



Ghana

through the lense of Children

Present and the Next 20 years

Survey Report 2021



Child Rights International

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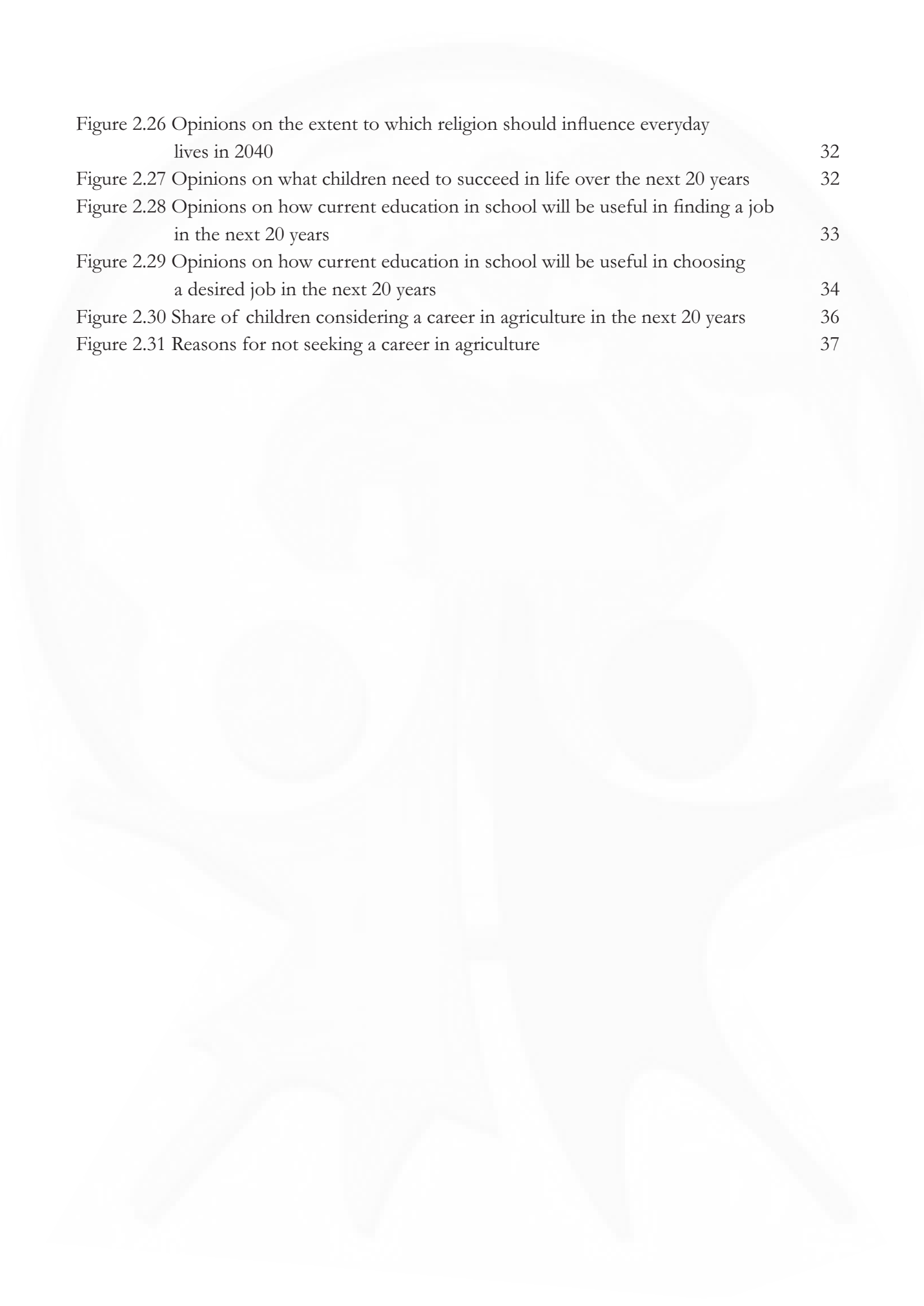


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FINDINGS

RESPONDENTS
11,288
age 12-17 years

48%
Female

52%
Male

93% of children are proud to be Ghanaians

However, **55%** of the children want to leave the country by 2040 citing jobs, education and better standards of living as the reasons.

Top 3 factors that make children proud of Ghana:

1. Peace and stability 48%
2. Freedom of speech 39.1%
3. System of democracy 31.8%



72% of female children forecast a bright future for Ghana in 20 years compared to **65%** of male children.



80% of children are not interested in building a career in agriculture in the next 20 years.

Top 5 social problems in Ghana today:

1. High unemployment 66%
2. High poverty level 42%
3. High level of corruption 36%
4. High level of streetism 36%
5. Poor education 29%

81% of children say religion is important

73% say religion is personal as opposed to religious affiliation of family or culture.



Top 3 things children would do if they become a leader:

1. Create jobs 71%
2. Fight corruption 42%
3. Improve education 37%



Only 40% are confident in finding job in the next 20 years

When given **Gh¢5000**, children will invest in their education (51%), start a business (27%) or save it (16%).

Top 5 things needed for Ghana to progress in 2040:

1. Reducing corruption (66%)
2. Reducing poverty (48%)
3. Creating new jobs (46%)
4. Better living standards (27%)
5. Limiting powers of politicians (25%)



Executive Summary

Child Rights International commissioned a national survey to understand the values, attitudes, concerns and optimism about the future of Ghanaian children. Understanding the views, priorities, and concerns of Ghana's young population is essential for policy makers to build the brightest future for them and unlock the full potential of the country's demographic dividend. The survey sampled the opinions from 11,288 respondents aged 12 to 17 in all 16 regions of the country. It was initiated to solicit information on the life experience of Ghanaian children about the present and their vision of the country for the future.

Key Findings

1. National identity and pride

- Over 90% of the respondents say they are proud to be Ghanaian.

Top five factors that make children proud of Ghana

- Peace and stability (48%)
- Freedom of speech (39.1%)
- System of democracy (31.8%)
- Cultural diversity (28.3%)
- Country's natural resources (25.7%)

2. Optimism about the country's future

- Nearly 80% of the respondents say they are optimistic about Ghana in the next 20 years.
- More than two in ten (22%) see the country's future as bleak.

Priority of children if given the chance to become leaders for a day.

- Create jobs (71%)
- Fight corruption (42%)
- Improve quality education (37%)
- Encourage entrepreneurship (31%)
- Improve infrastructure (21%)



3. Views on management of funds

- Invest in their education (51%)
- Start a new business (27%)
- Save it (16%)

4. The economy (standard of living)

- A little over 60% of the respondents believe the country is on the right track.
- 38% say it is heading in the wrong direction.
- 55% of the respondents say they are not satisfied with the standard of living.

Top five things needed for Ghana to progress in the next 20 years

- Reducing corruption (66%)
- Reducing poverty (48%)
- Creating new jobs (46%)
- Better living standards (27%)
- Limiting powers of politicians (25%)

Finding jobs by the year 2040

- 94% of the respondents say they are worried about getting jobs in the next two decades.



5. Social problems children are most concerned about today

- High unemployment (66%)
- High level of poverty (42%)
- Corruption (36%)
- High number of orphans and street children (36%)
- Poor education

6. Top priorities of children for government to increase spending

- Employment creation (77%)
- Investment in quality education (50%)
- Social protection systems (50%)
- Infrastructure (37%)
- Agriculture development (36%)
- Security (22%)

7. Opinions of children about religion

- 81% of the children say religion is important.
- 73% of the children say religion is personal as opposed to religious affiliation of their family (parents or guardians) or culture.

What children need in order to succeed in life in the next 20 years

- Hardwork (25%)
- Educational qualification (23%)
- Individual talents (20%)
- Individual effort (12%)
- Status/lineage/parent's social standing (10%)
- Religious beliefs (5%)
- Luck and chance (4%)

8. The value of current educational system to finding future jobs

- Over half of the children (53%) say they are optimistic.
- 47% of the respondents paint a bleak picture as to how the country's current educational system would help them find jobs in the next 20 years.

- On the issue of how today's educational system is essential in the next 20 years in choosing the desired job, the children are more divided over the issue.

9. Skills requirement for future jobs

- Higher level of training or skills (54%)
- Acquisition of technical or vocational skills (35%)
- Technological and innovative skills (12%)

10. Children's attitudes towards agriculture career in the future

- About 20% of the children would want to develop a career in agriculture, while 80% expressed uncertainty.
- Lack of start-up capital was the topmost reason cited by respondents for not considering a career in agriculture.

11. Intentions of children to leave the country

- 55% of the respondents say they wish to migrate to another country, while 11% would either stay in the country or leave.
- A majority of the respondents cited greener pastures, education and better standard of living as reasons why they would leave the country when there is a chance.



Conclusion

The survey found out that national pride is widespread among Ghanaian children. Although some of the children are hopeful about the future of the country in the next two decades, many children are wary of the current economic and social conditions (living standards). The findings suggest that there must be conscious effort by government to provide better standard of living for the citizenry. However, looking to the future, the children see the country as heading in the right direction.

The survey findings also indicate that some of the respondents believe that the country can change in the next 20 years by addressing such problems as corruption and unemployment as well as encouraging entrepreneurship, limiting the powers of politicians and investing in quality education.

Finally, the results suggest that religious influence in the country is likely to change in the next two decades as more children embrace the idea that hard work, educational qualification and individual talents are important factors they need to succeed in life rather than religious beliefs and practices.





1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

Ghana adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and passed the Children's Act 1998, 560. Both statutes provide that children have a right to express their views and State Parties have the obligation to listen to the views of children and to facilitate their participation in all matters affecting them within the country. However, taking the views of children seriously in accordance with their age and maturity has proved one of the most challenging to implement. This commitment calls for the engagement of children in national discourse for them to express their opinions on issues that affect their welfare if they have the capacity to do so.

Children form the largest proportion of Ghana's population, with almost 50% of Ghana's population being below 19 years¹. According to Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) estimates, in 2019, there were 14.7 million children aged between 10 and 19 years in Ghana. Thus, four in ten Ghanaians are children aged between 10 and 19 years. The main challenge brought about by this segment of the population is the ever-growing need for better services to improve their lives. If Ghana

can meet the social and economic needs of this population, then the socio-economic development of the country will be greatly enhanced. The large population of children will become an asset to the country. To a very large extent, these children will determine the focus and direction of the country's future.

The demographic significance of this large cohort of children is also increasingly taking centre stage in discussions about socio-economic development. For example, most national discussions speak directly about improving educational and employment opportunities for the youth (15 to 35 years including children). However, many children will eventually enter the labour force and face an employment market that creates few new jobs. This is reflected in the increasing levels of children who are on the street and highly vulnerable to recruitment into petty crime, gangs, and prostitution. As a result, young people's issues deserve a place on public policy agenda, especially since these age groups constitute a significant share of the nation's population and are recognized as a window of opportunity for rapid human capital development and economic growth².

In addition, children have contributed significantly in the development of Ghana in many ways; for example, at the community

¹ Ghana Statistical Service 2019. Ghana Living Standards Survey: Report of the seventh round. Accra: GSS

² World Bank (2006). World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.



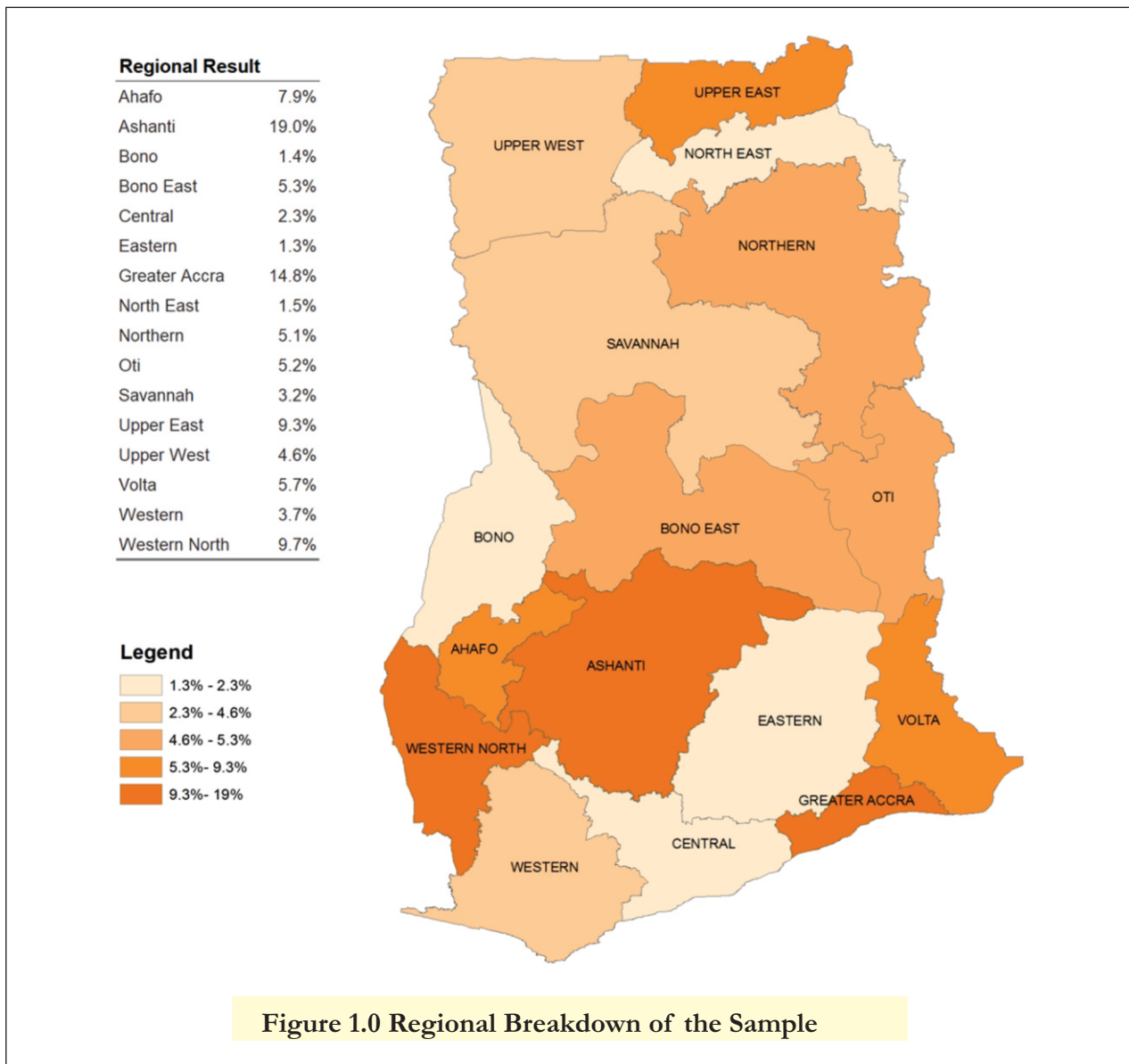
level, through play and the arts, and in their economic contribution to their families.

With that in mind, CRI commissioned a national survey to understand the values, attitudes, concerns and optimism of children aged 12 to 17. Understanding the views, priorities, and concerns of Ghana's young population is essential for policy makers to build the brightest future for them and unlock the full potential of the country's demographic dividend. The survey was designed to contribute to this understanding. The survey

was initiated in response to an identified gap in information about children's perspective about the present and their vision for the future.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the survey was to provide evidence on the values and issues of concern to children and provide them the needed opportunity to have their voices heard on key issues that affect them. The survey sought to gauge and explore children's perception on





these issues, including national identity, children's concerns, the country's future in the next 20 years; the Ghanaian economy; current education and job prospects in the future, religious landscape and intentions to leave the country.

1.3 Design of the Study

The survey is nationally representative of a section of randomly selected Ghanaian children. Data in this report are drawn from children aged 12 and 17 and were collected from June 2020 to April 16, 2021.

A stratified random sample of 11,288 children across the country, including urban and rural areas was used to gauge responses from sixteen regions of Ghana, with a substantial proportion of answers coming from Ashanti Region.

Figure 1.0 shows that the sample in the Ashanti Region (19%) and Greater Accra Region (14.8%) represents overall approximately a fourth of the respondents. The strong share of respondents from the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions does not come as a surprise as they both have the largest population in the country.

The sampled children are made up of 1093 (9.7%) from the Western North Region, 1051 (9.3%) from the Upper East Region, 641 (5.7%) from the Volta Region and 586 (5.2%) from the Oti Region. While the Ashanti Region recorded the highest proportion of the respondents, the Eastern Region recorded the lowest number of respondents even though Eastern Region is not considered as having the lowest population in Ghana. Over half of the respondents (51.9%) were males, and just over

one in ten children (10.1%) were out of school. Roughly, 69% of the children had basic level of education while the remaining 31% of respondents had senior high school education.

The survey was undertaken through verbal questionnaire administered to the respondents in a language they understood and were comfortable expressing themselves in. The door-to-door approach was used in targeting respondents.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The study report is arranged in three sections. Section One presents the introduction and rationale of the study and provides a brief profile of the sample and methodology employed for the study. Section Two represents discussions and findings of the study. Sections Three and Four present conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

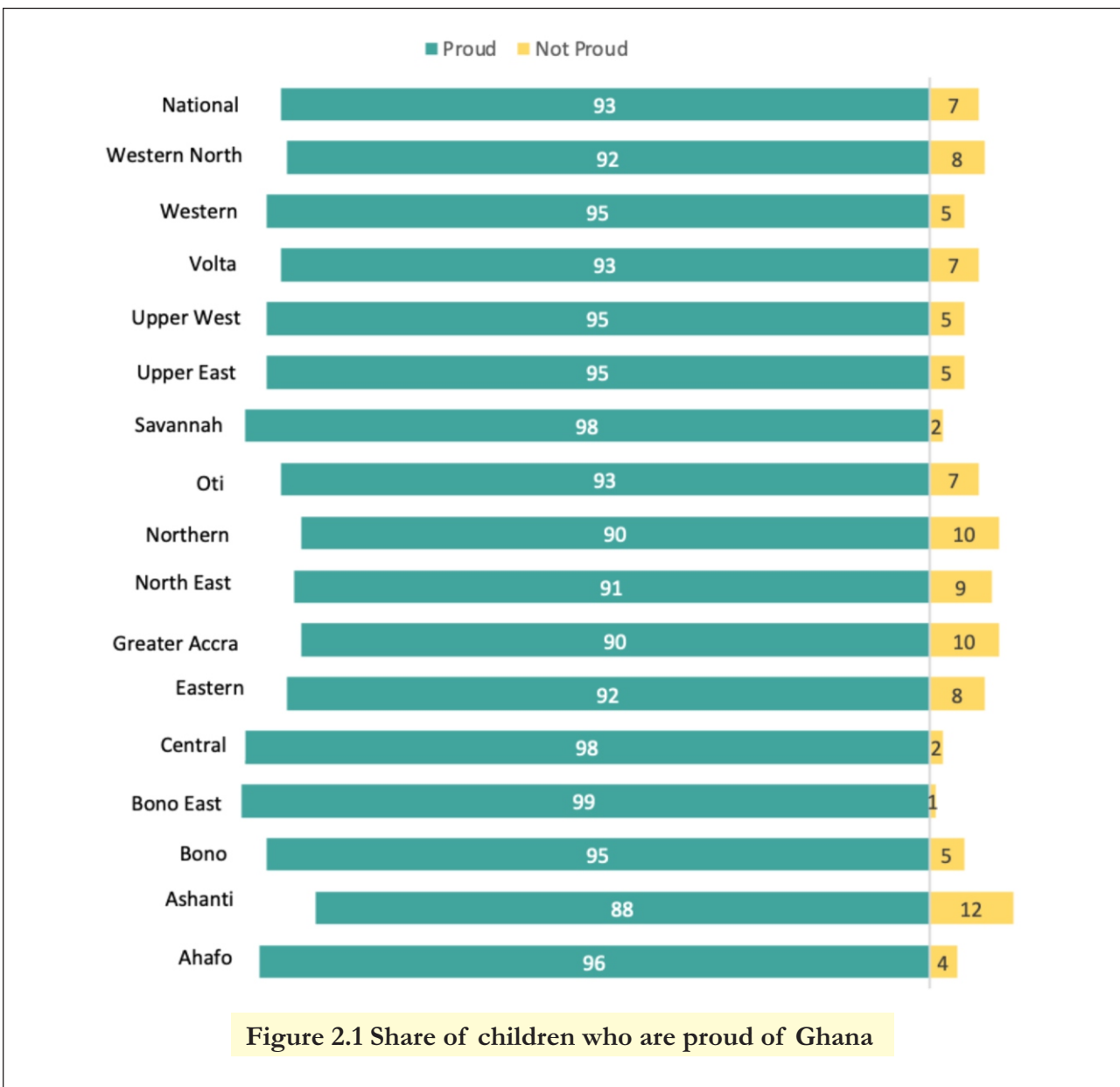
NOTE: Data collection was done in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2012 (Act 843) of Ghana and the Child Protection Policy of Child Rights International.



