deficit approach of examining adolescent disengagements and destructive engagements alone. Taking a more enabling and positive approach to understanding adolescence then requires examining critical developmental milestone in adolescent transitions to adulthood that include young people's civic engagements. Adolescence is considered a critical period for civic development and when civic values, skills and commitments take shape [13 - 15] and yet this has not been adequately explored to understand the extent to which young people navigate in the construction of civic identity, particularly in the contexts of low-income countries where youth obligations seem to be accentuated and rights seem less emphasized. The contextual factors that shape adolescent civic development need to be thoroughly examined to chart out interventions to appropriate their engagements.

In fact, adolescents and youth explore socio-political ideas, are exposed to social networks, and transition into roles providing societal continuity such as voting [16]. Civic engagement during adolescence is associated with civic participation in the future [17, 18] and contributes to better social and emotional adjustment [19 - 21].

Although civic engagement is not well investigated in Ethiopia, experiences seem to suggest that adolescents and youth are involved in different civic activities, including volunteering in coordinating activities during religious festivals or worship, community outreach services, monitoring traffic jams to smoothen movements of vehicles, and school gardening. They also seem to participate in adolescent-led district and city parliaments, informal help groups like tutorial support to lower grade students, mobilizing resources and supporting orphaned children, and doing chores in their neighborhoods and community [22]. Further, adolescents organized in adolescent/youth-led parliaments promote awareness of their rights, identify adolescents who experience violence, are deprived of access to social services and report to local government offices to take appropriate actions [23]. Moreover, youths are organized under national, regional, and city level youth associations with over 8.3 million youth

members all over the country. Members of the youth-led clubs and associations participate in social and political issues such as community based discussions on local security issues, budget approval and review, and monitoring delivery of social services. Adolescents and youth, as members of the school or district/city parliaments, mobilize resources from their school and families and provide support to orphans and vulnerable children, and making them feel important and develop a sense that others are concerned about them [24].

1.2. Parents and Community Influence on Adolescent Civic Engagement

A relational developmental system theory asserts that optimal development unfolds due to the reciprocal and mutually reinforcing interactions between individuals and contexts [25]. Everyday interactions with individuals can serve as assets to foster adolescents' civic values and behaviors [26, 27]. In this regard, the fundamental role of family on adolescents' civic engagement is recognized in literature [28 - 30]. It was found that closeness between parents and adolescents is related to greater adolescents' civic responsibility [31]. Adolescents' discussions on social and political issues with parents are positively associated with a range of civic values and behaviors [32, 33]. Parent-adolescent civic discussion is a stronger predictor of political behaviors [27]. Having parents engaged in civic activities and with whom adolescents can speak about civic issues promotes both civic action and the development of civic attitudes [29]. Growing up in a family that participates in civic activities was positively related to civic responsibility [29]. Individuals displaying higher involvement in community-oriented activities during late adolescence have been encouraged by their family to engage in such activities [34, 35]. Parental civic modeling is a strong predictor of adolescents' civic engagement [28].

The contexts in developing nations like Ethiopia may seem to take a different overtone; a sort of oxymoron orientation that needs to be figured out in research like this one. On the one hand, close, collegial and dialogic parent-child relationships seem less manifest. On the other hand, socio-cultural dynamics seem to instill a sense of social and community responsibility and industriousness from the early years. Parents expect family members, including adolescents, to participate in different civic activities that benefit both individual and society. Parents serve as role models for adolescents to participate in community-based voluntary services, support needy people, volunteer during religious festivals and in times of crisis, and participate in community based social support groups. For example, several traditional associations exist in urban and rural parts of Ethiopia to give socio-economic support to their members and relations with their members in times of crisis. Community members are motivated to join community-based groups such as *iddirs*, as they are called in Amharic in Ethiopia, to support one another and other people outside their members [36, 37]. Adolescents and youth participate in voluntary service in their neighborhoods during burial ceremonies and this is a commonly practiced civic participation, an indicator of respecting social and religious values, cultivates their relationship with society and a means for adolescent and youth empowerment. Further, parents and adolescents participate in

community-based care and support structures aimed at helping vulnerable members of the community [24].

1.3. Sex Differences in Civic Engagement during Adolescence

Previous studies highlighted significant gender differences in civic engagement during adolescence [15, 34, 38]. Girls were generally more civically informed and engaged than boys [39, 40]. Findings of a cross-cultural examination of civic engagement [38] showed that boys had higher intentions of future political involvement. And yet, results pertaining to gender differences in civic engagement are mixed. For example, some authors [41] found the components of civic engagement differed by gender (in favor of females) and that females were more likely to be engaged in volunteerism during adolescence. However, both males and females participated in political forms of civic life [34, 41]. Previous research [34] and [38] found out higher intentions for future political involvement in boys; girls were more sympathetic to social justice than boys [42].

In Ethiopia, boys and girls are socialized differently which impacts their civic participation. A study [43] indicated that children, especially girls, were socialized to obey parental orders, to be passively punished, and not to demand their rights from parents. Girls were socialized to be submissive, while boys were socialized to be messy and loud, be strong, outgoing, assertive, and group leaders. Further, another study [44] found out that since their early age, males and females were socialized according to gender stereotypes through the traditional verbal arts, which associate certain activities with a certain gender. Males were found to be assigned to do tasks which are highly valued and demand strength and courage, whereas women's tasks were less valued because they are considered to be 'harmless' and to demand 'less energy and strength'. Males were socialized to be brave, courageous, dominant, and superior, while females were socialized to be shy, passive, and submissive. Moreover, a study [45] investigated the psycho-social factors that affect assertive behavior of female students and females reported having lack of social skills influenced by parenting styles, cultural orientation, lack of teachers' gender sensitiveness and access to training opportunities.