2. Key Findings

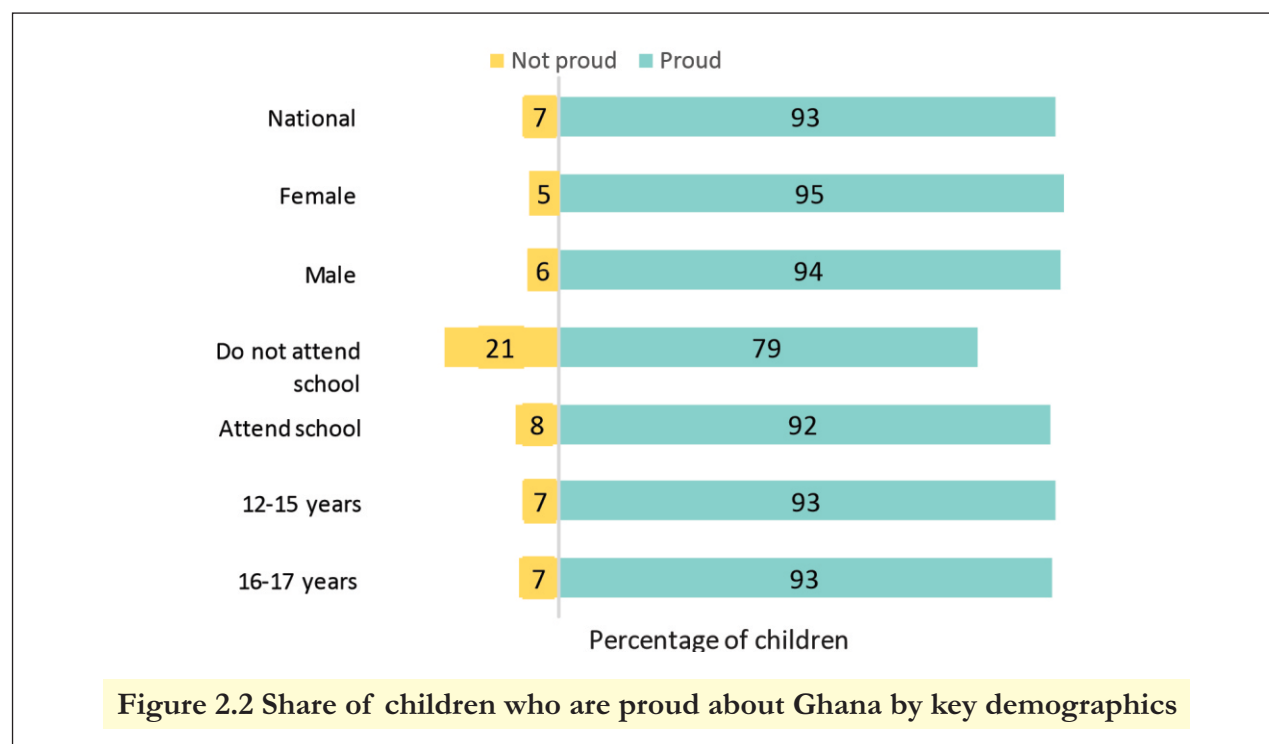
2.1 National Identity and Pride

In order to establish what children are proud of, we asked them the extent to which they are proud of Ghana. Overwhelmingly, nine in ten respondents affirmed their national pride, indicating a strong sense of national identity. In all the 16 regions, there was widespread pride about the country among the respondents. This includes, at least, every respondent in Bono East (99%), Savannah (98%), Central (98%) and Ahafo (96%). The share of children in the Ashanti region who say they are not proud to be Ghanaian (12%) is higher than others in other regions. The findings indicate that more respondents expressed high levels of pride in their nationality.





In examining the differences that exist, according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, we find that national pride is expressed more by those who have been to school. The respondents, who had basic school education or who are still students of JHS, seemed to be slightly more proud of the country than the other respondents. In addition, the female respondents appear to feel more proud than their male peers slightly.



So what is it that makes Ghanaians so proud to be Ghanaians, and why are they so keen to be reborn in this country? In response to this question, the peace and stability of the country (48%) topped the list of factors that make children most proud of Ghana. Freedom of speech, system of democracy, the culture of the country, natural resources and sense of unity among citizens followed (Figure 2.3). One in three children identified the freedom of speech as the second factor that makes them so proud about the country.

Interpretation 1

Children listed peace and stability as the main reason for finding pride in Ghana. They mentioned the following as contributing factors:

- The absence of civil war during elections held in Ghana
- No insurgence of extremist or terrorist groups in the country.
- Freedom of movement enjoyed by all within the country.
- The celebration of diversity, harmony and cultural integration among the various ethnicities.



Regarding freedom of speech, the children listed the following as indicators of Freedom of Speech:

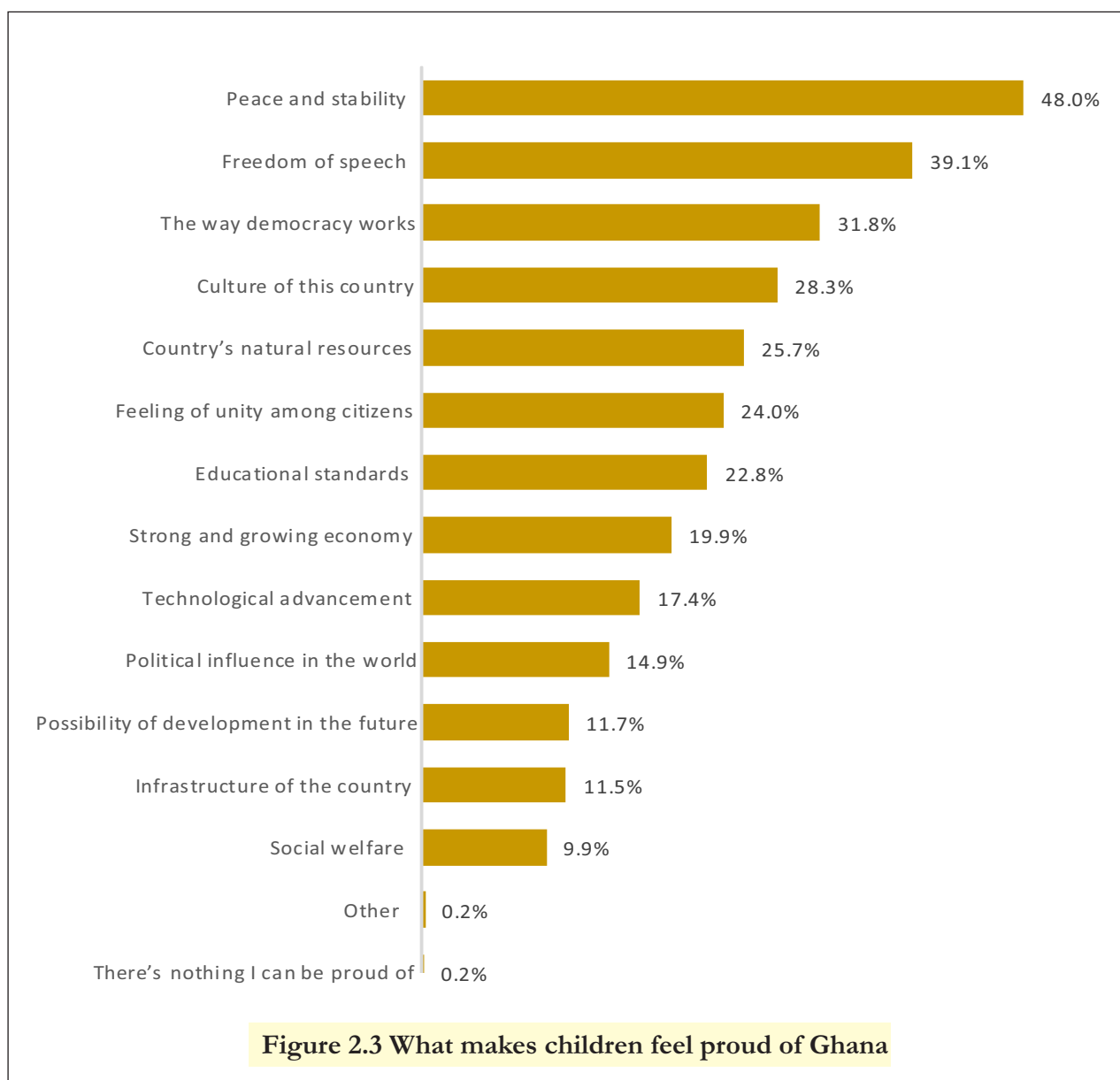
- Individuals being permitted to speak their minds on media platforms such as TV and radio using language meant to incite violence, the use of profane language without fear of reprimand.
- The manner in which people conduct themselves on social media, call in sessions on radio, TV and engage others on platforms and contribute to each other over disagreements without any form of regulation or fear of reprimand.
- How people employ the use of sensationalized or scandalous pronouncements or utterances or news to gain public attention or elicit some expected form of response or to 'trend' or go 'viral'.
- The glorification of obnoxious or intolerable speech sometimes meant to elicit public attention without regulation.

Children view the above mentioned practices on traditional and modern media platforms as the acceptable ways to communicate and indeed the fastest way to gain recognition or fame. Also, there was a noted absence of importance placed on cultural values and nationalism in media spaces by children, the children indicated. This was evident in the percentage of foreign content as opposed to local content in our media spaces.

Next in line was the fact that ours is a free, democratic country, that gives individuals a lot of freedom and is essentially a peaceful country. About a third of the respondents (31%) felt this was one of the top credentials for them to be proud of Ghana. A little over a quarter (28%) of children felt that the culture of the country, in terms of its multiculturalism and traditions, among others, serve as a source of pride for them. One in four children felt that the country's natural resources inspire pride.

It is noticeable that most children are collectively less proud of the social welfare system, infrastructure, future development, political influence in the world, technological advancement and economic achievement.

Children think that the peaceful nature of the country is what makes Ghana such a great country to live in. It was clear that the democratic credentials and freedom of speech are what set Ghana apart from the rest of the African nations.



The survey also gauged the level of pride in being a citizen of Ghana among children. Across the board, there was widespread pride among the respondents for being citizens of Ghana. Almost all the respondents share in this position. This pattern is most apparent in North East, Volta and Bono East Regions, where at least 90% say they are very proud citizens of the country.

It is to be noted that a sizable fraction of children in the Ashanti, Oti and Bono Regions are less proud of being citizens of Ghana compared with children from other regions.

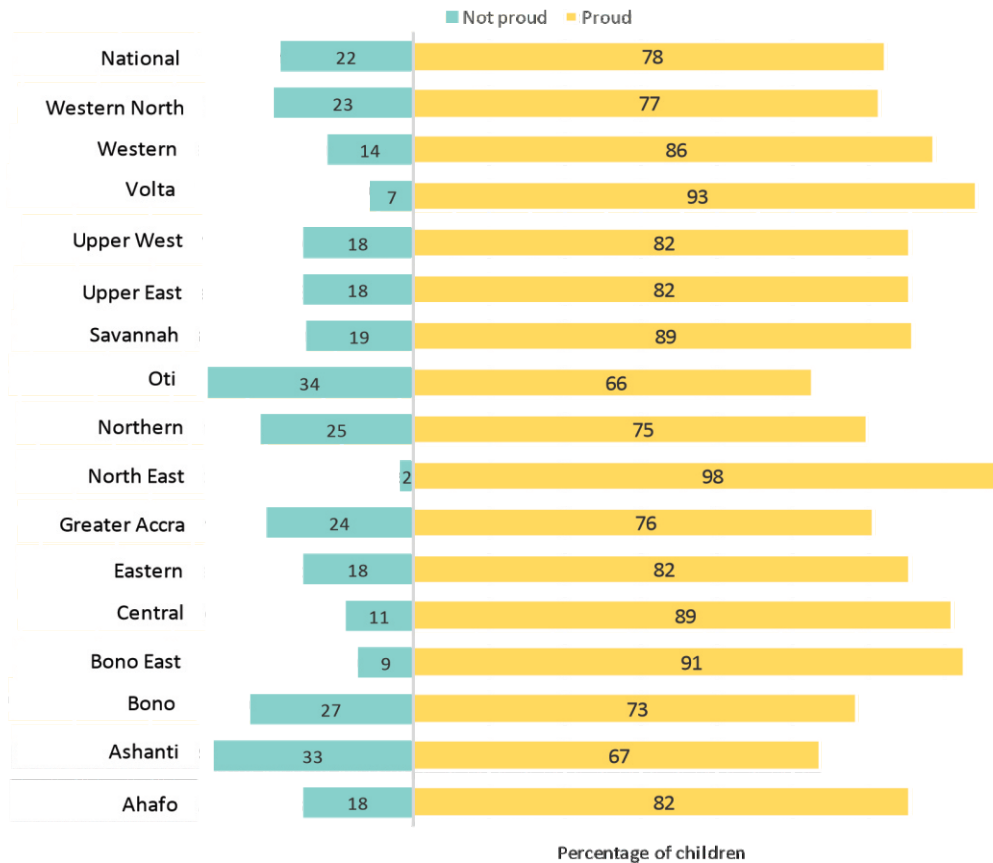


Figure 2.4 Share of children who are proud to be a citizen of Ghana

A more detailed analysis of these feelings of pride among the children is expressed more by children who have been to school. The respondents, especially those who have completed basic education or who are still in school (JHS) seem to be slightly more proud of their country than their other peers. The female respondents (25%) are proud of their country than their male counterparts (20%).

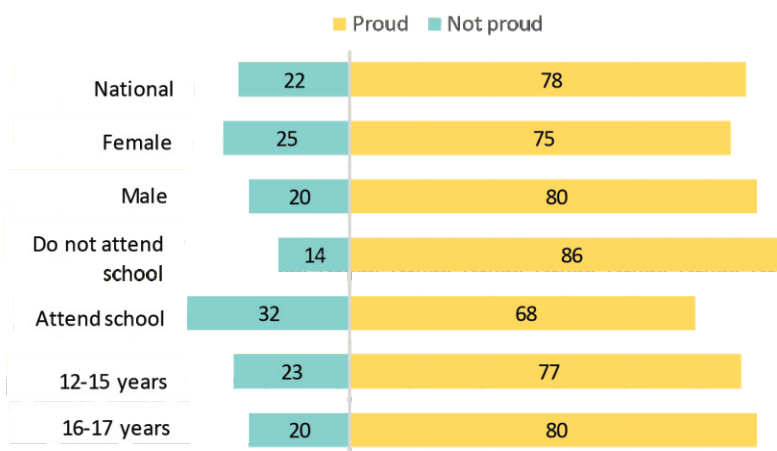


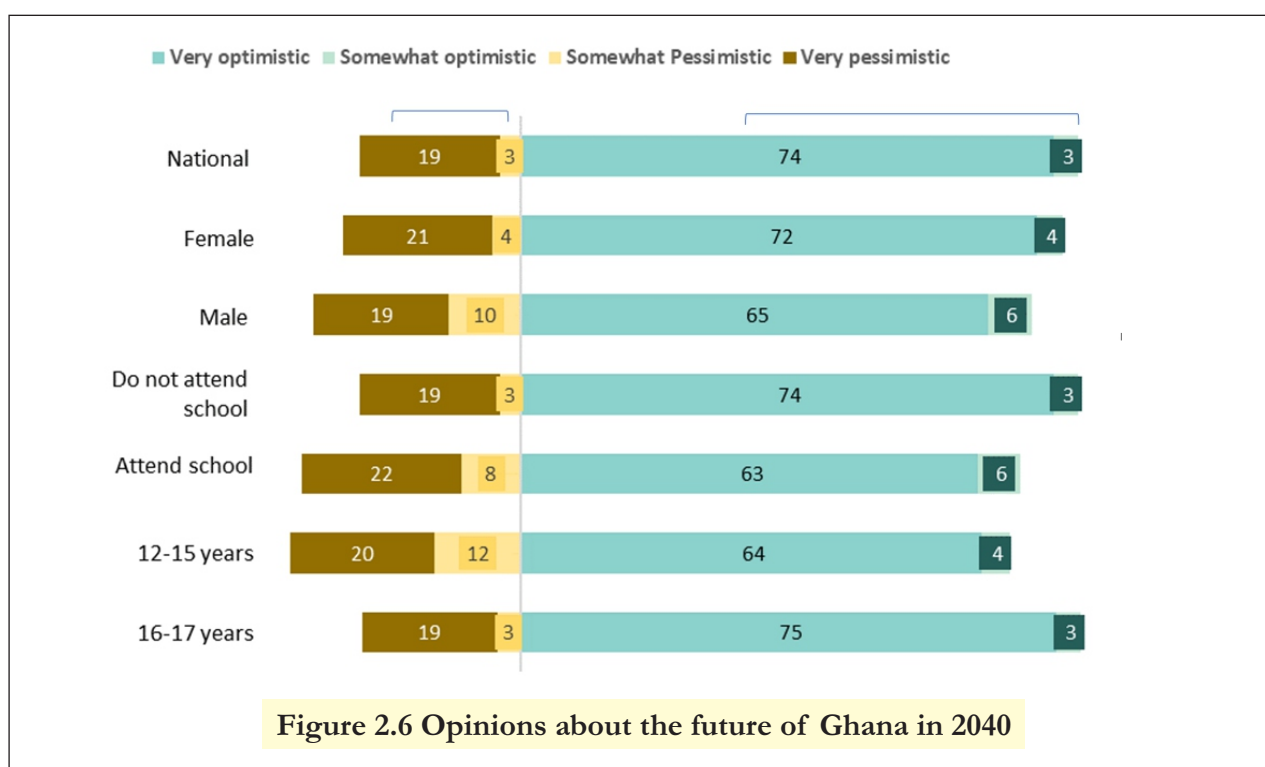
Figure 2.5 Share of children who are proud to be a citizen of Ghana, by key demographics



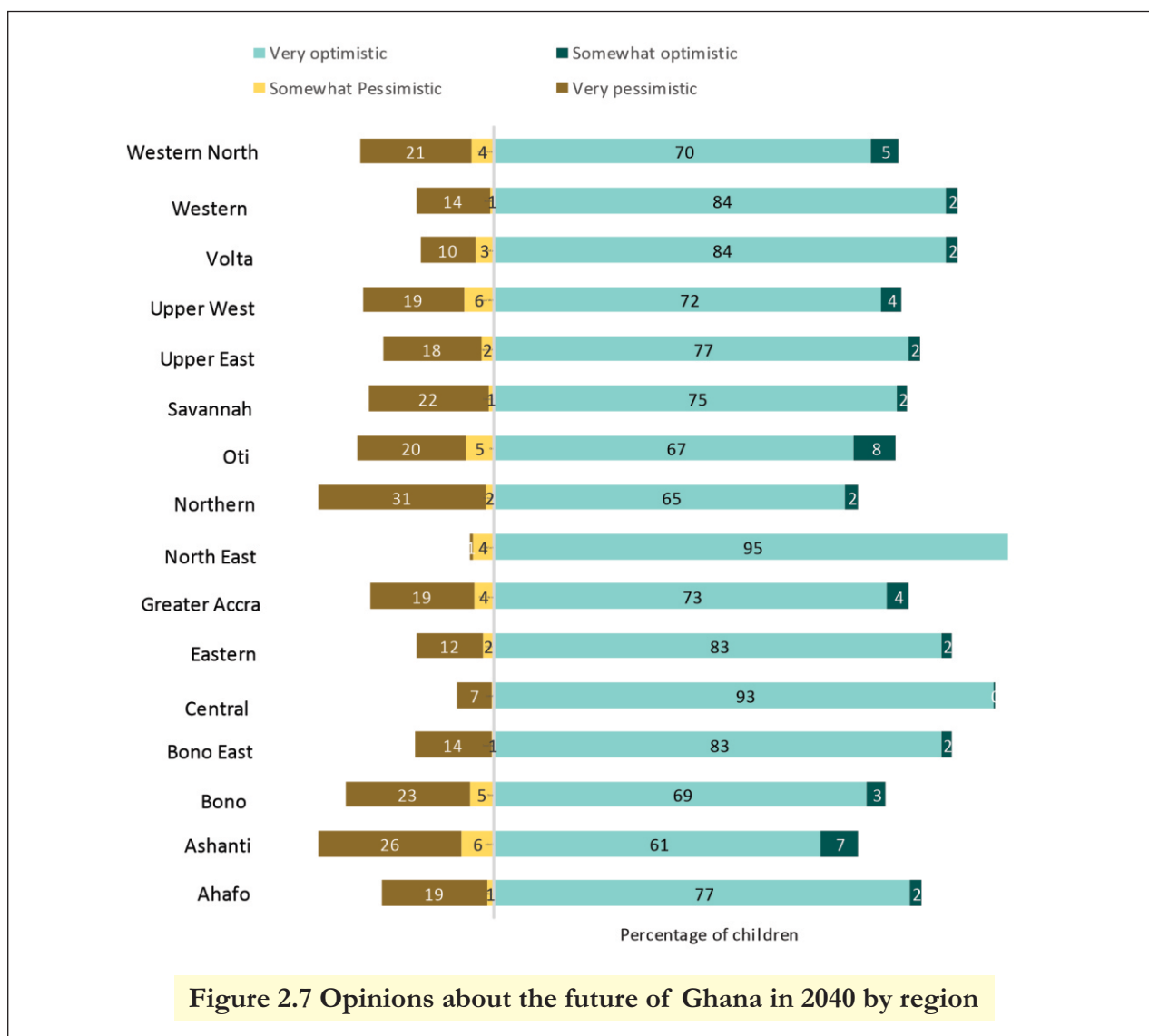
2.2 Optimism about the country's future

Ghanaian children are generally hopeful about the future of the country over the next 20 years but more pessimistic when the focus shifts to specific issues such as employment, widening gap between the rich and poor and limited land to accommodate exploding populations. Overall, 77% of all children say they are either very optimistic, (74%) are somewhat optimistic, (3%) are very optimistic about Ghana in 2040. However, more than two in ten (22%) see the country's future as bleak, including 19% who say they are very pessimistic and 3% who are somewhat pessimistic about Ghana in 20 years.

While most key demographic groups share in this view, it is more widely held by female children and children aged 16-17 years. About three-quarters of female children (72%) forecast a bright future for the country in 20 years, a view which is shared by 65% of male children. Roughly, seven in ten children who have ever attended school (74%) feel hopeful about Ghana's future.



The regional picture switches from the above pattern when children were asked about the future of Ghana over the next 20 years. Children in North East and Central regions are among the most optimistic about the country's future. About nine in ten children in these regions feel hopeful about Ghana's future. Children in Western, Volta and Bono East regions are more positive about the country's prospects. In contrast, a considerable fraction of children in the Ashanti, Northern, Bono regions is less confident about Ghana's future. Unlike the proportion of children hopeful of the country's future seen in the above regions, 33% of children in the Northern region and 32% of their peers in the Ashanti region are pessimistic when it comes to these broad predictions about Ghana's future. See Figure 2.7.

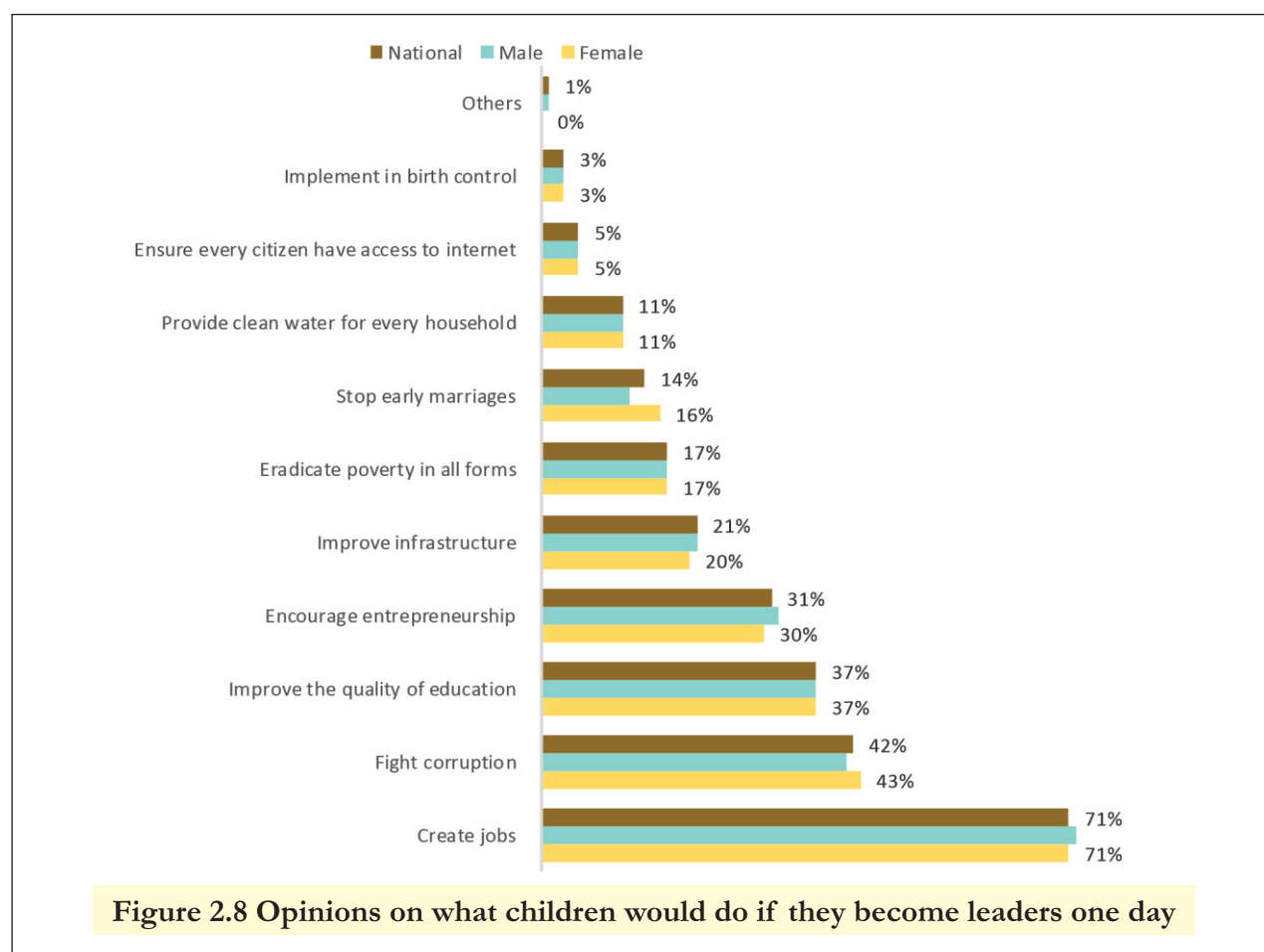


When children look to the future, they see Ghana facing threats on multiple fronts. The majority of them are at least somewhat worried about excessive migration of people from rural to urban areas, limited land to control exploding populations, increasing rate of unemployment and increasing inequality gap. Children also view growing pollution, food shortage and reliance on technology as occurring in the future. While these and other issues may require government action to solve them, children have little confidence in the government's ability to effectively address these issues. Overall, about 39% say that in thinking about the country's future, they see significant migratory flow of people to cities, especially young people seeking new income and employment opportunities. About a third of children (35%) say they see increasing pressure on limited lands due to population growth.

To get a further sense of how these children would like to change Ghana in the future, we asked what they would like to accomplish if they happen to be in leadership positions. A majority of children (71%) say they would focus their attention on solving the unemployment problem in the country by creating jobs if they became leaders in the future. Nearly four in ten children (42%) say they would curb corruption by creating procedures to stop the canker. Across the board, these



views are held by a similar share of male and female children. 31% of children say they would encourage entrepreneurship when asked about what they would do as leaders for one day. The findings show the aspirations of Ghanaian children to become future entrepreneurs with the view to create more jobs. Over a third of the children (37%) say they would invest in quality education, while 31% would encourage children-led entrepreneurship. From increasing quality education and improving infrastructure to ensuring eradication of all forms of poverty, Ghanaian children have an understanding of the complex systems that govern their lives and the improvement the system requires.



Interpretation 2

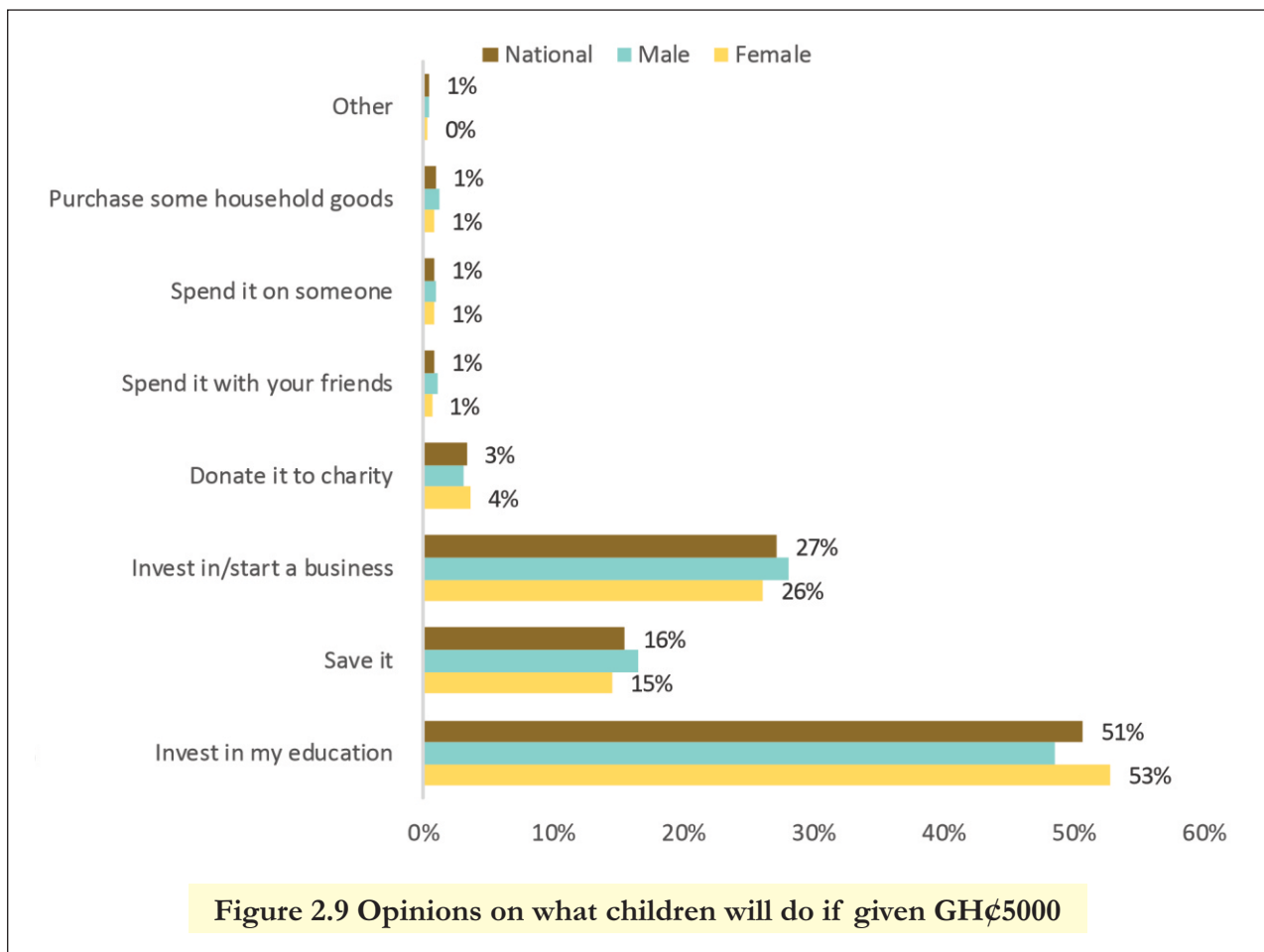
Children prioritised five key area they would focus on if given the chance to become leaders for a day.

- Create jobs
- Corruption
- Improve quality education
- Encourage entrepreneurship
- Improve infrastructure



2.3 Views on management of funds

Children were also asked what they would do if given GH¢5000. About 50% said they would invest in their education, 27% would start new businesses and 16% would save it. Only a small fraction would spend this amount on themselves or others (total of 7%). Overall, more female children (53%) said they would like to start business if they receive such an amount compared to their male peers (47%). More male children are more interested in saving or starting their own business if they receive such an amount. Indeed, the sample showed strong emphasis on investments in their education and entrepreneurial ventures. These findings underscore entrepreneurship as one of the greatest aspirations of Ghanaian children and respondents expressed their willingness to pursue entrepreneurial ventures.



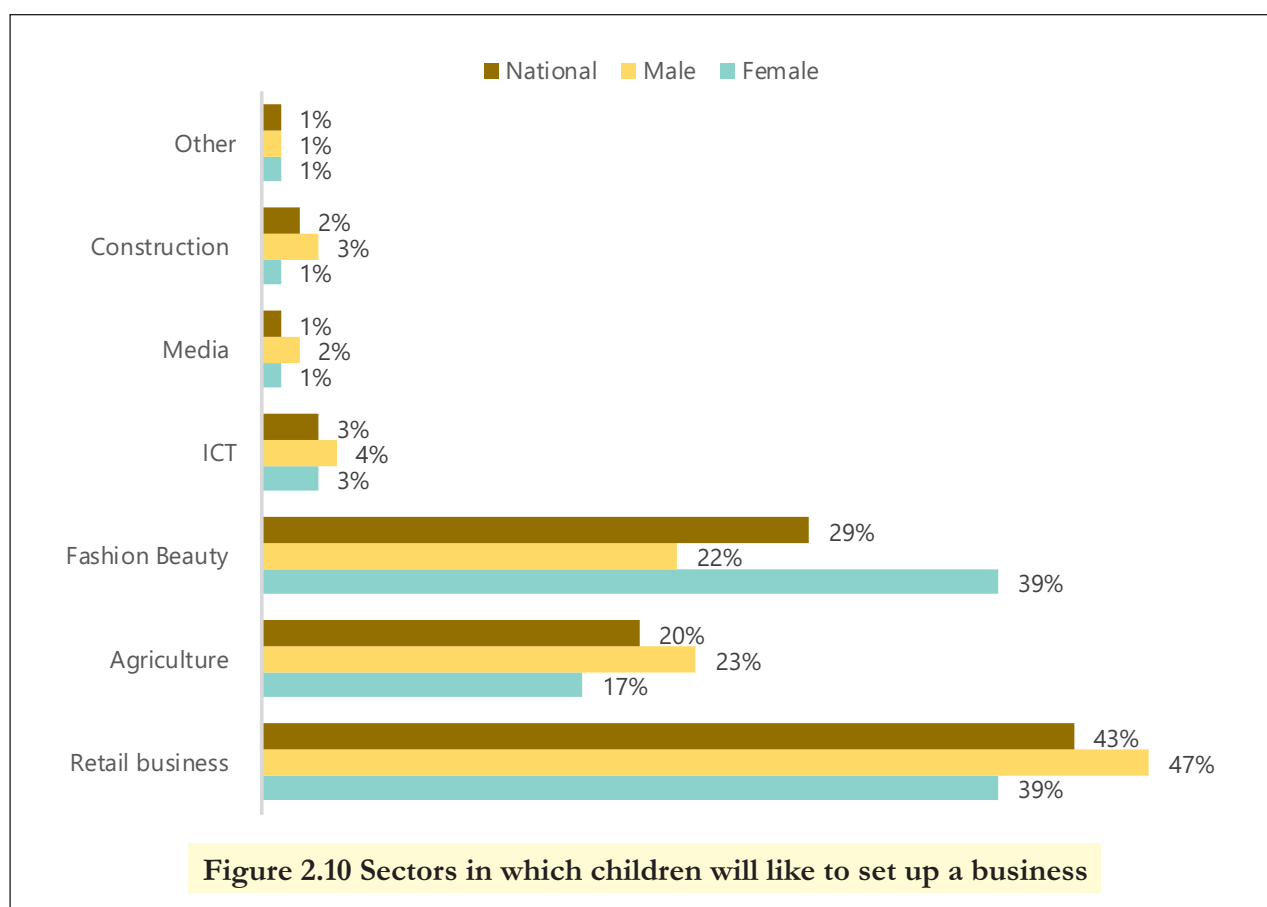
Out of 27% who said they would like to start their own businesses, 43% want to do so in the retail sector. The second most sought-after sector for children is the fashion sector (29%), an interest held mostly by females than males. Interest in starting an agriculture-based business was held by a fifth of the surveyed children, while 7% of Ghana's children said they were interested in working in sectors such as Information and Communication Technology, media, construction, among others.



Interpretation 3

In the area of finance management, the Ghanaian child is most likely to prioritize the following when given the freedom to spend.

1. Invest in education
2. Start a business
3. Save



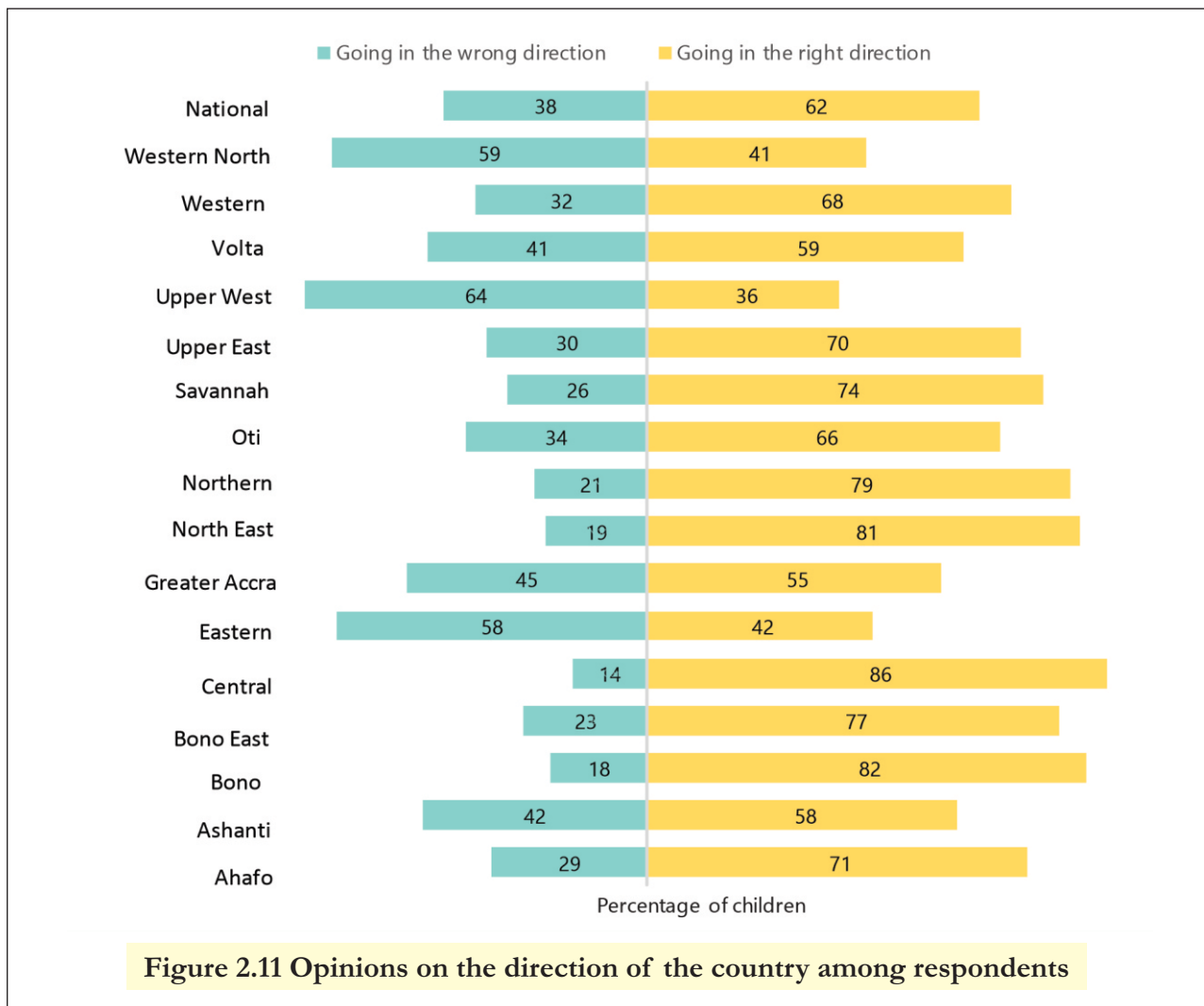
Interpretation 4

More children are interested in going into retail trade as opposed to agriculture and industrial sector such as manufacturing and artisanship. This is a reflection of the lack of perceived options or inadequate education in these areas by Ghanaian children.