1.4. Objectives of this Study

Studying adolescent civic engagement is a contemporary imperative and yet not well explored in Ethiopia. In recent years in Ethiopia, adolescents have tended to engage in socially destructive behaviors, indicative of the negative side of adolescents' engagement. During her short address to adolescents and youth on the occasion of the International Youth Day 2020, Her Excellency Sahelwork Zewudie, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, emphasized, in tune with current research in the field [46] that many adolescents and youth were engaged in unhelpful destructive behavior and action that at times amounts to crime against one another and called everyone to promote positive youth civic engagement. She called on families, schools, communities, civil society and government to play a greater role in executing their responsibilities to help adolescents to develop socially responsible behaviors and engage in civic

activities that would facilitate their positive development. Despite this, adolescents in Addis Ababa participate in volunteering, informal helping, community-based campaigning, and civic activism. Further, in practice, owing to cultural and religious influences, many adolescents tend to follow their parents and family members to emulate and engage in various civic activities which they think are appropriate cultural and religious practices. The question is whether adolescents can simultaneously make proper engagements and mis-engagements or if these constructs are mutually exclusive. Furthermore, given the existing gender divide in Ethiopia, gender differences among adolescents and the levels of civic engagement are still not explored. The role of parents as agents of civic socialization and different levels of civic socialization and their contributions to adolescents' civic engagement have not been well recognized by government and other stakeholders and not been investigated in the Ethiopian context.

Social development model (SDM) as a theoretical framework explains adolescent development within multiple social contexts and can thus help identify which factors might promote civic development [47]. The SDM emphasizes how adolescents learn patterns of behavior through their interactions with multiple socializing units, such as family, school, peer groups, and community. However, despite many studies identifying the influences of social contexts on adolescents' civic development, studies analyzing the role of family contexts in influencing the civic development of adolescents are rare. For this reason, this study examined the influence of parental civic socialization on the civic engagements of adolescents. According to the SDM, different components are involved during the socialization process, helping to understand the development of civic behaviours in developmental contexts and describe how the theory supports the current research: (a) opportunities for involvement in activities and interactions with the family; (b) the degree of involvement and interaction of adolescents in civic engagement opportunities; (c) the individuals' behaviors acquired to participate in these interactions-considered as civic engagement (individual level).

The main purpose of this study is to examine the civic engagements of adolescents (male and female) and their relationship with parental civic socialization by raising the following research questions:

- What are the level and types of civic engagement of adolescents?
- Is there a significant sex difference in the civic engagement of adolescents?
- Is there a significant relationship between parental civic socialization and adolescents' civic engagement?
- Is there a significant difference in the civic engagement of male and female adolescents across different levels of parental civic socialization?

2. METHODS

2.1. Design

The research employed a quantitative research design to

examine the level of and relationship between adolescents' civic engagement and parental civic socialization. A qualitative method was also used to explain how parental socialization contributed to enhanced civic engagement and low civic engagement or disengagement of adolescents.

2.2. Participants and Sampling

Participants were 960 urban school adolescents (53.5% female and 46.5% male, Mean age=17.7, ages 15-19 years) from three secondary schools in Gulele Sub-City in Addis Ababa. Of the 10 districts, five districts (1, 5, 7, 9 & 10) were purposely targeted in the study where the six public secondary schools are located. Of the six secondary schools with a total student population of 11,300 (5,198 female), three secondary schools (Entoto Amba, Medihanealem and Dilber) were selected using simple random sampling. Then, using convenient sampling, 18 sections from grade 9-12, each section having 50-60 students, a total of 960 students filled the questionnaire correctly.

Eligibility criteria were adolescents (males and females) aged 15-19 years, studying from grades 9-12, living with one or both parents, no severe disability, ability to read and write in Amharic (the national working language of Ethiopia), and willing to spend at least one hour to participate in the research.

For in-depth interview, 12 adolescents were randomly selected from among those with civic engagement scores falling in the upper and bottom quartiles (extreme scores); 6 with high and another 6 with low civic engagement scores. These adolescents were contacted and participated in an in-depth interview to get additional information on their family civic experiences that may have contributed to enhanced civic engagement or low civic engagement at large.

2.3. Procedures

Prior to initiating the study, the research project was approved and ethical clearance was secured from the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University. The research project was approved on 11 August, 2022, with Reference Number: Ref: SoP-Eth Co/004/2022. The researchers also secured permission from the respective school principals to administer the questionnaire during class time. As guardians of students, the school directors were provided with written information about the research and were asked for their consent for students to participate. Students were informed about the study and asked whether they wished to participate. Data were collected from adolescents in a school setting from July to August 2022. The response rate for the questionnaire was 99%.