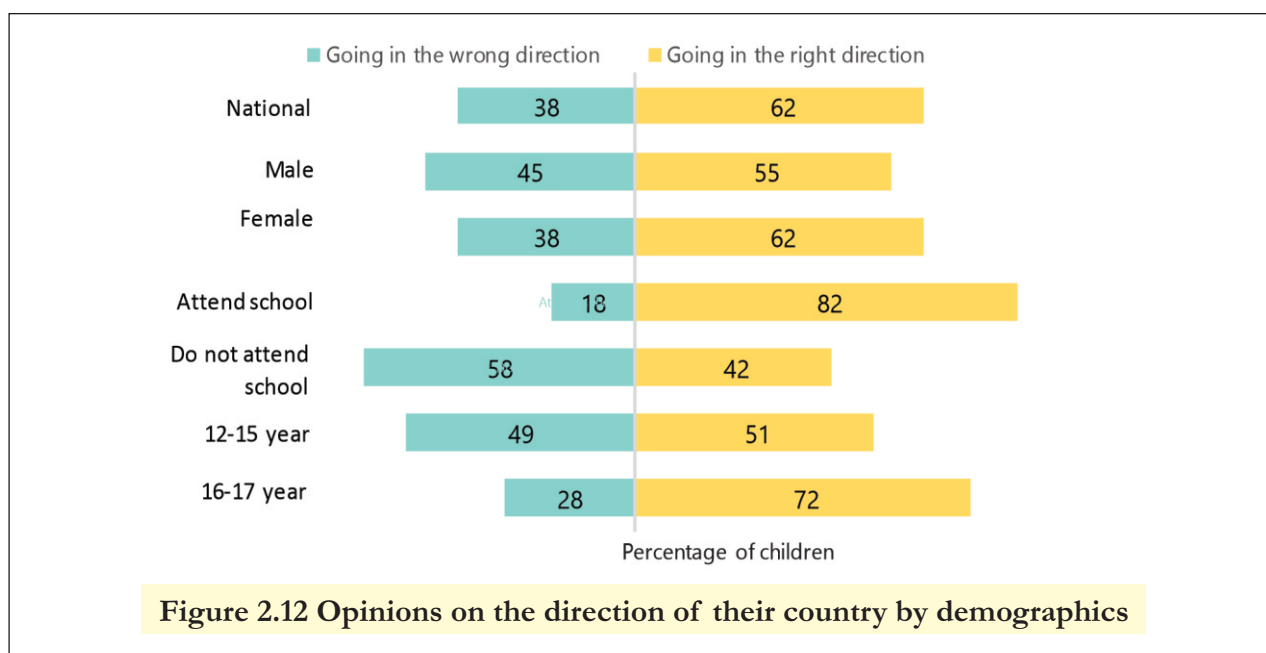


2.4 Optimism about the economy

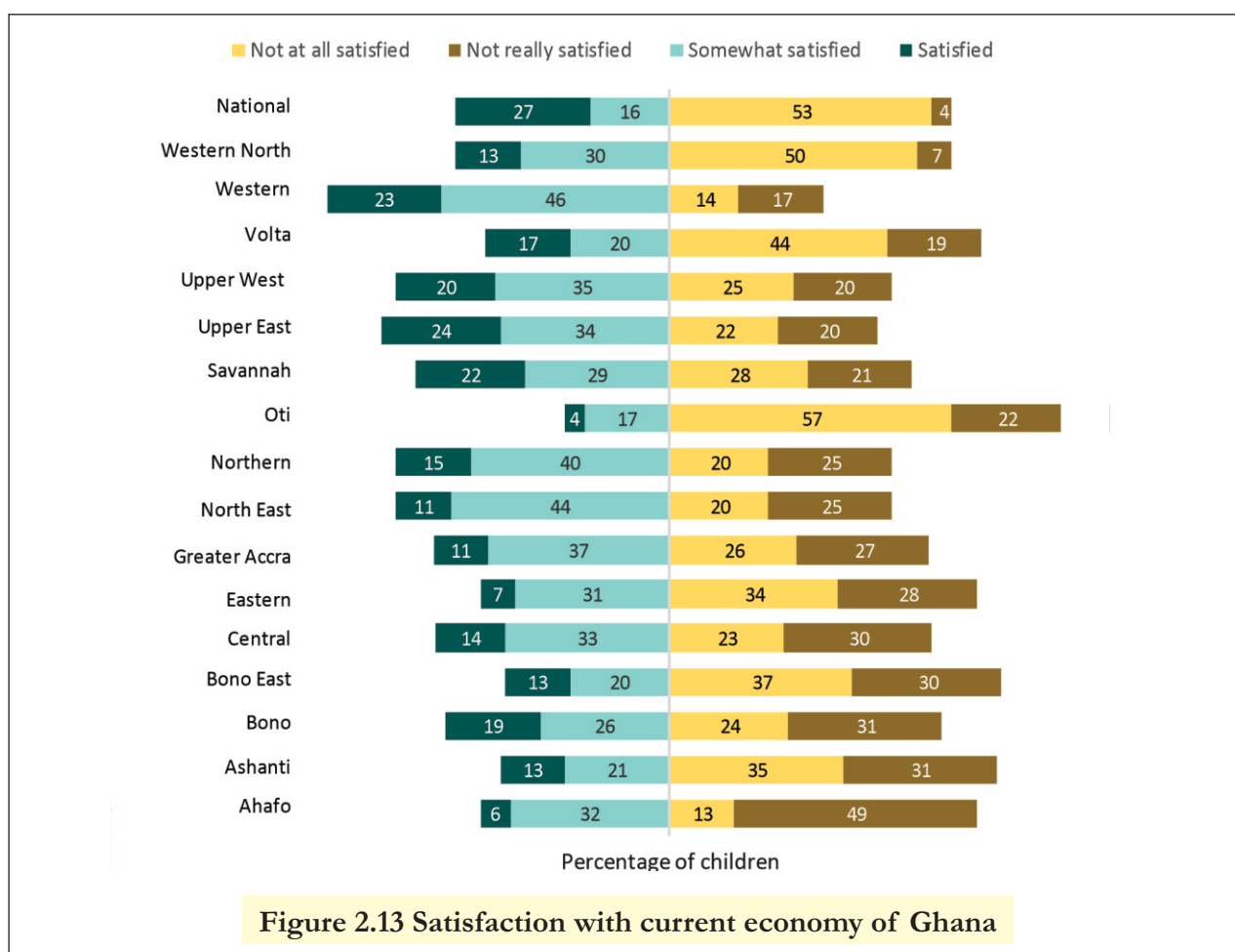
The survey also sought to find out whether the country is heading in the right direction or not. Figure 2.11 shows that, most Ghanaian children are satisfied with their country's direction despite dissatisfaction over issues such as unemployment and corruption. About two-thirds (62%) say the country is on the right track. However, nearly one in three (38%) believes their country is heading in the wrong direction. Children in Central, Northern and Bono East regions expressed confidence in the country's direction. Children in Upper West, Western North and Eastern regions tend to hold a predominantly negative view regarding the direction of the country.



Children who attend school are more likely to remain optimistic. Out of the number, 82 percent say that the country is generally heading in the right direction. More than half of children who do not attend school have the least confidence in the country's direction. Children aged between 12-15 years are unsettled about the country's pace of development. A gender split suggests that female children are more optimistic about the nations' direction than male children.



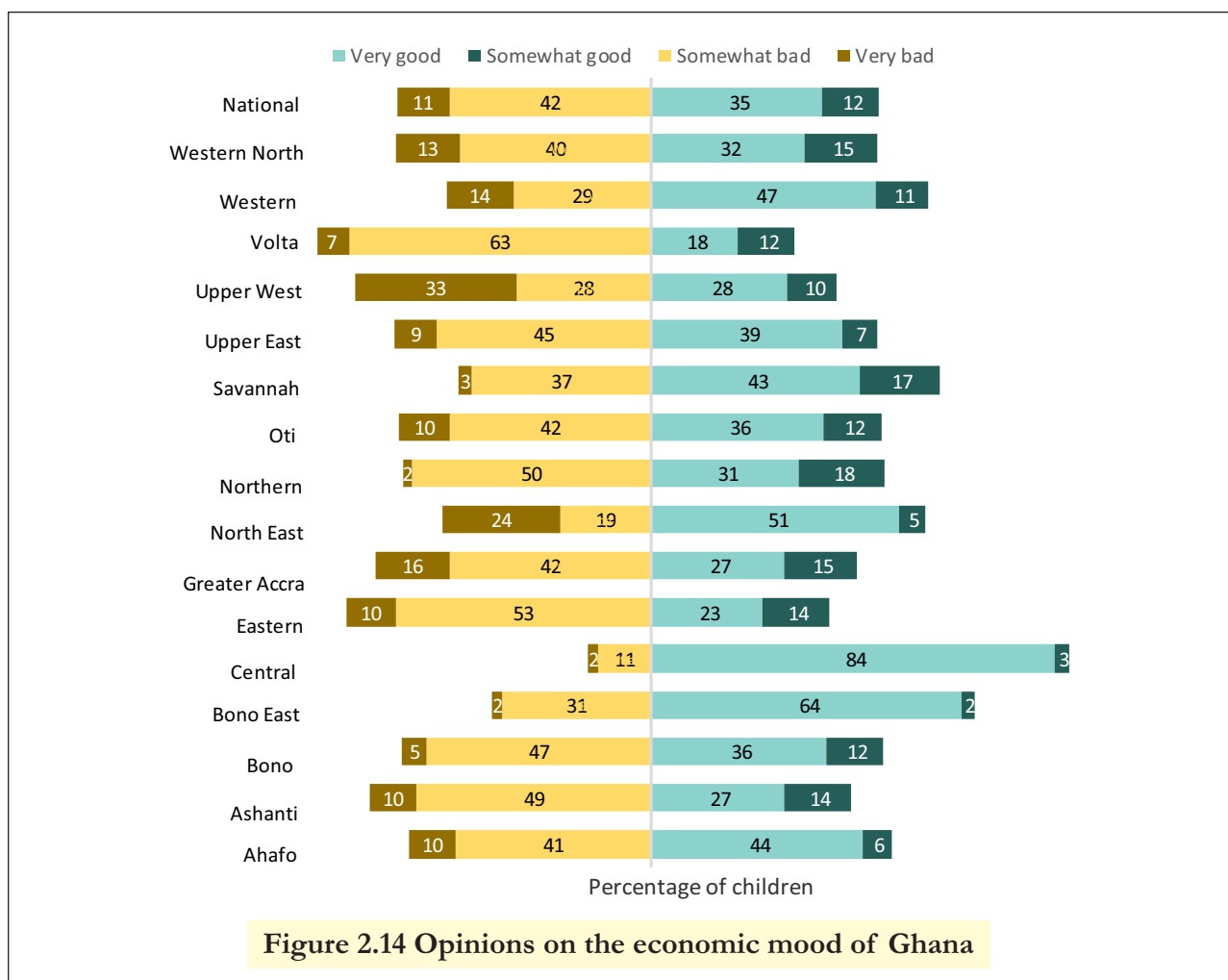
The children were asked to assess the country's economic conditions (standard of living). As shown in Figure 2.13, a small majority of children (55%) are not satisfied with the Ghanaian economy. Forty-five percent said they were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with economic conditions in the country.





Satisfaction with the economy was found across five out of 16 regions. For example, a greater fraction of children in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West and Western Regions feel they are satisfied with the economy. On the flip side, a majority of children in the other regions say they are dissatisfied.

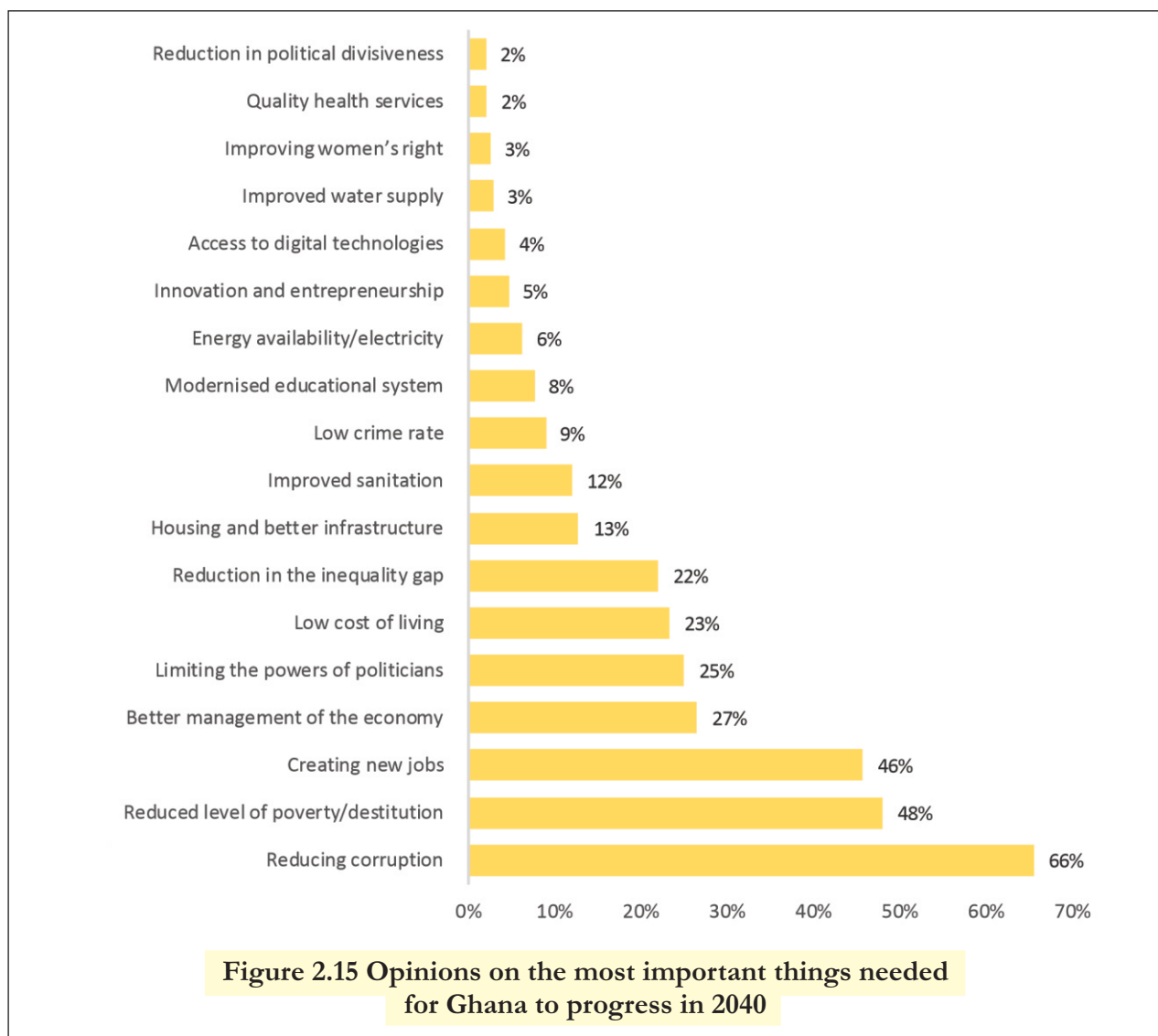
As illustrated in Figure 2.14 above, a small majority of children (53%) see the country's economy performing poorly. Only 47 percent view the economy as doing well. Those who see the economic condition in the most negative light are mostly children from Greater Accra, Eastern, Bono, Volta, Ahafo, Ashanti, Western North, Oti, Upper West and Upper East Regions. More than 50% of them say economic conditions are bad. Conversely, those most positive about the nation's economic conditions are children in the Central (84%), Bono East (64%) and North East (51%).



Regarding the most important measures needed to be taken for Ghana to progress and move forward, reduction in corruption and poverty, creation of employment, better management of the economy and limiting the power of politicians stand out as policy prescriptions needed to improve life for future generations. Curbing corruption in the country is viewed as a top priority by 66% of the respondents, followed by reducing poverty (48%). Roughly half of the respondents (46%) say creating jobs in the country should be a top priority for the government in



the future to move the country forward. Nearly a quarter of the respondents prioritize better management of the economy, and limiting the powers of politicians is seen as such by 25%. Falling further down the list are quality health services, reducing political divisiveness, improving women's rights and water supply.



Interpretation 5

Top five priorities Ghana needs if it is to progress as expressed by children;

- reduction in corruption
- reduced level of poverty
- creating new jobs
- better management of the economy (living standards)
- limiting powers of politicians



With regards to corruption, children identified the below as examples of why they believe Ghana is corrupt.

- Overpricing of everyday goods and services
- Politicians and public officers intervening for perpetrators in child abuse cases.
- Favouritism in scholarships disbursement and the processes of assessing scholarships.
- Police officers accepting bribes for traffic violations when children are in public transportation or other transportation options either from their parents or commercial drivers.
- Teachers requesting for favours from parents and consequently treating said parent's children better than other students.
- Examination malpractices
- When parents come from political campaigns and meetings, they return with cash and/ or kind such as money, food stuffs, motor bikes, bicycles, flashlights.
- Blatant violation of traffic regulations and rules.

Children are silent observers of the ills perpetuated by adults and the society and consciously or unconsciously emulating them.

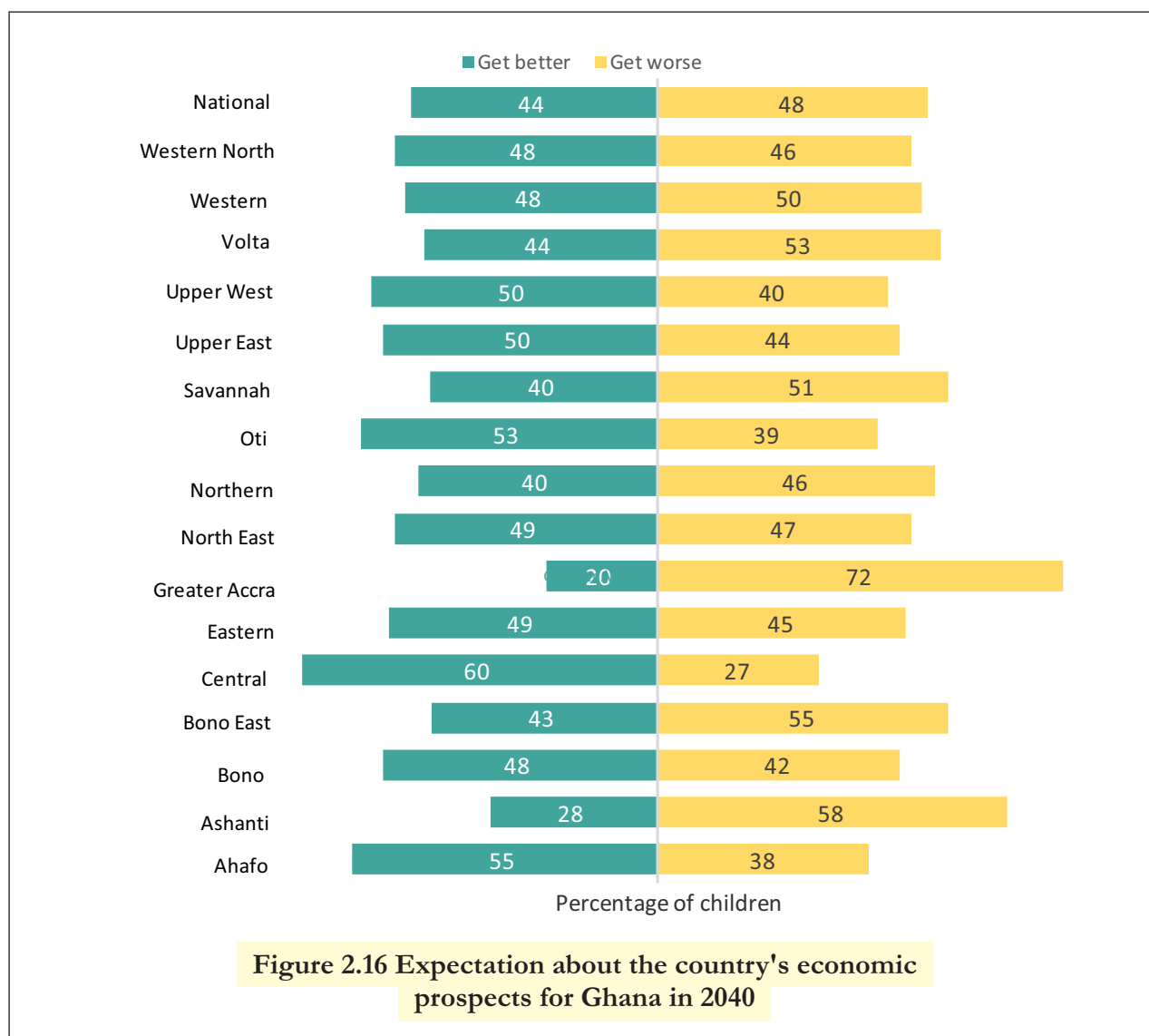
When asked about how the government is currently handling the problems, respondents expressed positive views of the government's performance in nine specific areas. Overall, a majority of children say the government is doing very well or managing in the following areas: Management of electricity (76%), improvement in education system (72%), ensuring access to digital technologies (72%), improvement of quality of healthcare services (68%) and reduction in political divisiveness (64%). Children are more critical of how the government handles several other issues including limiting the powers of politicians (39% of the children say the government is doing a good job), creation of job opportunities (58%), poverty reduction (52%), cost of living (52%) and effectively handling of corruption (51%).