2.4. Measures

2.4.1. Civic Engagement

Refers to the behavioral aspect of civic engagements (reported civic actions by adolescents) as measured by the existing sources and adapted scale: Adolescents' Involvement in Community Services and Informal Helping [48, 49]. The measure comprises of 15 items, 8 items measuring adolescents

engagement in community services and 7 items measuring informal helping behavior. Responses were rated from 0=Never to 4=Always. The Exploratory Factor Analysis resulted in two interpretable factors within civic engagement scale. Items measuring adolescents' engagement in community services had factor loading from .73 to .92. Items measuring adolescents' engagement in informal helping had factor loading ranging from .65 to .93. All the items were loaded to the identified factor structures. The two extracted components (factors) explained nearly 60.53% of the total variance in the Civic Engagement Scale. Pilot results showed that the internal consistency reliability for the civic engagement scale was found to be $\alpha=.843$, suggesting that the measures could fairly be used to assess civic engagements of adolescents in Ethiopia.

The inter-correlation of the two sub-scales was found to be high, $r(960)=.88$, $P<0.01$. Further, the specific activities that adolescents reported as civic engagement in community services and informal helping are more or less aligned. For example, adolescents reported helping out around the school by doing chores (informal helping) and volunteering as an engagement in community services, which can also be considered as informal helping in school. Thus, adolescents' responses were aggregated to make up a value of civic engagement measure.

2.4.2. Levels of Civic Engagement

It refers to the variability of the total civic engagement scores at the extreme high (4th quartile), moderate (2nd and 3rd quartiles), and extreme low scores (first quartile) determined a posteriori. The values that fall in the 2nd and 3rd quartiles were merged together and generated the most middle values.

2.4.3. Parental Civic Socialization and Support

Refers to adolescents' communication with their parents about social and political issues and parental modeling of civic behaviors as measured by a five-point scale scored from 1-5, which is adapted from earlier researchers [50]. This measure has two factors: parent-adolescent civic discussion and civic modeling. The measure comprises 11 items Likert scale: 7 items measuring parental civic modeling and 4 items measuring parent-adolescent civic discussion, with responses rated from 1= never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5=Always). Reliability of the items was reported to be $\alpha = .80$. Students' responses were aggregated to make up values of the parental civic socialization scale. Civic socialization was treated as a categorical variable because it is easy and meaningful to communicate to students and parents as high (with scores range from 46-54), moderate (scores range from 36-45) and low (with scores from 27-35) level of socialization than more or less socialization scores which is less understood by students, parents and teachers. This way of categorization and communication is culturally and easily understandable in society. This way, categorization helps us to know the distinct parental civic experiences of adolescents with high and low civic engagement scores. This way of categorizing parents' level of socialization helps in designing future intervention to help adolescents with low civic engagements due to low parental civic socialization.

2.4.4. Instrument for Qualitative Data

Interview questions focus on adolescents' civic experiences in the family, including opportunities to discuss social and political issues, parental modeling of civic behaviors, any socially constructed sayings about raising children embedded with social values, and types of civic engagements.

2.5. Data Analysis

Firstly, descriptive statistics were used to examine sample distribution according to the studied variables—including the mean and standard deviation. The levels of civic engagement were identified by computing the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quartiles. Bivariate correlation was computed to examine the relationship between parental civic socialization and adolescents' civic engagements. Independent samples t-test was used to test mean differences in civic engagements of males and females, and a 2x3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) examined the mean differences in civic engagements across levels of parental civic socialization and gender. In-depth interviews with adolescents were narrated to supplement some of the quantitative results. The textual data for each adolescent was coded independently. The data were analyzed using case analysis and then proceeded to cross-case analysis. The case analysis began with a case description of each adolescent's civic experience before description, categorization and analysis of variations and commonalities in the answers to common questions about the experience of adolescents. Thematic analysis was used to develop the essence of civic experiences of adolescents with high and low civic engagement in the family.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics

As depicted in Table 1, participants were 960 adolescents (53.5% female) whose age ranged from 15-19 years. About 40.73% were 18 years, 22.81% were aged 19, 21.04% were 17 years, and 14.58% participants were 16 years old. Only .83% of the adolescent respondents were aged 15 years old. As regards their grade level, 42.1% were in grade 12, 27.4% in grade 11, 19.5% in grade 9 and 11% in grade 10.

3.2. Levels of Civic Engagement of Adolescents

As shown in Table 2, the mean civic engagement score was 41, a standard deviation of 7.4 The levels of civic engagement of adolescents were shown in the mean and quartile scores of participants. Accordingly, half of the adolescents (50.3%) had civic engagement scores below the mean, while 45.5% obtained scores above the mean civic engagement score. Quite a few (4.2%) of the participants had civic engagement score that is equal to the mean value. Males seemed to obtain higher mean civic engagement scores than females.

Attempts were also made to examine the categories of civic engagement (high, moderate and low), which participants were likely to fall based on their civic engagement scores. This was done using quartile classification. Accordingly, 25.3% had civic engagement scores ranging from 19-35, considered a low

level of civic engagement; and 26.9% had civic engagement scores ranging from 47-60 considered as high level of civic engagement. A significant proportion (47.8%) had civic engagement scores that fall in 2nd and 3rd quartiles (with scores ranging from 36-46) considered a moderate level of civic engagement.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents (N=960)

Variables	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Sex	Male	446	46.5
	Female	514	53.5
Age	15	8	0.83
	16	140	14.58
	17	202	21.04
	18	391	40.73
	19	219	22.81
Grade Level	9	187	19.5
	10	106	11
	11	263	27.4
	12	404	42.1
	9	187	19.5
	10	106	11
	11	263	27.4
	12	404	42.1

Table 2. Levels of civic engagement of school adolescents (N=960).