Children also have a somewhat more negative view on the future of the country's economy. A narrow majority feels pessimistic about the economic prospects in 2040. Just about half of children (48%) predict that Ghana's economy in 20 years will be weaker than it is today, while 44% say it will be stronger. Children living in the Greater Accra Region (72%), Ashanti Region (58%), Volta Region (53%), and Savannah Region (51%) are somewhat more pessimistic about the future of the country's economy.

While a considerable share of children predicts a stronger economy in 20 years, it is more widely held by those living in the Central region. Roughly half of respondents living in the Upper West Region (50%), Upper East Region (50%), Oti Region (53%) and Ahafo

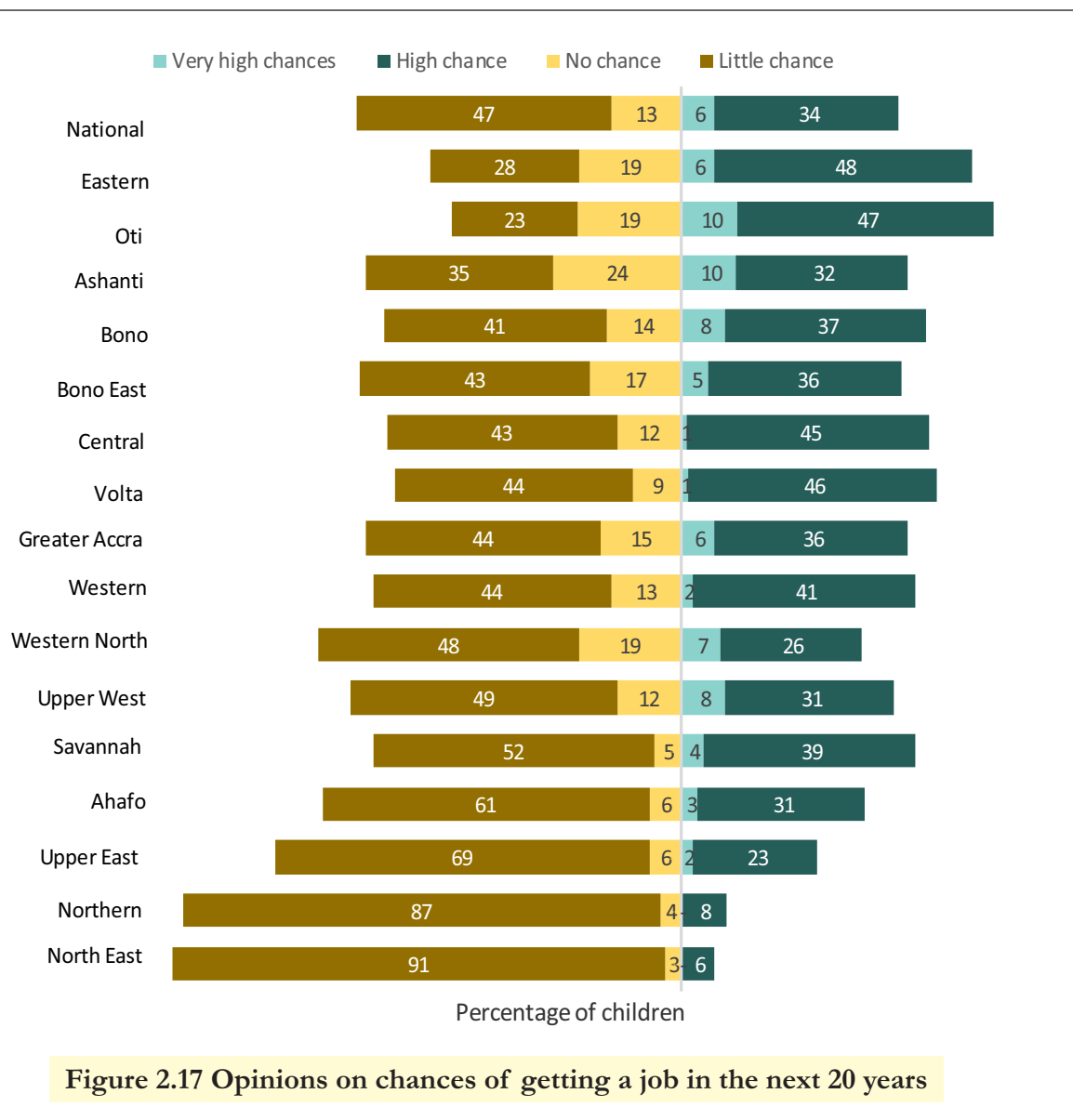


Region (55%) predict a stronger economy in the next 20 years. Children living in larger regional economies are somewhat more likely than those living in smaller regional economies to say the economy will be weaker in 2040 than it is today. See Figure 2.16.



Children are more skeptical of finding jobs in the next 20 years. Six in ten children surveyed say, by the year 2040, the average person in Ghana will have a more difficult time finding jobs. Only 40% of the respondents have confidence in finding jobs in the next 20 years. Children living in the northern part of the country are somewhat more pessimistic than their peers in the southern part of the country in this direction.

The notable exception to this trend is the Oti Region, where children appear more optimistic about finding jobs in the next 20 years. Across 16 regions surveyed, children living, especially in Eastern and Oti regions, have a more positive outlook of getting jobs in the future than those who live in other regions. See Figure 2.17.



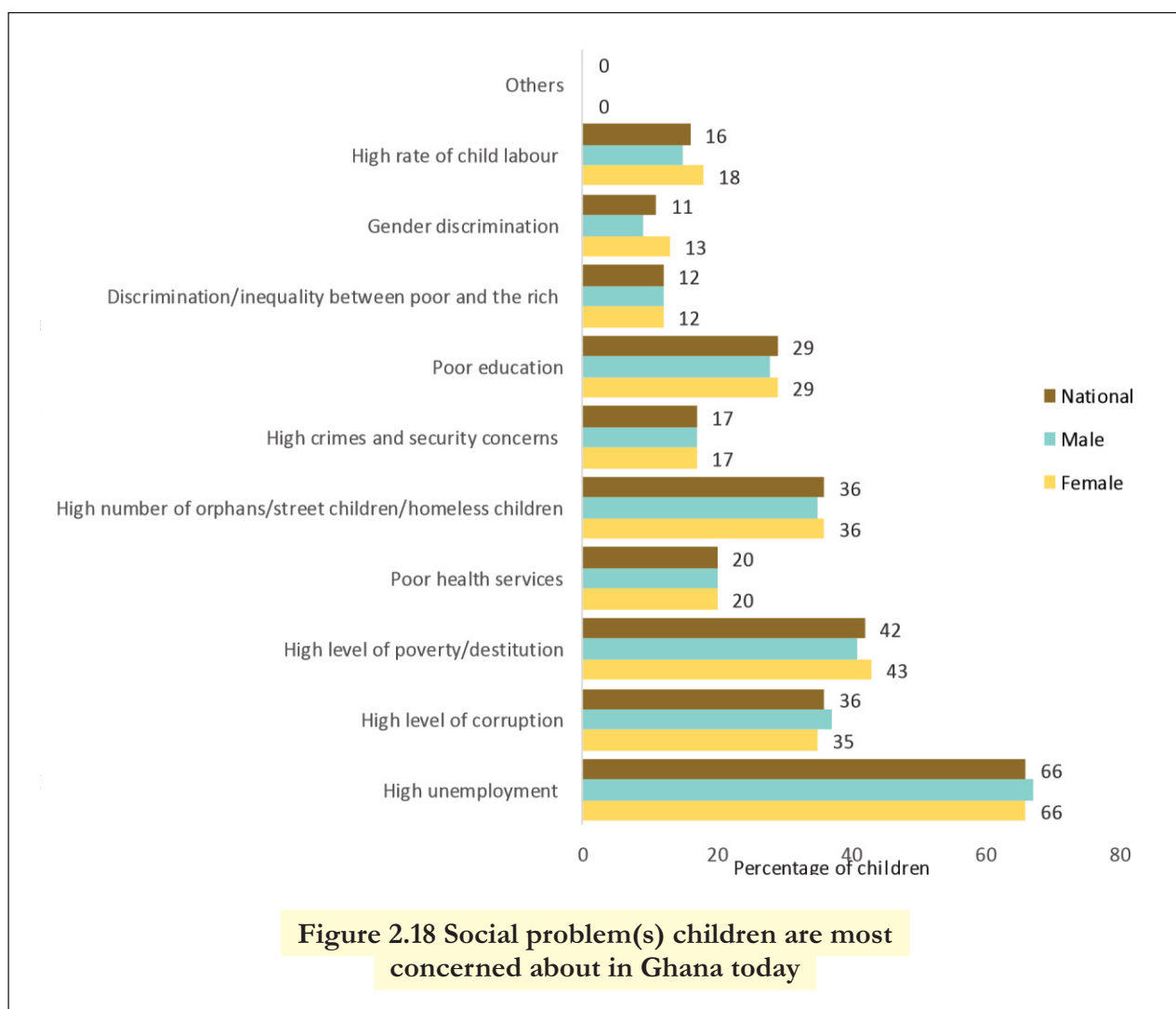
2.5 Children's concerns about the country's social problems

Despite the fact that children are satisfied with some aspects of Ghanaian life at present and see the country as moving in the right direction, the employment situation still remains a major concern for children in Ghana today. About six in ten (66%) are very worried about the high unemployment situation today. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that children are fairly pessimistic about the future employment situation in the country. More than four in ten say they are worried about the level of poverty in the country. About a third of children (35%) say they are very worried about the level of corruption in the country. A similar number expresses the ability of the government to solve the street children problem. Children also seem to be less worried about the present gender discrimination (11%) in the country, child labour (16%), inequality gap (12%) and crime and security concerns (17%).

Interpretation 6

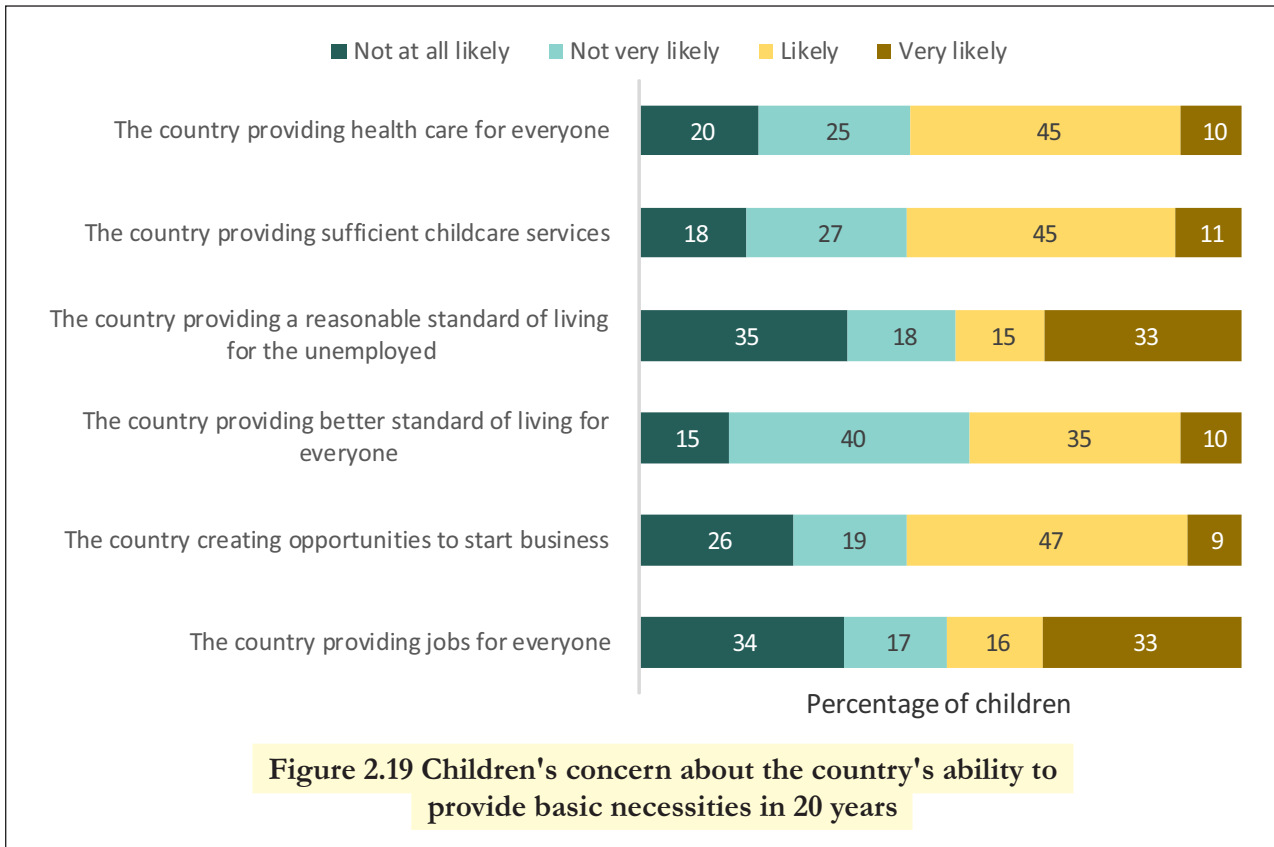
Top 10 priorities before 2040 in no particular order:

1. Solving unemployment
2. Reduced level of poverty
3. Tackling corruption
4. Dealing with streetism
5. Gender discrimination
6. Eliminating child labour
7. Bridging the inequality gap
8. Reducing crime rate
9. Enhancing security
10. Limiting powers of politicians.





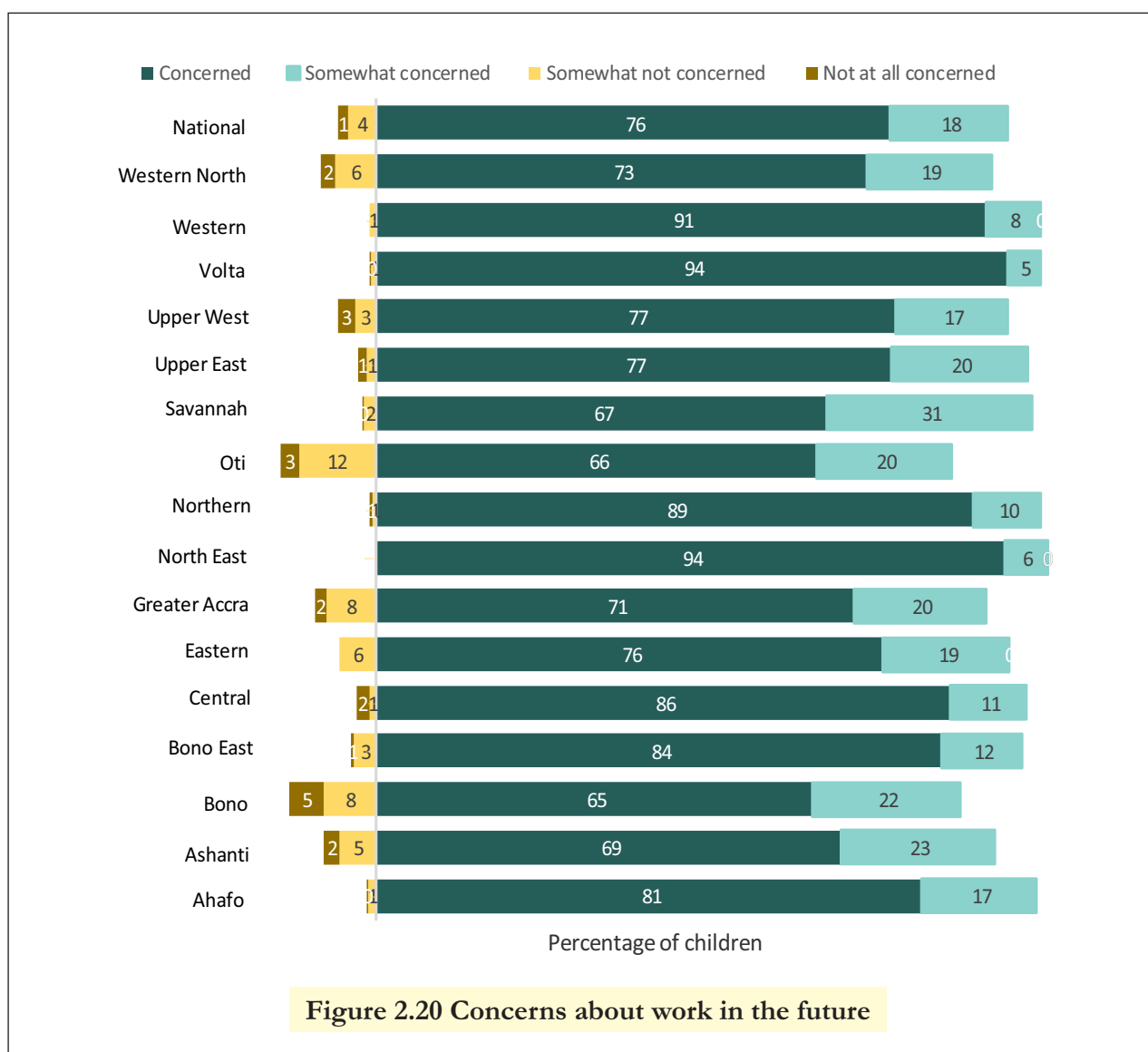
When asked about the likelihood that the country will provide jobs for every citizen in the next 20 years, more than five in ten children (51%) are concerned that the country is not likely to create jobs for every citizen in the next 20 years. In contrast with the faith children have in the potential of the country to create jobs, they have some confidence in the country's ability to create entrepreneurial opportunities to tackle the country's unemployment problems.



A small number of children predicts that the country can provide better standard of living for families in 2040. More than five in ten children (53%) are worried that the country is not likely to provide a reasonable standard of living for unemployed persons over the next 20 years.

Most of the children have more confidence in health care services: 55% of them say the country is likely to solve the country's health problems. When it comes to prospects for child care services, 45% of children say they are concerned about the government's inability to provide adequate child care services in 20 years.

Some of the children think that jobs in this country will be reshaped over the next 20 years. They see forces such as the changing nature of employment itself and growing demands for modern skills (including soft skills), coming at play in search of future jobs. When asked about how concerned they are about getting a job in the future, a large number of them (94%) say they are worried about jobs in the next 20 years. The share of children in Western, Volta, North East and Central Regions who say they are very worried about future jobs are high. On the flip side, children in Bono, Oti and Savannah Regions are less worried about this.



When the children were asked in what areas they wish government could increase spending to improve the quality of life of people over the next 20 years, their top priorities included employment creation and education. About 77% of the children say providing employment opportunities to citizens should be top priority for the government if it decides to increase spending.

On the issue of education and social protection priorities, responses were split (50%). A sizable number of children (37%) ranks increased spending for infrastructure as a top priority, and nearly as many (36%) say the same about increased spending on agricultural development. At the same time, 22% say increasing spending on security should be a top government priority.