Description	Civic Engagement Scores (Min.-Max.)	Frequencies	Percentages
Mean Score	41	40	4.2
Standard Deviation	7.4	-	-
Scores below the mean	-	483	50.3
Scores above the mean	-	437	45.5
Low Civic Engagement (1 st Quartile)	19-35	243	25.3
Moderate Civic Engagement (2 nd & 3 rd Quartiles)	36-46	459	47.8
High Civic Engagement (4 th Quartile)	47-60	258	26.9

3.3. Types of Civic Engagements

Theoretically, the Social Development Model emphasizes that adolescents learn patterns of civic behavior through their interactions with multiple socializing units, such as family, school, peer groups, and community. Conceptually and empirically, previous scholars [12, 14, 29] define this civic engagement as individual and collective activities intended to identify and address issues of public concern or social issues and enhance the well-being of one's community and society. It was regarded to be expressed behaviorally mainly in interactions and involvement in the social world, through engagement in individual volunteering, informal helping,

community-based activities, and civic activism. Accordingly, attempts were made to check out the extent to which empirical data in this study would generate themes having allegiance to conceptual thematizing of previous research and theorizing.

Thematic analysis of the interview data has in fact, suggested emergence of themes paralleling these theoretical and conceptual themes in literature. It was noted that participants tended to commonly participate in the following major themes of civic engagement activities. Each theme is substantiated with detailed first person accounts.

3.3.1. Theme 1: Mobilizing adolescents and other people to help the most deprived

This theme describes adolescents' engagement in mobilizing adolescents and other people to support the most deprived individuals in their schools and communities. *"As members of the child parliament, we identify school adolescents who are from poor families or who lost their parents. We mobilize financial and material resources and provide them with different supports"* (16 years old female) *"Identifying the most vulnerable adolescents and helping them continue their education is one of our civic engagements. In doing so, we mobilize contributions from students, our parents, schools, and businessmen"* (17 years old male). *"We identify children especially girls who are exposed to violence and abuse. These children report to the child parliament and we immediately report the cases to the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs and police to take action on perpetrators"* (18 year old male).

3.3.2. Theme 2: Promoting Awareness of their Rights

This theme narrates how interviewed adolescents are engaged in promoting awareness of their rights and reporting protection risks to adolescents as one of the civic engagements. Detailed first person accounts of cases are presented as follows: *"As a member of the district adolescent-led parliament, I often engage in promoting awareness on the rights of children and adolescents using mini-media and community-based campaigns as strategy. We use national, regional and international days to sensitize the public"* (16 years old male) *"As members of the adolescent-led parliament, we participate in important events such as the Day of the African Child. We conduct educational programs about our rights that we are entitled to and our responsibilities to adolescents, parents, government officials and other stakeholders"* (17 years old female).

3.3.3. Theme 3: Volunteering

This theme contains how adolescents are engaged in volunteering as one of the commonly practiced civic engagements. It has been noted that most adolescents are engaged in volunteering driven by intrinsic motivation with no financial gains. Detailed first person accounts of cases are sampled as follows. *"We engage in volunteering during religious festivals, community outreach services, student traffic, and participate in the sub-city adolescent-led parliaments and youth-led groups. By doing so, we are not only benefiting but also contributing to the wellbeing of the*

community" (17 years old male). *"During religious festivities, we get organized and render volunteer service. We help in raising the national flag in the main streets of the city, cleaning roads, and work with security forces to maintain order during the religious ceremonies"* (17 years old female). *"Some school adolescents miss classes and spend in risky places: drinking and 'Khat' chewing houses. These students were exposed to addiction and to sexual abuse. We monitor and report such cases to the police and these houses were closed"* (18 years old male).

3.3.4. Theme 4: Monitoring Delivery of Social Services

This theme presents how adolescents and youth are engaged in monitoring the proper delivery of social services relevant to them. Adolescents and youth believe that participation in monitoring services is their right and a strategy to improve accountability of service providers. Detail accounts are presented as follows. *"As members of the school and district level adolescent-led parliament, selected students participate in monitoring the delivery of social services. As right holders and service users, we demand for improved education services which has resulted in increased accountability of service providers"* (17 years old female). *"Through our school monitoring, we identified gaps in the education service and demanded the school and district education officials to fulfill those facilities. As a result, the identified service gaps were prioritized in the school and district education annual plan and budget"* (18 year old male).

3.3.5. Theme 5: Participating in Public Discussion on Community Matters

This theme narrates how adolescents participated in community matters to address issues that concern adolescents and youth, family and the community. They noted that their engagement in such affairs is not only for themselves but also for others. Detail account of cases is presented here: *"Ethiopia has experienced socio-political transitions accompanied by recurrent social crises including COVID-19, conflict, and drought. As a citizen, I participated in such discussions and other community concerns in my school, community, and at government level"* (17 years old male). *"During the World Children's Day and Day of the African Child, we are invited to participate in panel discussions focusing on children's rights, child rights violations, the role of adolescents and adults to contribute the civic development of adolescents"*. (18 year old male) *"The local administration invited the community members to discuss about the social problems especially the security concerns that prevailed in recent times. As a member of the child parliament, I was invited to engage in community discussions and provided valuable ideas"* (17 year old female).

3.4. Group Comparisons in Civic Engagements

Group comparisons on civic engagements of male and female adolescents is presented in Table 3. The results of an independent sample *t*-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean civic engagement scores of male and female adolescents, $t(958) = 5.33, p < .01$. This result suggested that male adolescents had significantly higher civic engagement scores (Mean = 42, SD = 7.7) than females (M =

39.4, SD = 6.9).

Given the existing gender divide in Ethiopia, gender differences among adolescents and the levels of civic engagements are still not explored. The role of parents as agents of civic socialization and different levels of civic socialization and their contributions to adolescents' civic engagement have not been well recognized by the government and other stakeholders and not been investigated in the Ethiopian context.

Table 3. Result of independent samples t-test for gender differences in civic engagement of school adolescents.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	5.823	0.052	-5.327	958	.000	-2.5133	0.47177
Equal variances not assumed			-5.287	901.894	.000	-2.5133	0.47177

3.5. Correlation between Parental Civic Socialization and Adolescent Civic Engagement

The result of a bivariate correlation between parental civic socialization and civic engagements of adolescents is found to be high and statistically significant $r(960) = .78, p < .01$. It appears that an increase or decrease in the value (level) of parental civic socialization is associated with a likely increase or decrease in adolescents' civic engagement scores respectively.

3.6. Levels of Parental Civic Socialization and Civic Engagement

The differences in civic engagement of school adolescents as a function of parental civic socialization and support to adolescents across gender are presented in Table 4. A two-way ANOVA was used to check whether there is a statistically significant difference in the mean civic engagement scores of male and female adolescents across the three levels of civic socialization-low, moderate and high. The result showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean civic engagement scores of the three groups (low, moderate, and high) for parental civic socialization (main effect) determined by ANOVA [$F(2, 958) = 820, p < .05$]. The result was also significant for the second main effect (sex factor) [$F(1, 959) = 15.50, p < .05$] and the interaction effect (Sex*Parental Civic Socialization) [$F(1, 958) = 15.14, p < .05$]. The result showed that high parental civic socialization had a higher effect on male adolescents than female adolescents. The mean civic engagement score for male adolescents was 50 and 48 for females. For a moderate level of parental civic socialization, the mean civic engagement scores for male adolescents were 41 and 39 for females. Low parental civic socialization did not have differential effect on the civic engagement of male and

female adolescents (both groups had average scores of 33).

The result also showed the Partial Eta Squared (η^2) measuring the effect size of different variables in the ANOVA model. Partial Eta Squared (η^2) for parental civic socialization was found to be $=.632$, which was considered to be high. For the second main effect, although the result shows a statistically significant gender difference between males and females, the effect size was very small, only 1.6% of the variance in adolescents' civic engagement scores was accounted for parental civic socialization, leaving remaining after accounting for variance explained by other variables in the model.

Table 4. ANOVA summary table showing differences in mean civic engagement scores of the three groups (Tests of Between-Subjects Effect).

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Parental Civic Socialization	32105.83	2	16052.92	820	.000	.632
Gender	303.42	1	303.42	15.50	.000	.016
Sex*Parental Civic Socialization	201.34	2	100.67	5.14	.006	.011
Total	1630546	960				

3.7. Pairwise Comparisons of Mean Civic Engagement Scores

Pairwise comparisons of mean civic engagement scores of adolescents across levels of parental civic socialization are presented in Table 5. The result showed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean civic engagements of the three groups: high and medium, high and low, medium and low, both at .05 and .01 levels of significance ($P < .05, P < .01$).

Table 5. Pairwise comparisons of the mean civic engagement scores across levels of parental civic socialization.

Levels of Parental Civic Socialization (PCS) Score	Levels of PCS	Mean Civic Engagement Score	Mean Difference	Sig*.
High	Low	33.46	15.644*	.000
	Medium	40.22	8.885*	.000
Low	High	49.11	-15.644*	.000
	Medium		-6.758*	.000
Moderate	High		-8.885*	.000
	Low		6.758*	.000

Note: The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Excerpts from interviewed adolescents with high civic engagement scores confirmed how parental socialization contributed to enhanced civic engagement. "We discuss about family, social, economic and political matters. Even if we have different ideas, we manage the differences through peaceful dialogue. Growing up in an open family environment helped me develop skills to participate in civic activities and communicate civic messages" (16 years old male adolescent). "My parents are educated. They believe in having open family

discourse. We discuss about increasing insecurity, inflation, and protection concerns for girls. Participating in family discussion helped me develop civic skills and able to participate in civic platforms” (17 years old male adolescent). “My parents help the poor in my neighborhood and community. If they see people being mistreated, they are at the forefront to stand by with them. They are my role models who influenced me to do the same for the needy” (15 years old school adolescent girl) “My parents participate in community discussions on development and security issues, community based organizations, and environmental protection. These are civic activities that myself and my brothers and sisters are favorable to emulate as citizens” (A 17 years old male adolescent)

Openness of parents/open family environment, an opportunity for discussion on social, political and current issues, and parental modeling of civic behaviors are the themes emerged from the analysis. Adolescents’ participation in the family discussion helped them develop civic skills and this has positively influenced them to participate in civic engagement activities. Further, their parents’ engagement in community based development activities such as helping the poor, and standing up for those people who are treated unfairly are civic behaviors adolescents often imitate or would like to emulate.