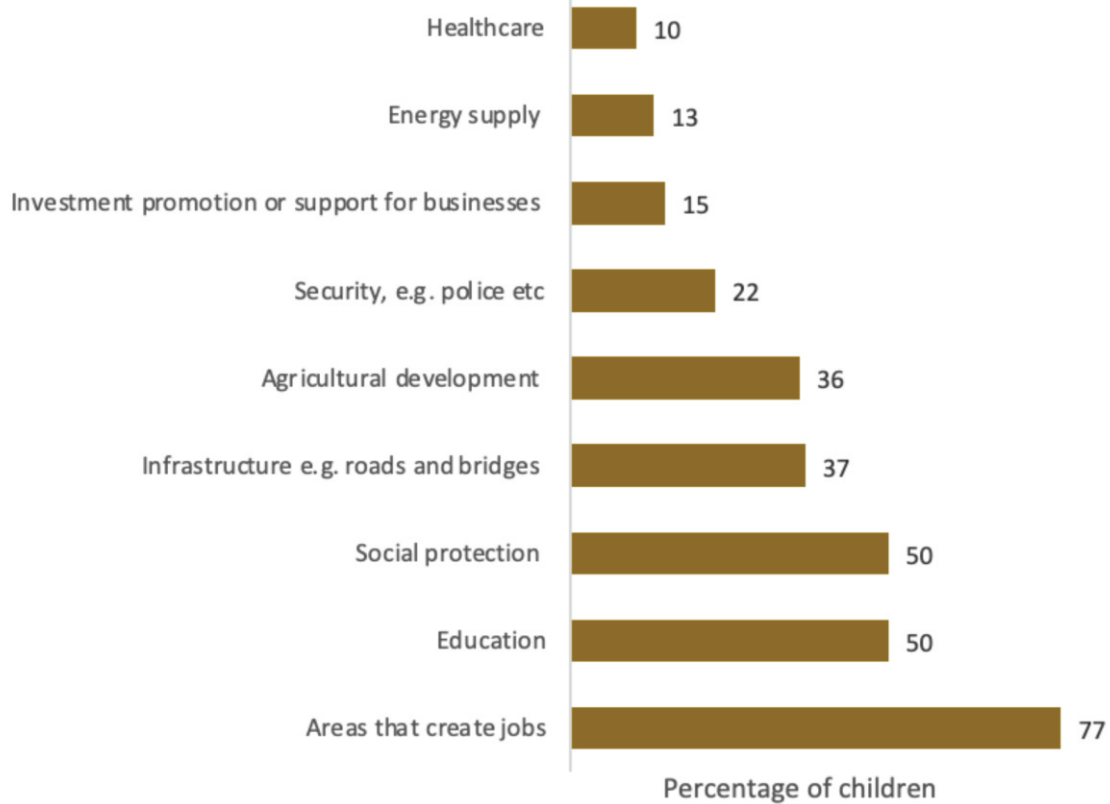
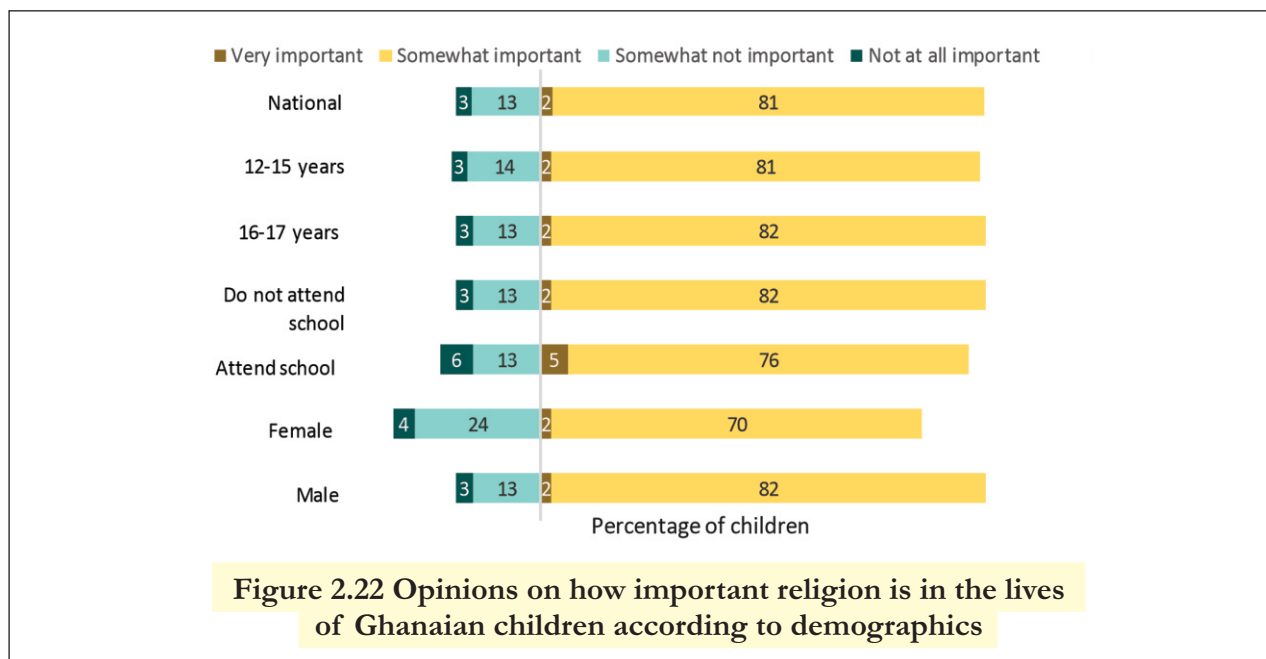


Figure 2.21 Opinions on areas government should make it a priority to spend on if it could increase spending in the next 20 years

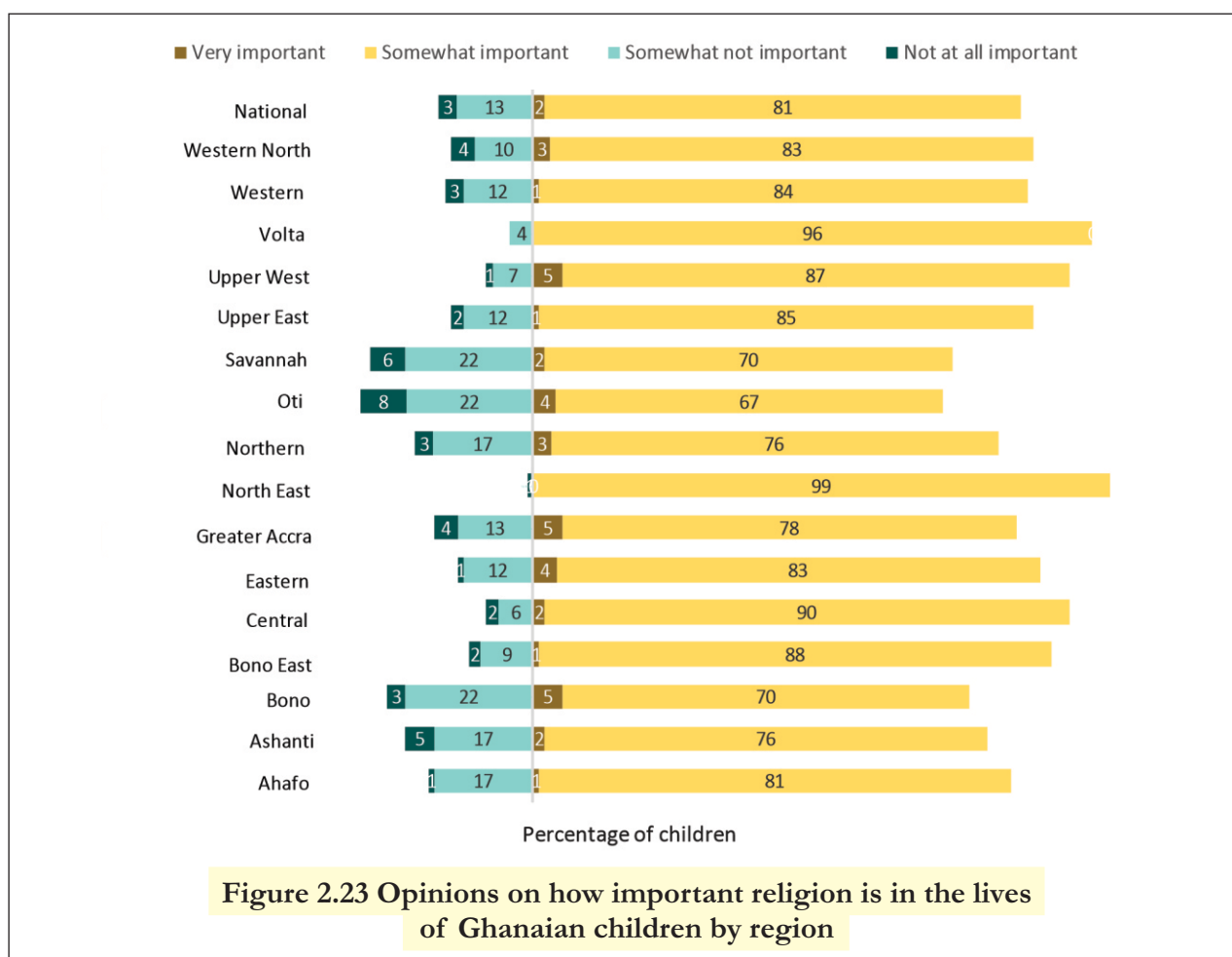
2.6 The religious landscape

Religion remains important in the lives of most Ghanaians. We took a detailed look at the religious beliefs of Ghanaian children and examined children's views on religion and its relevance in their lives. When asked about the importance of religion, eight in ten children say religion is at least "somewhat" important to their lives, with 81% saying it is "very" important. Approximately one in ten says religion is "not too" important (13%) or "not at all" important in their lives (3%).

For the children who are religiously affiliated, the importance attached to religion varies somewhat by demographics. Eight in ten girls (82%) compared with 70% of male children say religion is very important to their lives. A similar share of both children aged 12-15 years and 16-17 years say religion plays a very important role in their lives.



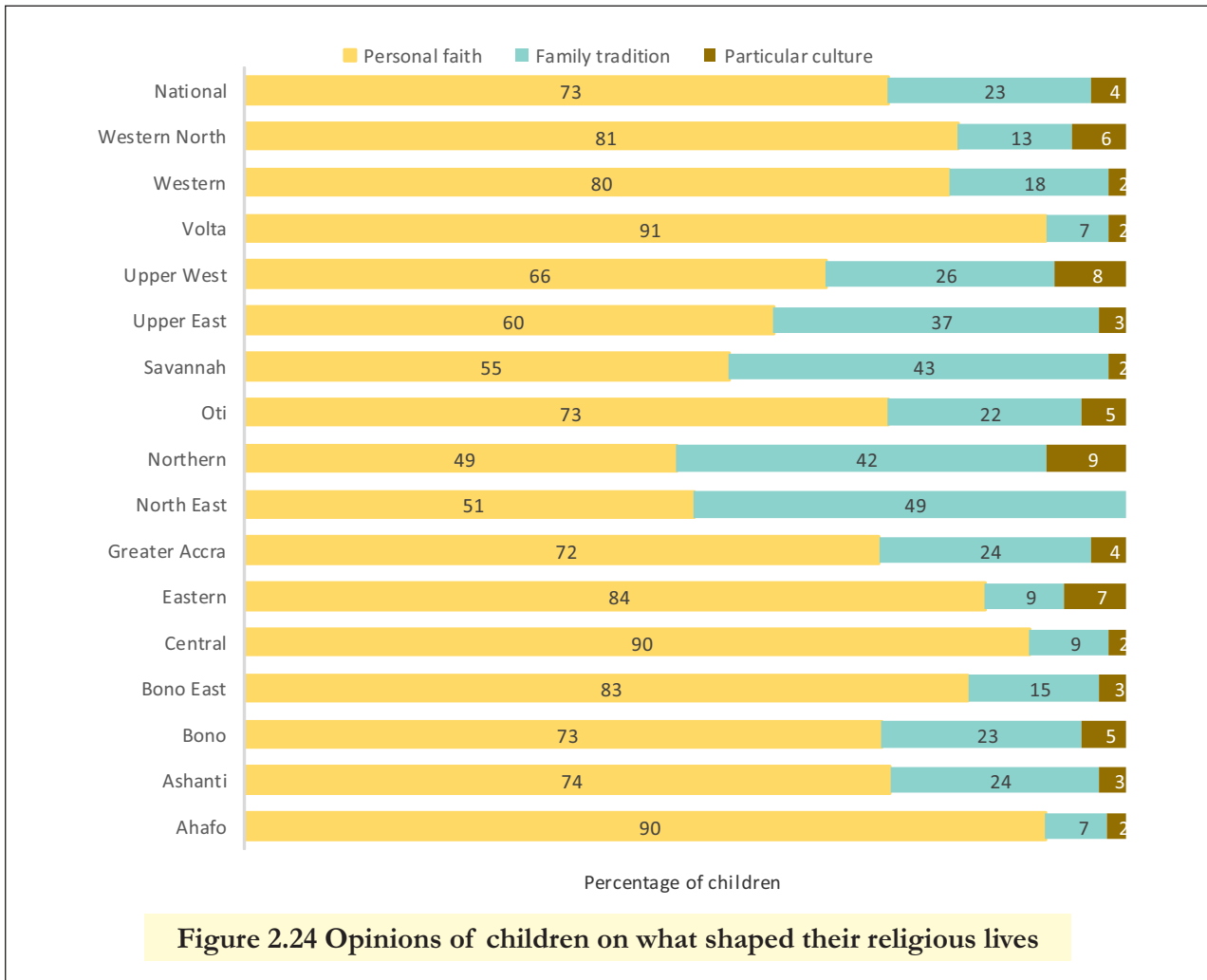
Unlike the large regional differences that mark children's views on many issues, the regional divide on this question is very narrow. Responses by some of the children indicate that religion does not play important role in their lives.





At least seven in ten children (70%) in every region say religion is very important to them, but most of the children who indicated that religion is least important in their lives are from the Volta Region, followed by the Upper East, Bono East and Ahafo Regions. The findings suggest that more children see religion as playing important roles in their lives.

Across the 16 regions, the religious profile of children appears to be shaped by their personal faith rather than their parents' behest or a particular culture. More children (73%) think religion is a matter of personal faith, while 23% of them indicates that they share the religious affiliation of their family (parents or guardians). Most of the respondents in Volta (91%), Central (90%) and Ahafo (90%) say religion is a matter of personal faith. In a handful of regions such as Northern, Savannah and North East, children believe that their religion is shaped by their family ties rather than personal faith. It is important to note that large Muslim populations in these regions are strongly linked to the high share of children having their religious lives shaped by family tradition.





Interpretation 7

Factors that influence children's religious choices:

- Close family ties or units
- The belief of children that religion is a personal choice or faith and should not be based on the beliefs of their parents.
- Differing views on religion from that of their parents due to non conformity of parents actions and principles of their religion. E.g. domestic violence, corruption at work, verbally abusing others, etc. exhibited by some parents
- Places dedicated for children in churches and mosque for worship generally not attractive and conducive for children.

When asked about how religious Ghanaians are today, about 90% of the children surveyed said Ghanaians are religious. This view is especially prominent in the North East Region (86%), Central Region (85%) and Bono East Region (81%). The big exception is Greater Accra, which is divided on the religiosity of Ghanaians.

	Very religious	Somewhat religious	Not too religious	Not at all religious
Ahafo	76%	18%	4%	1%
Ashanti	63%	29%	7%	1%
Bono	52%	34%	10%	3%
Bono East	81%	15%	4%	1%
Central	85%	10%	4%	1%
Eastern	65%	26%	4%	5%
Greater Accra	52%	4%	30%	15%
North East	86%	8%	6%	1%
Northern	43%	43%	14%	0%
Oti	52%	33%	13%	3%
Savannah	57%	38%	5%	0%
Upper East	69%	25%	5%	1%
Upper West	58%	18%	16%	8%
Volta	41%	51%	6%	2%
Western	63%	27%	11%	0%
Western North	66%	23%	8%	3%
National	62%	28%	9%	2%

Table 2.1 Children's view on how religious Ghanaians are today



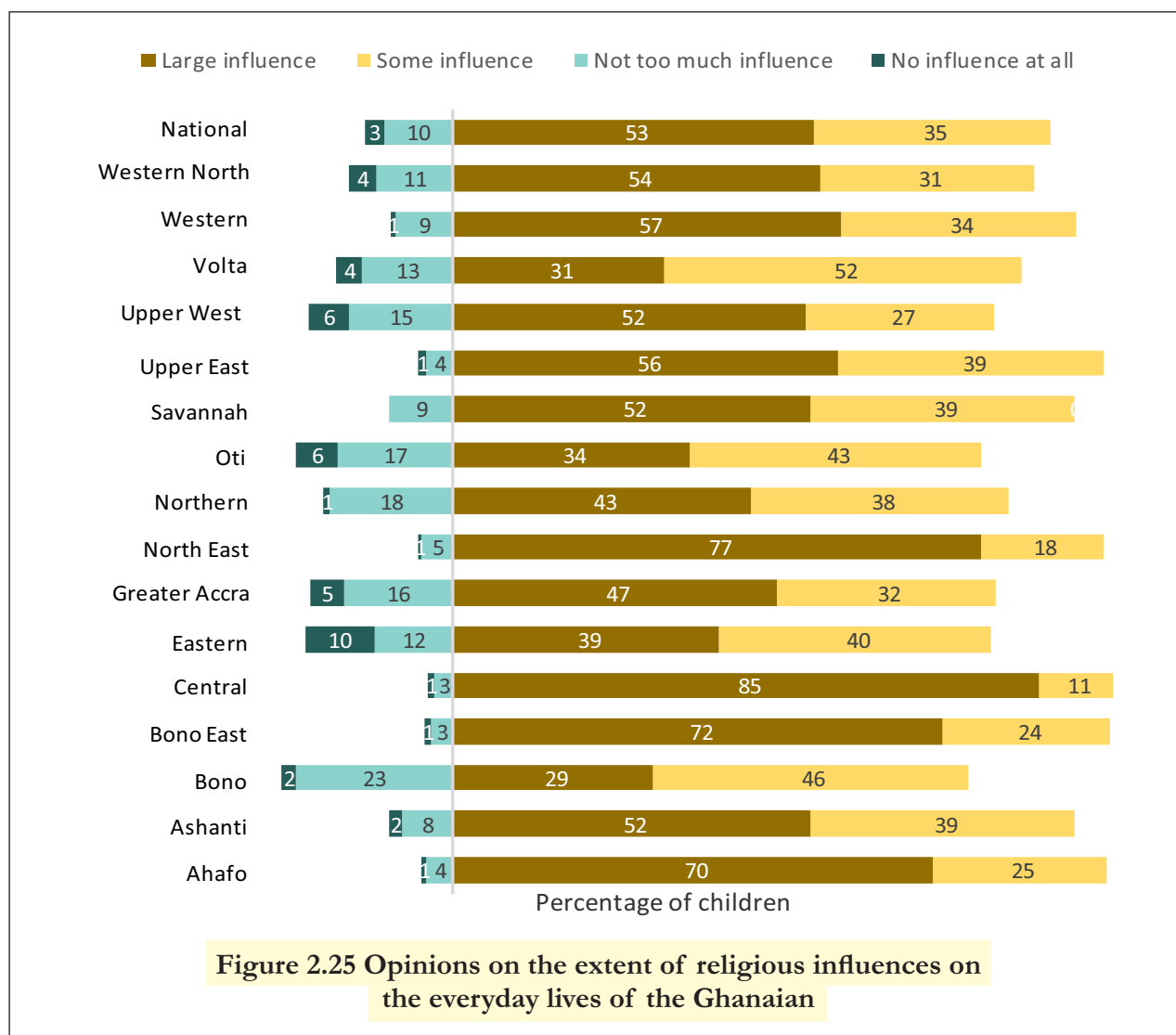
Apart from children in Greater Accra, more than three-quarters of children across the 16 regions believe that religion has a big impact on the lives of the nation. Most of the children in Bono East, Central, Savannah, Ahafo, North East and Upper East Regions (at least 90%, respectively) say the country is "very religious" or "somewhat religious," an indication that religion is very important to the people of the country.

There were mixed responses from the respondents when they were asked how religious Ghanaians should be in the next 20 years. 32% of the respondents said religion will lose its importance, while only 2% said it will become very important. The majority of children (65%) said Ghanaians will be somewhat religious over the next 20 years, which is an indication of a decline in the importance of religion in the country. Children in Bono, Savannah, Upper East and Volta Regions are more likely to see a decline in religious interest than their peers in other regions. There appears to be high disapproval for an increased role for religion in the country in future.

	Very religious	Somewhat religious	Not too religious	Not at all religious
Ahafo	1%	76%	20%	4%
Ashanti	2%	61%	26%	11%
Bono	4%	46%	42%	8%
Bono East	1%	75%	19%	5%
Central	0%	83%	12%	5%
Eastern	4%	69%	21%	6%
Greater Accra	3%	60%	27%	10%
North East	1%	85%	6%	7%
Northern	0%	69%	29%	2%
Oti	4%	61%	20%	15%
Savannah	2%	62%	29%	7%
Upper East	1%	67%	28%	4%
Upper West	7%	65%	20%	8%
Volta	2%	61%	29%	8%
Western	1%	65%	23%	11%
Western North	6%	62%	21%	11%
National	2%	65%	24%	8%

Table 2.2 Children's view on how religious Ghanaians should be in 20 years

When asked about the extent of religious influence on the daily lives of Ghanaians, the survey finds that there is much connection between religion and the affairs of the country. As shown in Figure 2.25, more children (53%) say religion greatly influences the country's everyday life. The importance Ghanaians attach to religion as an influencer of issues in the country varies somewhat across the 16 regions. Almost all the children (at least 95%, respectively) in Central, Bono East, Ahafo, Upper East and North East Regions think religion has a large influence on the affairs of the country. Not many children in Greater Accra, Upper West, Eastern, Oti and Bono Regions say religion has a large influence..



When it comes to the future influence of religion in the life of people, the children are divided over whether religion should have influence in the country in the next 20 years. More than half of children (51%) believe religion will not influence people much in the next 20 years. This belief about the influence of religion is shared by children in Northern, Savannah, Ahafo, Ashanti, Upper West, Western North, Western and North East Regions. In contrast, those in Bono, Central, Greater Accra, Upper East, Oti, Bono East, Volta and Eastern Regions think that religion will have some influence in the country in the future. Thus, there is a correlation between the belief that religion will be less important in the future and being influential in everyday life within the country in the future.

The survey asked children what they will need in order to succeed in life in the next 20 years. More respondents said hard work is the most important, followed by educational qualification and individual talents. Individual effort fell somewhere in the middle, with more than a tenth saying it was important. Rounding out the bottom are luck and religious beliefs.

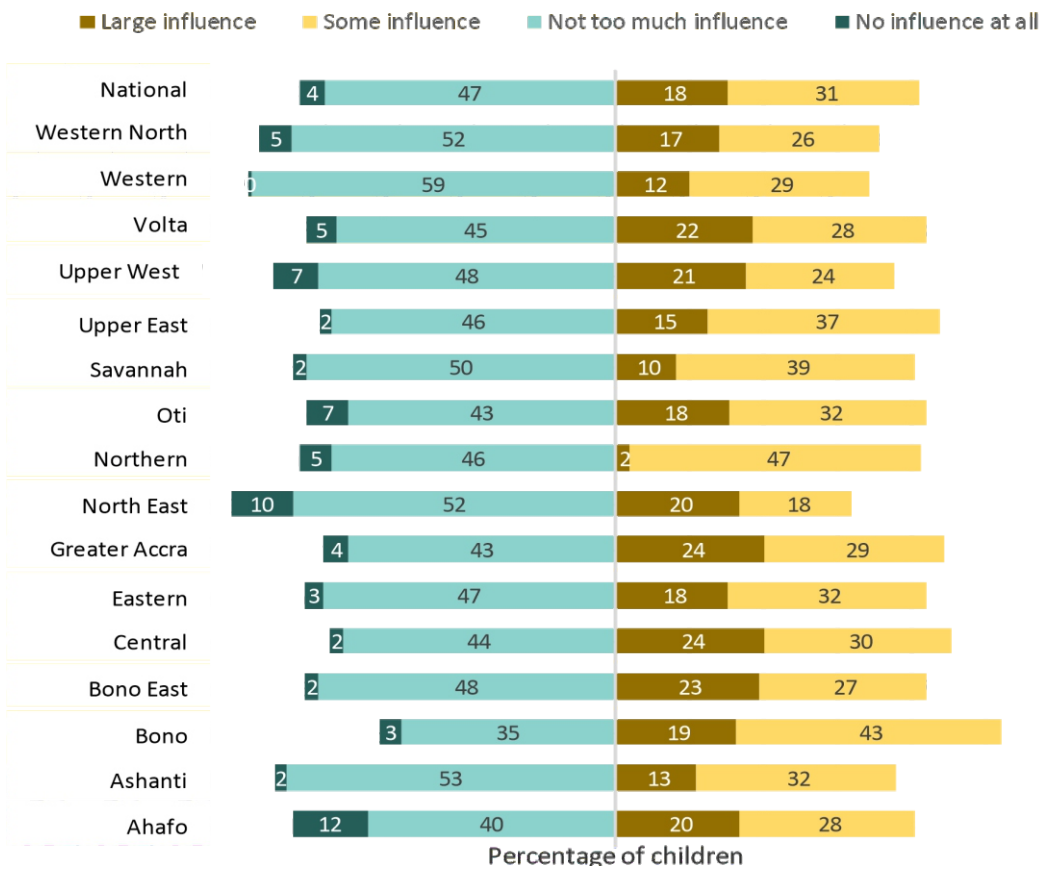


Figure 2.26 Opinions on the extent to which religion should influence everyday lives in 2040

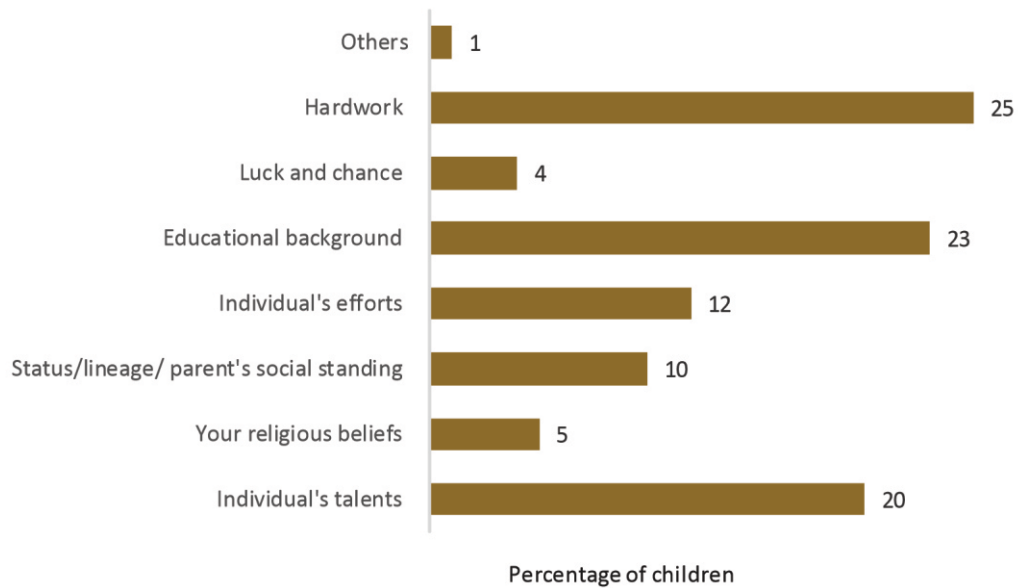
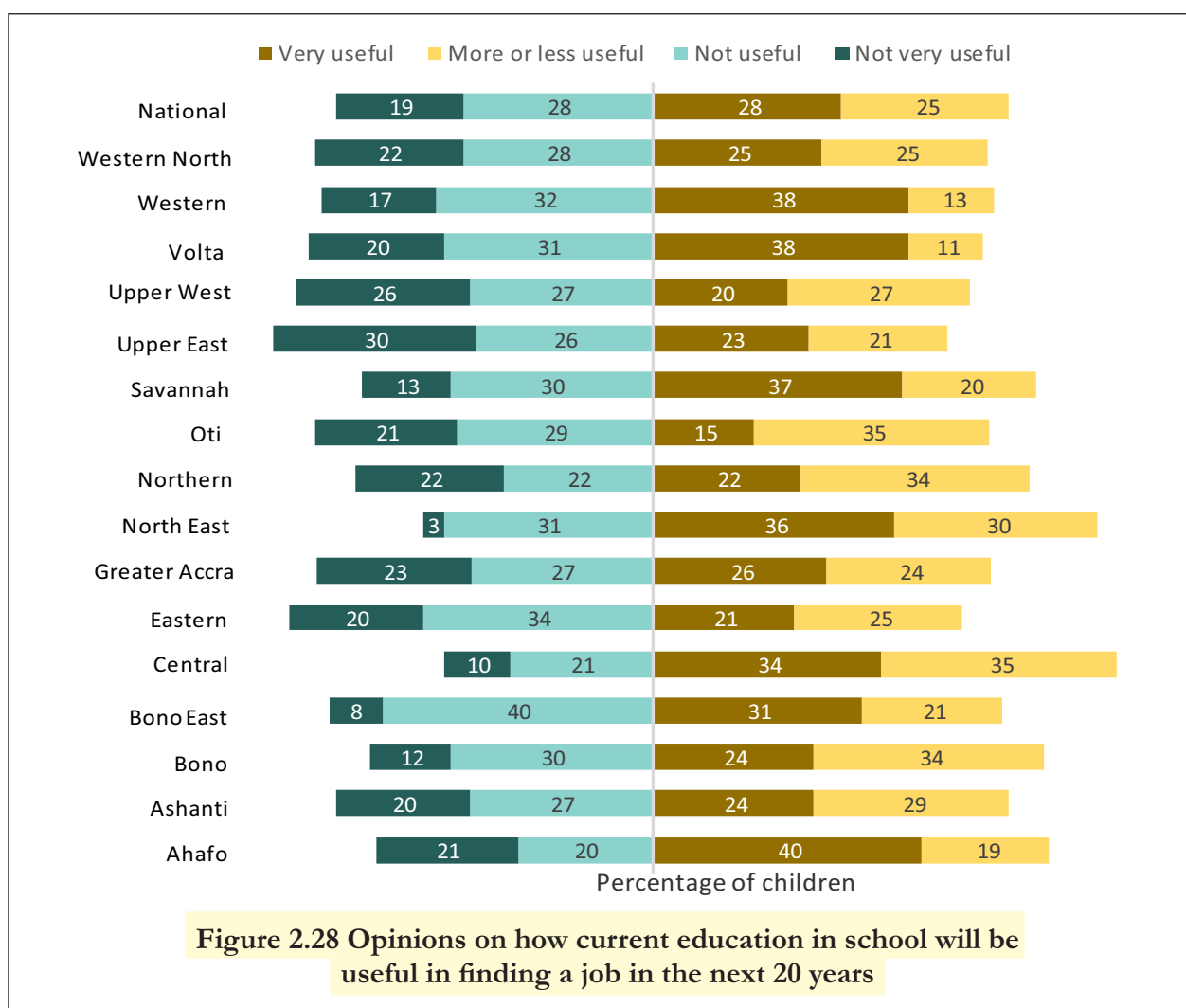


Figure 2.27 Opinions on what children need to succeed in life over the next 20 years



2.7 The value of current education system to finding future jobs

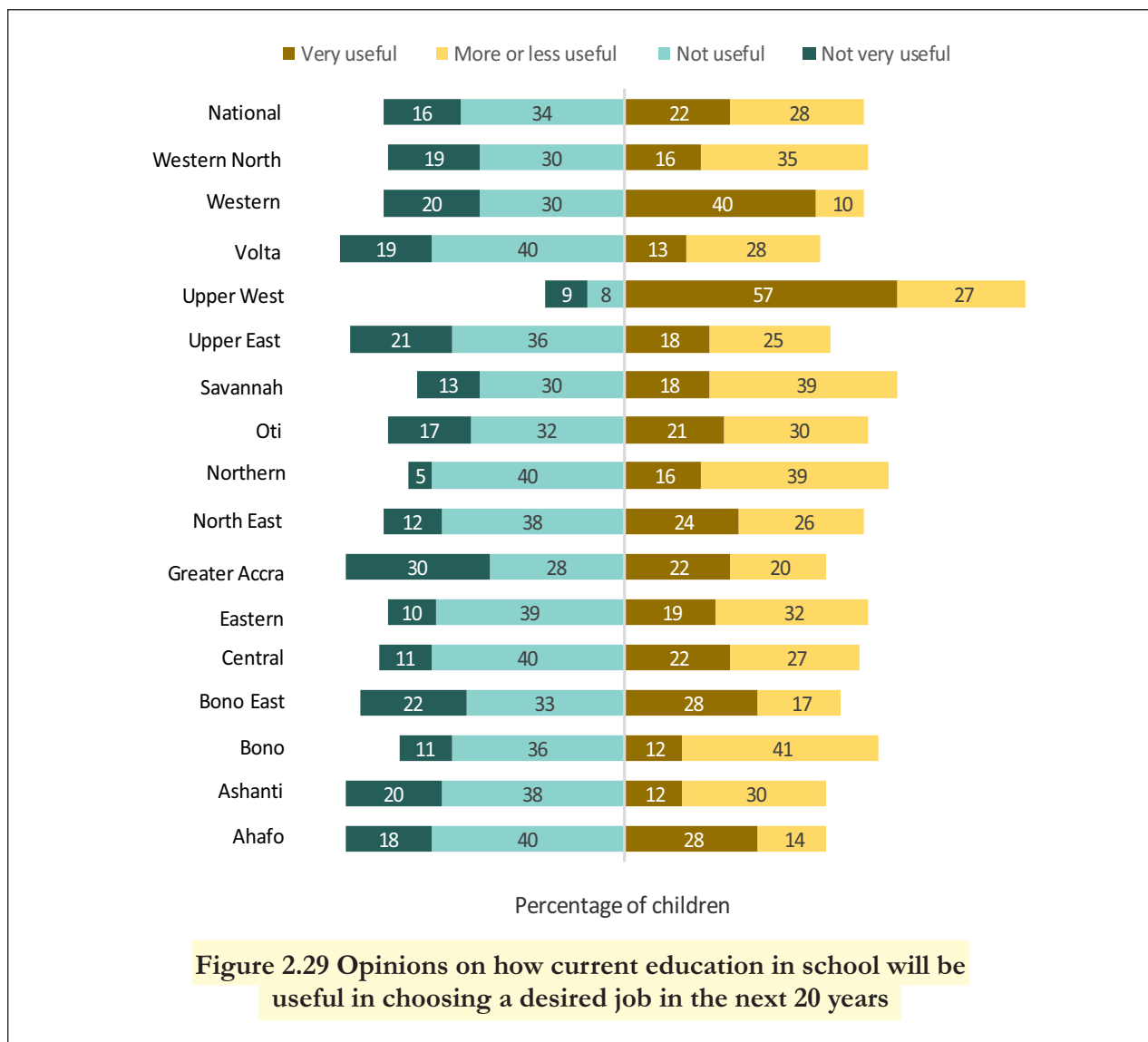
When asked how well, if at all, the children think their school is preparing them for 2040 and beyond, the children were uncertain that the current educational system will bring more jobs in the future. More than half of the children (53%) say they are optimistic that the current education they are receiving in school will be useful for their job prospects in the next 20 years. But a sizable number of them (47%) paints a bleak picture as to how the country's current educational system would help them find jobs in the next 20 years. This broad pattern of pessimism pervades children's views, particularly in Greater Accra, Oti, Western North, Volta, Upper West Eastern and Upper East Regions.



On the issue of how today's educational system is essential in the next 20 years in choosing the desired job, the children are more divided over the issue: 50% of the respondents say the current system will be useful in getting the desired jobs they need, while 50% concluded it will not be useful. There are significant regional differences in perceptions about the usefulness of the current educational system in choosing future desired jobs. Out of the respondents who participated in the survey, 84% of them in the Upper West Region think that the current educational system will be essential for choosing their desired jobs in the next 20 years. Some



50% or more of the children in Eastern, Oti, Western North, Bono, Northern and Savannah Regions share similar views. By contrast, more than half of children in Volta, Ahafo, Ashanti, Greater Accra, Upper East, Bono East and Central Regions do not see how the current educational system will help them secure the desired jobs in the future.



2.8 Skills requirement for future jobs

There is a widespread feeling among the children that there is the need for acquiring a degree, some skills and training. More than half (54%) of the children say that it will be essential for them to get a higher level of training or skills in order to keep up with jobs in the next 20 years. An additional 35% of the children say acquiring technical or vocational skills through Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) education will be essential for them to find jobs in the next 20 years.



	High level education (degree or higher)	Technical or vocational education	Technology and innovation
Ahafo	55.6%	28.3%	16.2%
Ashanti	51.2%	37.6%	11.2%
Bono	33.1%	42.9%	24.0%
Bono East	52.7%	35.6%	11.7%
Central	76.0%	19.4%	4.6%
Eastern	65.2%	23.4%	11.3%
Greater Accra	54.8%	31.1%	14.1%
North East	12.6%	76.4%	10.9%
Northern	38.0%	49.1%	13.0%
Oti	43.9%	43.1%	13.0%
Savannah	22.7%	54.2%	23.0%
Upper East	58.6%	31.5%	9.9%
Upper West	57.4%	33.3%	9.3%
Volta	74.9%	16.2%	8.9%
Western	72.8%	19.5%	7.7%
Western North	55.7%	36.1%	8.2%
National	53.6%	34.5%	11.9%

Table 2.3 Skills and training needed to compete for jobs in the next 20 years

Only 12% of the children say technological and innovative skills will be important for them to get jobs in the future. Among the children who say they need higher level of skills or education to get ahead in search of jobs, a substantial number of them reside in Central, Volta and Western Regions. According to them, technical or vocational education is essential for them to get jobs in the future. This is particularly so among the children in the northern regions (i.e., North East, Northern and Savannah). The children in Bono and Savannah regions are more likely than their peers in other regions to see technology and innovation as essential for future jobs.

Interpretation 8

- Children have been oriented by the current education structure to believe they are more likely to acquire a job after completing a degree course as opposed to a course in TVET or Technology Innovation based studies.
- Most children perceive acquisition of a degree to securing a white colour job and associate that to increasing the social status of their family and pride attached to being a degree holder.
- Children are more inclined to study courses regarded as prestigious by their parents such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses as opposed to TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) courses.



2.9 Children's attitudes towards agriculture career in the future

When asked whether the children would like to make a career in agriculture in the next 20 years, about 20% of the respondents were positive, and the largest number expressed uncertainty (80%). The children who live in the northern part of the country were significantly more positive in considering a career in agriculture. Thus, three in ten reported that they had considered this possibility. The number of children living along the coastal belt appears to have the lowest expectation of venturing into agriculture as a career. Interestingly, for children living along the forest belt where agriculture is very attractive, a small number considered making a career in agriculture over the next 20 years. The findings show that agriculture is not a sector most children are interested in building a career in the future.