On the contrary, adolescents with low civic engagement scores stated how the lack of open family environment and lack of opportunity in the family to emulate civic behaviors contributed to their disengagement. “My parents are non-democratic, who do not believe in discussing on social and political matters. I think their way of socialization has influenced my behavior: lack interest and motivation to engage in civic activities” (A 16 years old female adolescent). “My parents believe that children should be submissive and not participate in discussing social and political matters with adults. Such family norm and practice have influenced me not to engage in civic matters” (A 16 years old adolescent girl). “My father is an authoritarian who believes in shaping children to be docile. He believes submissive adolescents are well-behaved and respecting social norms. This has dictated me to be nonassertive and do not participate in child or youth-led clubs” (A 16 years old male adolescent). “My parents do not know their responsibilities to be role models for their children. They are busy in accomplishing daily activities with less interest to engage in community-based civic activities. There is less opportunity for me to emulate civic behavior” (A 15 years old female adolescent).

There are culturally constructed sayings that dictate how parents and other adults should socialize children and adolescents. These sayings could discourage positive adult-child interaction that should have enhanced social skills of adolescents relevant for their civic engagement. One participant (16 years old male adolescent) said “Playing with a child is the same as exposing one’s wound to fly”. “What you discuss with a child is the same as hiding yourself with dogs”. “Children should be seen not to be heard”. Some parents or adults do not believe in the idea of their children and adolescents sitting and having a discussion with them. Whenever they children and adolescents ask questions, they are

told to shut up because parents think that they are not grown up to discuss social issues. Parents and adults consider a good child to be silent in the presence of adults and being passive is appreciated by parents and the community.

The case analyses resulted in major themes as explanatory factors for low level of civic engagement. These include: no open family discussion, never sit with children and adolescents to discuss issues, being disciplined to be submissive, and limited opportunity to emulate civic behaviors. Reflective of cultural and social values, parents who do not believe in having an open discussion with adolescents, disciplining children to be submissive with the view of making them well-behaved and respecting social norms, and lack of opportunity to emulate appropriate civic behavior in the family seemed to have contributed to adolescents’ low level of civic engagement or disengagement, or low level of skills to participate in civic engagement activities.

4. DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to explore the civic engagement of adolescents and particularly to describe the levels of civic engagements, gender differences, relationships between parental civic socialization and civic engagement, and differences in civic engagement across levels of parental civic socialization.

The results indicated that nearly a quarter of adolescents had low civic engagement and the majority of adolescents fall within moderate to high civic engagement levels implying the possibility that many adolescents who disengage in various activities are also likely engage in a number of beneficial activities. The possible explanation is that, in addition to parental civic socialization and support, school and community based civic engagement initiatives such as engaging adolescents in volunteering, informal helping activities, participation in school clubs, and district and city level adolescent-led parliaments and their participation in promoting awareness on their rights and responsibilities might have contributed to an increased civic engagement of adolescents. The government of Ethiopia reported that more than 63,500 adolescent-led parliaments and school-based clubs were established at school, district and regional levels and significant number of school adolescents participated in civic engagement activities across the country, including Addis Ababa [23]. These structures can be used to promote adolescent and youth civic engagements. A national assessment on the implementation of the national Youth Policy revealed that one in five adolescents and youth aged 10 to 29 were able to participate in the national campaign against COVID-19 in Ethiopia in 2021 generally contributing a monetary equivalence of nearly a third of the national government budget for the year [9].

The findings of this study contribute to international civic engagement research. Research on adolescent and youth civic engagement in developed countries has emphasized the importance of growing up in a civic context to develop in civic domain. For example, the authors [29] found out the importance of considering multiple contexts to understand what factors are associated with adolescents’ and youth civic

engagement. The finding showed the relative influence of neighborhood opportunities, schools, friends' civic engagement, and parents' civic engagement on civic attitudes and civic behaviors among adolescents and youths.

Mobilizing adolescents and other young people to help the most deprived, promoting awareness of their rights, volunteering, monitoring delivery of social services, and participating in public discussions on community matters were found to be the major types of civic engagements of adolescents. Consistent with the current finding, previous research found out that adolescents as members of the community engaged in community-based care and support initiatives to help the most vulnerable members of the community including children, youth, women and the elderly, and participate in volunteering in their neighborhood and communities in times of crisis [24, 37]. Furthermore, adolescents were engaged in promoting awareness on their rights, identifying children and adolescents who experience violence, deprived of access to social services and report to local government offices [23]. The importance of getting civically engaged in society has been recognized as a central process for adolescents and youth to be becoming responsible citizens: becoming change agents to address social problems affecting their lives and the community, and doing something for others allows them to be connected to society, and for youngsters, involvement in society facilitates the development of a sense of agency. In modern and traditional multicultural societies, for adolescents, getting involved in civic engagement activities is important, because societies' transcendence is linked to people's connectedness.

The result of the study revealed a statistically significant difference in the civic engagements of adolescents, in favor of males. Research indicates the existence of gender differences in civic engagement during adolescence [34, 51]. Females reported being civically engaged in volunteerism more than boys in previous studies [41, 52]. Others reported boys scoring higher in participation indicators such as planning to vote or following the news [34, 51]. Furthermore, male students had higher average civic engagement scores than females [38, 40].

Gender difference in civic engagement can be seen as a result of an interaction between various elements, such as a gender-biased socialization that affects gender roles in the field of civic engagement and provides different experiences for boys and girls. This is particularly true in traditional societies like Ethiopia, where girls and boys are socialized differently. For example, a study [44] indicated males are socialized to be brave, dominant, superior and courageous, while females are socialized to be shy, passive, submissive, *etc.* This socialization process appeared to have influenced boys and girls differently—whether to engage and not to engage in civic activities in their neighborhoods, schools and communities. The fact that girls have low civic engagement scores means that they have limited civic engagement opportunities. Further, another study [43] indicated that children, especially girls, are socialized to obey parental orders, to be passively punished, and not to demand their rights from parents. Girls are socialized to be submissive, while boys are messy and loud, strong, outgoing, assertive, and group leaders. Parents treat boys with more freedom than girls.

This is because the boy has to grow into a man, so he has to go out and experience his culture before he is able to provide for his own family someday. The girls stay home with their mothers and help with household chores and learn to cook for their future family. Moreover, findings of another research [45] found out that females reported to be less assertive due to the influence of parenting, cultural orientation, and access to training opportunities. Assertiveness is an essential social skill for enhanced civic engagement of young people. Civic engagement at the community level requires meeting with different people outside home setting, leading and coordinating groups of adolescents and youth to engage in civic activities. This essentially requires confidence, lobbying and leadership skills, which are essentially considered as 'masculine' than 'feminine' characters. Thus, it appeared that gender socialization may have created gender differences and impacted the civic engagement of male and female adolescents differently.

This study showed a significant and positive correlation between parental civic socialization and adolescents' civic engagement. This is consistent with the findings of the previous study showing that adolescents' discussions on social and political issues with parents is positively associated with civic values and behaviors [32, 33]. Parental civic modeling is a predictor of civic participation among adolescents [28].

Consistent with the previous results, the finding of this study indicated the existence of statistically significant difference in the mean civic engagements of adolescents for parental civic socialization (first main effect), the second main effect (gender), and interaction effect (Sex*Parental Civic Socialization). High and moderate level of parental civic socialization appeared to have a higher influence on male adolescents than females. The result also showed differences in mean civic engagements of the three groups due to differences in the levels of parental civic socialization. From the qualitative finding, it was found out that having parents who believe and support open discussion with adolescents on social and political issues and parental modeling of civic behaviors appeared to have helped adolescents to develop civic behaviors and skills. On the other hand, parents who do not have open discussion with adolescents, discipline their children to be submissive, and do not model appropriate civic behavior seem to have contributed to adolescents' lack of civic skills and interest to engage in civic activities.

Although there is limited research in Ethiopia, the fundamental role of family in adolescents' civic engagement is strongly recognized in previous literature. Parents are key players in socio-political socialization during adolescence [53].

Growing up in a family that shows interest in civic issues was positively related to civic responsibility and civic behaviors [29]. Further, previous research found out that family and community contexts play an important role in influencing the likelihood of adolescents' involvement in civic activities [54].

Families vary considerably in the extent to which they introduce their children to the socio-political world. Some parents provide a rich literacy environment for their children to

acquire knowledge and skills on social and political issues. Still some parents are themselves socially and politically active, or they may display an interest in these issues through frequent discussions and media use. The current findings indicated that parents differ in their levels of civic socialization which further influences civic engagement of adolescents. Civic experiences in the family contribute to the preparation of adolescents and youth for civic responsibility. The civic engagement gap between adolescents and youth can partly be narrowed by creating a supportive family environment where parents can serve as initiators to impart civic skills and reinforcing adolescents to participate in civic activities in and outside the family context.

CONCLUSION

The majority of adolescents had civic engagement scores that fall in the moderate to a high level. Mobilizing adolescents and youth to help the most deprived, promoting awareness of their rights, volunteering, monitoring the delivery of social services, and participating in discussion on community matters are the common types of civic engagement of adolescents.

Parents as agents of civic socialization seemed to have significant role in enhancing or deterring the civic development of adolescents. Parental civic socialization was strongly associated with the civic engagement of adolescents.

The study revealed the existence of sex difference in civic engagement in favor of males. One possible explanation is attributed to the gender divide in Ethiopia influencing the way parents and family members socialize boys and girls.

The result showed the existence of difference in civic engagement of the three groups (low, moderate, and high) for parental civic socialization (main effect), sex factor, and the interaction effect (sex and parental civic socialization). High and moderate level of parental civic socialization appeared to have higher influence on male adolescents than females.

Reinforcement of adolescents' civic skills and engagements more at community level is needed to support adolescents to aspire to be strong civic actors that can contribute to positive changes in themselves, their families and communities.

The existence of positive and significant correlation between parental civic socialization and adolescents' civic engagement scores does not imply causations. Other factors (confounding variables) such as socio-economic status, prior trainings and access or lack of opportunity to participate in different youth-led groups could be potential confounders that might influence the civic engagement of adolescents. This is one of the limitations of this study due to the correlational design of the research.

Future researchers can explore the civic engagement of adolescents considering other variables such as rural and urban, in and out of school adolescents, and from different socio-economic backgrounds.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study revealed that a significant

proportion of adolescents had civic engagement scores that fall in the moderate to high civic engagement level. This implies the potential of strengthening the existing initiatives that can support adolescent students to enhance their civic participation. This requires mapping out the existing initiatives in the family, school and community contexts, opportunities, and potential for strengthening.

The study was conducted with urban adolescent student samples. More work is needed to see whether or not these results apply to other adolescent groups, such as rural, non-student adolescent population from different socioeconomic strata.