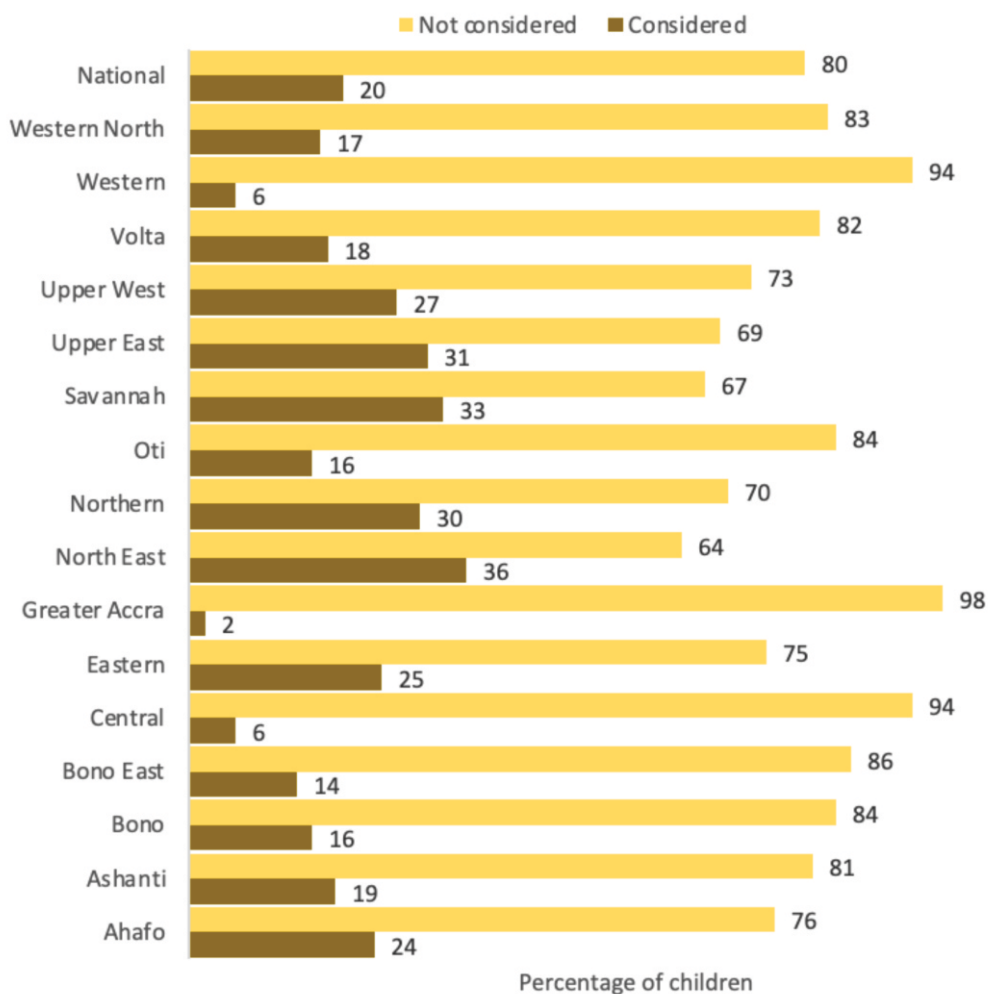
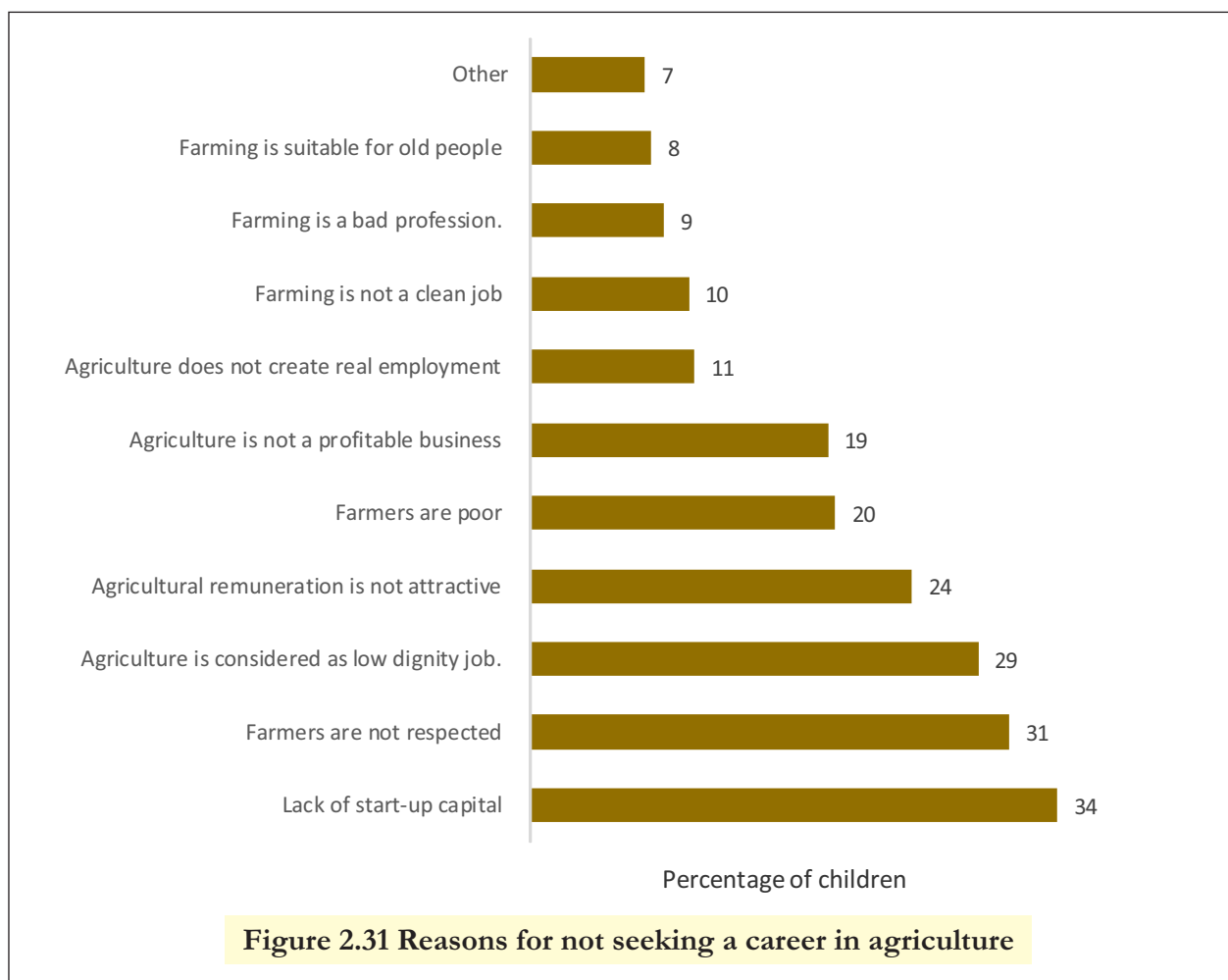


Figure 2.30 Share of children considering a career in agriculture in the next 20 years



To understand why the children are not interested in the agricultural sector, the respondents who did not consider the possibility of choosing agriculture as a career were asked to cite factors explaining their choices. The survey finds that lack of start-up capital was the topmost reason cited by respondents for not considering a career in agriculture. Second is the low social status in the community, unattractive remuneration and the idea that farmers are poor. Some of the respondents view farming as being suitable for older folks and not a profession that is lucrative.



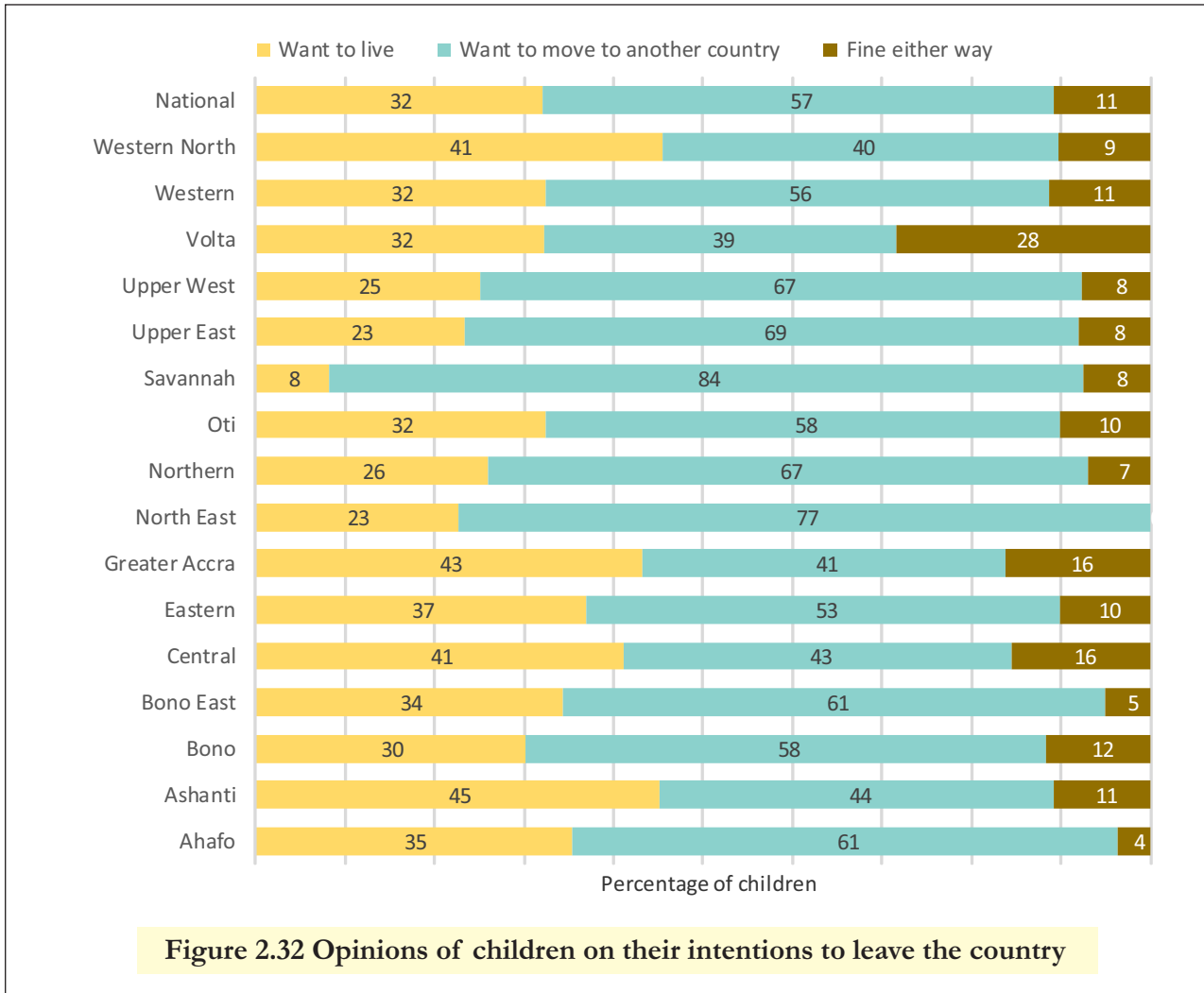
2.10 Intentions of children to leave the country

The survey also asked whether the children would like to move to another country if they had the opportunity or would prefer to continue living in this country in the next 20 years. As shown in Figure 2.32, more than half of the children in the 16 regions say they would leave if they had the chance to do so over the next 20 years. In all, 55% of the respondents say they wish to migrate definitively, while another 11% would either stay in the country or leave the country eventually.

The survey also finds that children in the northern part of the country appear to harbour more intentions to leave the country if they had the opportunity to do so. For instance, nearly 84% of the children in the Savannah Region say they want to move to another country in the five years, by far the highest response from the regions. Meanwhile, eight in ten children (77%) in North East



say they want to leave in the next 20 years, as do 69% in Upper East. By contrast, smaller shares of the children along the coastal belt said the same. These findings highlight the intentions of the children to migrate from the country when there is a chance, with a majority citing greener pastures, education and a better standard of living as reasons.



Interpretation 9

Respondents from the three northern regions said it will be difficult to find jobs in the future. This may account for the high percentage of migrant children from these regions. The cumulative results of these factors would be the incidence of high rates of child workers from the northern parts of the country working in urban centers across the country. Probing further reveals these regions record some of the highest percentages of child marriages, child trafficking and child labour. These can be attributed to high rates of poverty in these regions of which inadequate job opportunities is a contributing factor.



3. Conclusion

The following are the findings from the survey of 11,288 children across the 16 regions of Ghana.

The survey found that national pride is widespread among Ghanaian children, with the bulk of the respondents in every region saying they are either "very" or "somewhat" proud of the country (e.g., proud "of Ghana," proud "to be a Ghanaian"). Perhaps, it should not come as a surprise that these findings reaffirm the existence of the bond between the individuals and the State. However, this sense of pride has not been channelled into involving them in the national discourse. There is therefore the need to drive home these positive attitudes towards engagement of children in the national dialogue.

Although some of the children are generally hopeful about the future of the country in the next two decades, they are still worried about the current social and economic conditions not being in good shape. However, looking to the future, the children see the country as heading in the right direction.

While the majority of the respondents are somewhat optimistic about the country's future, hope gives way to doubt when the focus turns to specific issues such as unemployment

and corruption. A majority predicts that confidence in government will weaken, the rate of migration to urban centers will balloon, condition of the environment will worsen, inequality gap will widen, and unemployment will make it harder for some citizens to make ends meet than they do now. Also, the children see increasing pressure on lands due to population growth over the next 20 years. These grim predictions mirror, in part, the children's sour mood about the current state of the country. The share of children who are dissatisfied with the present standard of living is high. There is the need for better policies to minimize the impact of the widespread negative views on the current standard of living and the bleak picture painted by many of the children.

Moreover, the survey found that 45% of children believe that their standard of living may not improve in the next 20 years, as they foresee that the country will find it difficult to provide a better standard of living for their families. Further, 53% of the respondents are concerned about the country's ability to provide reasonable standard of living for unemployed persons over the next two decades. These findings suggest the country's inability to provide a better standard of living for them could be a source of motivation for the many children who may want to leave the country.



Some of the respondents believe that the country can change in 2040 if governments address such problems as corruption and unemployment as well as encouraging entrepreneurship, limiting the powers of politicians and investing in quality education. It emerged that, the children are eager to be entrepreneurs, as 27% of them said they would like to open their own business in the next 20 years if given GH¢5000 as seed money. The retail and fashion sectors were found to be the most popular choices for investment among the children.

The religious landscape of the country is likely to change in the future. According to them, the religious influence in the country is also likely to change in the next 20 years as more children embrace the idea that hard work, educational qualification and individual talents pay rather than religious beliefs and practices.



4. Recommendations

Generally, there is a strong will by the average Ghanaian child to see change in the various sectors of the country which include education, social services and living standards. In view of that, the following are put forward as recommendations;

1. National Pride

- Teach patriotic songs in all educational institutions at all levels.
- Translate all school mottos, the national anthem and the pledge into the languages of the area in which the school is situated.
- The use of African print as uniforms.
- The school environment should be designed with patriotic symbols of Ghana.

2. Education and Employment

- A higher level of importance must be accorded to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses. Children should therefore be educated on the importance of these areas of study ensuring a functioning society. This will encourage more children to venture into the industrial sector, particularly manufacturing and artisanship for the creation of more jobs. To make this possible, government must invest heavily in the sector.

3. Agriculture

- Re-orient children to prioritise and target agriculture and make it attractive.
- Conscious efforts must be made to expose agricultural opportunities to children within the supply chain so that they do not see agriculture as only farming.

4. Corruption and Religion

- Society must live a life of integrity and social consciousness since children emulate society by what they see.
- Officials found to be corrupt must be prosecuted and punished to serve as deterrent. This will break the culture of impunity among corrupt officials.



APPENDIX A

SAMPLING PROTOCOL

1. Sampling Frame and Sampling Unit

The survey is nationally representative of a section of randomly selected Ghanaian children from age 12 to 17 years in all 16 regions of Ghana. It was conducted from June 2020 to April 16, 2021.

2. Stratification


A stratified random sample of 11,288 children across the country, including urban and rural areas was used and a substantial proportion of answers came from Ashanti Region.

3. Sample Size and Allocation:

Figure 1.0 shows that the sample in the Ashanti Region (19%) and Greater Accra Region (14.8%) represent overall approximately a fourth of the respondents. The strong share of respondents from the Ashanti and Greater Accra Regions does not come as a surprise as they have the largest population in the country.

Regions	2010 census percent population distribution	Proportionate allocation of sample	Achieved sample	Response rate
Ahafo	2.9%	295	891	302%
Ashanti	18.8%	1881	2147	114%
Bono	3.7%	371	154	42%
Bono East	1.9%	189	599	317%
Central	8.3%	827	263	32%
Eastern	10.5%	1054	143	14%
Greater Accra	16.1%	1606	1666	104%
North East	1.9%	187	174	93%
Northern	6.2%	619	580	94%
Oti	2.4%	241	586	243%
Savannah	3.6%	360	365	101%
Upper East	4.1%	414	1051	254%
Upper West	2.8%	276	516	187%
Volta	6.1%	606	641	106%
Western	7.0%	703	419	60%
Western North	3.7%	371	1093	295%
Total		10000	11288	113%

Table 2.4 Sample allocation by region



The sampled children are made up of 1093 (9.7%) from the Western North Region, 1051 (9.3%) from the Upper East Region, 641 (5.7%) from the Volta Region and 586 (5.2%) from the Oti Region. While the Ashanti Region recorded the highest proportion of the respondents, the Eastern Region, on the other hand, recorded the lowest number for this response even though Eastern Region is not considered as having the lowest population in Ghana. Over half of the respondents (51.9%) were males, and just over one in ten children (10.1%) were out of school. Roughly, 69% of children hold basic level of education while the remaining 31% of respondents hold a higher secondary level of education.

The survey was undertaken through a verbal questionnaire mainly administered to respondents in a language they understood and were comfortable with in expressing themselves. The door-to-door approach was used in targeting respondents.

APPENDIX B

Child Consent Form

GHANAIAN CHILDREN ENVISIONING THE COUNTRY IN 2040

Hello, my name is _____, and I am working with Child Rights International, a non-profit organization in Ghana to collect data on children's vision for Ghana in the next 20 years. We are gathering data on how Ghanaian children view the country now and how you would like the future direction of the country to be.

You have been randomly selected for participation in this research. Your participation is very important, but you do not have to participate if you do not wish to. If you agree to participate, I will ask you some questions regarding how you see the country's economy, social protection, educational system, etc. and predict how the country would be like in 2040. My questions for you will take approximately 25 minutes.

Your name will NOT be recorded on this form, nor mentioned anywhere in the survey data.

The combined results of the survey will be shared with donors and other stakeholders. The results will be used to shape advocacy campaigns on policy directions that affect children.

We believe there is no risk to you in participating in this research.

You will not personally benefit from participating in this interview. However, your responses will be used to help support a change in direction of policies that affect children.

If you have any concerns regarding this research, you may contact Child Rights International on 0302 503744. I will leave a copy of this form with you.

Do you have any questions?

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary? Yes _____ No _____

Do you understand that you can stop at any time? Yes _____ No _____

Are you willing to participate? Yes _____ No _____

CONSENT STATEMENT: I give consent for this interview.

Respondent provided consent for this interview: Yes _____ No _____

Consentee's Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Child Assent Consent Form

GHANAIAAN CHILDREN ENVISIONING THE COUNTRY IN 2040

Hello, my name is _____, and I am working with Child Rights International, a non-profit organization in Ghana to collect data on children's vision for Ghana in the next 20 years. We are gathering data on how Ghanaian children view the country now and how you would like the future direction of the country to be.

Your involvement in this interview is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate though we have been given permission by [MENTION NAME OF CAREGIVER]. If you agree to participate in the interview, I will NEVER share your name or your answers with anyone who is not participating in the study. The interview is expected to take 25 minutes.

We do not anticipate any risks to you for participating other than losing time you could have spent on other things. While there are no risks, some of the questions I will ask may be sensitive. If you are uncomfortable with any question at any time, you have the right not to answer and skip to the next one.

If you have any concerns regarding this research, you may contact Child Rights International on 0302 503744. I will leave a copy of this form with you.

Do you have any questions?

Do you understand that your participation is voluntary? Yes_____ No_____

Do you understand that you can stop at any time? Yes_____ No_____

Are you willing to participate? Yes_____ No_____

CONSENT STATEMENT: I give consent for this interview.

Respondent provided consent for this interview: Yes_____ No_____

Consentee's Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Caregiver/Guardian Consent for Participation in Survey

GHANAIAN CHILDREN ENVISIONING THE COUNTRY IN 2040

Hello, my name is _____, and I am with Child Rights International, a non-profit organization in Ghana. We are collecting data on children's vision for Ghana in the next 20 years. We are gathering data on how Ghanaian children view the country now and how they would like the future direction of the country to be.

Your child was randomly selected for participation in this research. His/Her participation is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to his/her participation.

If you agree for your child to participate, I will ask him/her some questions regarding how he/she see the country's economy, social protection, educational system, etc. and predict how the country would be like in 2040. My questions for him/her will take approximately 25 minutes.

Your child's name will NOT be recorded on this form, nor mentioned anywhere in the survey data. I will be recording his/her answers on this device. However, nobody will see the answers except Child Rights International.

The combined results of the survey will be shared with donors and other stakeholders. The results will be used to shape advocacy campaigns on policy directions that affect children.

There is no payment for allowing your child to participate in the survey. We do not anticipate any major risks to your child for participating in this research.

If you have any concerns regarding this research, you may contact Child Rights International on 0302 503744. I will leave a copy of this form with you.

Are you willing to allow your child to participate? Yes_____ No_____

CONSENT STATEMENT: I give consent for my child to participate in this interview.

Respondent provided consent for this interview: Yes_____ No_____

Consentee's Name:_____ Date: _____



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“An Adult Is A Child Who Has Survived”