The results of the study revealed the significant role of parents in enhancing or deterring adolescents' civic development. On a positive side, the findings suggest the potential role that parents can play as agents of civic socialization to support adolescents to develop civic behaviors. The role of parents in helping adolescents to develop civic responsibility is indicated in the National Child Policy [55]. Thus, policymakers and implementers (government and stakeholders) need to support parents through training, mentoring and follow up to help adolescents' develop civic responsibilities and engage in civic activities that benefit themselves and the community. By doing so, parents can prevent adolescents from engaging in socially destructive behaviors and be able to thrive and become productive members of the society.

The researchers wish to stress that our results revealed another side of the transmission of participating behavior: the fact that children of non-engaged parents have a very low chance of being involved. This result could stimulate further research to find out whether other socializing agencies (e.g. neighborhood, peers and schools) could act as role models for the associational involvement of adolescents whose parents are not involved.

The result of the study shows the existence of sex difference, females were reported to be less civically engaged than males. While this is expected in traditional society like Ethiopia in which girls and boys are socialized differently, there is a need to overcome the civic engagement gap. Hence, there is a need to target contextual influences, including family, schools, peer groups, and community based institutions, in facilitating adolescents' civic development, and, more importantly to support girls.

There is a need to establish programs that support girls to have increased civic engagement opportunities at family, school and other contexts especially for those adolescents with civic engagement gap. For example, it is possible to establish and support media and other community programs to provide media education and awareness for parents to create open family environment for civic discussion and model appropriate civic behaviors for their children and adolescents. The programs should aim at portraying the impacts of culturally constructed sayings that negatively impact parents' ways of socialization such as discouraging open parent-adolescent interaction on civic issues, disciplining children and adolescents to be submissive and less assertive which

ultimately contribute to disengagement of adolescents. A behavioral change communication models should be designed to change knowledge and attitudes of parents and communities to eliminate the negative sayings into positive ones that encourage parents and children and adolescents to have open family environment for discussion on social issues and current events.

The SDM model would suggest that opportunity is the lowest level of socialization; perhaps increasingly more active levels of civic involvement, development of civic skills and reinforcement from parents, schools, peer group, community, and government structures are needed. The results suggest that perhaps adolescents must be actively engaged in civic opportunities across all of the social domains for sustained civic development. Moreover, according to SDM, it is possible that reinforcement of civic skills and engagements more at community level is needed to support adolescents to aspire to be strong civic actors that can contribute to positive changes in their communities.

Support adolescents at community level would enhance opportunities for involvement and interactions with others, the possibility of developing individuals' civic skills, and an environmental arena supporting civic values and civic behaviors. Creating such an environment would positively affect both adolescent development, because it strengthens the transmission of civic values and skills, and parents and whole families, by providing possibilities to broaden their social network with teachers, community based structures and government arena to influence decisions on issues impacting their lives.

This study has certain limitations. Although the finding shows the existence of a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between parental civic socialization and adolescents' civic engagement scores, it is difficult to establish cause effect relationships between variables due to the correlational design of the research. Likewise, questionnaire methodology has the limitation of self-reported scales. One should be cautious about the generalization of results from this study. The use of self-report measures may be susceptible to social desirability. Some adolescent respondents may have responded in a socially desirable way to present themselves and their parents in a positive way. Nonetheless, all the instruments used or those on which the used scales were based on a demonstrated reliability and validity in adolescent populations. Researchers interested to study adolescent civic engagements should collect data from family, teachers, and friends to have a comprehensive understanding of contextual factors in Ethiopia.

Generalisability of the study results: the study results can be used to generalize to the school adolescent population aged 15-19 in Addis Ababa. First, the study areas and schools were selected using simple random sampling. Everyone in the sample pool had an equal chance of being selected for the study. Second, the measures administered for adolescents were validated to the Ethiopian context through rigorous validation procedure. This implies the data gathered and results obtained would reflect the reality of adolescents in Addis Ababa. Further, the quantitative and qualitative findings generated in

this study have allegiance to the theoretical and conceptual thematizing of previous research, and empirical findings.

Finally, this study contributes to international civic engagement research. According to data available in different countries, young people do not seem to be interested in public and political life, and this is a matter of concern since young people's civic behavior, knowledge, attitudes and perceptions have been found to be a strong predictor of citizens' engagement in adulthood. Most importantly, there is limited evidence on adolescents' civic engagements, types of civic engagements, sex differences in civic engagements, and how families and cultural issues influence civic engagement of adolescents in developing countries like Ethiopia. Hence, this study will contribute to addressing the knowledge gap based on cross cultural data on civic engagement of adolescents and further trigger interest among researchers to conduct further investigations on the issue and use findings for programming to address the civic engagement gap of adolescents and youth.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WHO	= World Health Organization
SDM	= Social development model
ANOVA	= Analysis of Variance
ANPPCAN	= African Network for Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect

ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

The research project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Addis Ababa University, College of Education and Behavioral Studies., School of Psychology, and secured ethical clearance (Ref. no. SOP-Eth Co/004/2022).

HUMAN AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

No animals were used for studies that are the basis of this research. All the humans were used in accordance with the ethical standards of the committee responsible for human experimentation (institutional and national), and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2013 (<http://ethics.iit.edu/ecodes/node/3931>).

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

Informed consent was obtained from all participants of this study.

STANDARDS OF REPORTING

COREQ guidelines were followed.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

The data supporting the findings of the article is available in the Addis Ababa University Research Data Repository at: rdm.aau.edu.et, reference number: <https://doi.org/10.20372/aaurdr/KSKPXB>

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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